

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14

## Health & Adult Care

*community meals*

## Co-operative & Communities

*co-operative values*

## Children & Young People

*planning primary school places*

## Housing, Economy & Infrastructure

*bringing empty properties back to use*

## Budget & Finance

*budget proposals and alternative budget*

## Scrutiny Management Board

*holding the Executive to account*



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## Chair's Foreword

This has been a fantastic year for Scrutiny in Telford & Wrekin. This report shows how Scrutiny has made a real difference for the people who live and work in the Borough and we are also getting national recognition for our achievements.

- We were the only authority in the country to be shortlisted for two Good Scrutiny Awards by the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Through the work of the West Midlands Overview and Scrutiny Network I have led a process to develop links between Local Government Scrutiny and Parliamentary Select Committees

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the Scrutiny – the members of the committees, officers who have worked with us, service users, partner organisations, and the Cabinet Members who have been held to account by the Management Board and responded positively to our recommendations.

As the financial pressures on the public sector increase over the coming years I believe the role of scrutiny will become more important and I look forward to continuing to work with you to develop Scrutiny in Telford and Wrekin.

*Cllr. Derek White  
Lead Scrutiny Member  
Chair of Scrutiny Management Board*

## Purpose of Scrutiny

Scrutiny was established in local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. It was intended as a counter-weight to the new executive structures created by the Act (elected mayors or leaders and cabinets). Scrutiny's role was to develop and review policy and make recommendations to the Council. The current legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees are mostly contained in the Localism Act 2011, which inserts several new sections into the 2000 Act largely around scrutiny of external organisations.

Telford & Wrekin Council is made up of 54 elected members but only nine of them are in 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 in the Cabinet to be involved in shaping the work of the Council. Scrutiny members can also scrutinise local NHS services and services provided by some other organisations. Scrutiny acts as the voice of local people to ensure council policies and decisions are in the best interest of residents and make the best use of available resources.

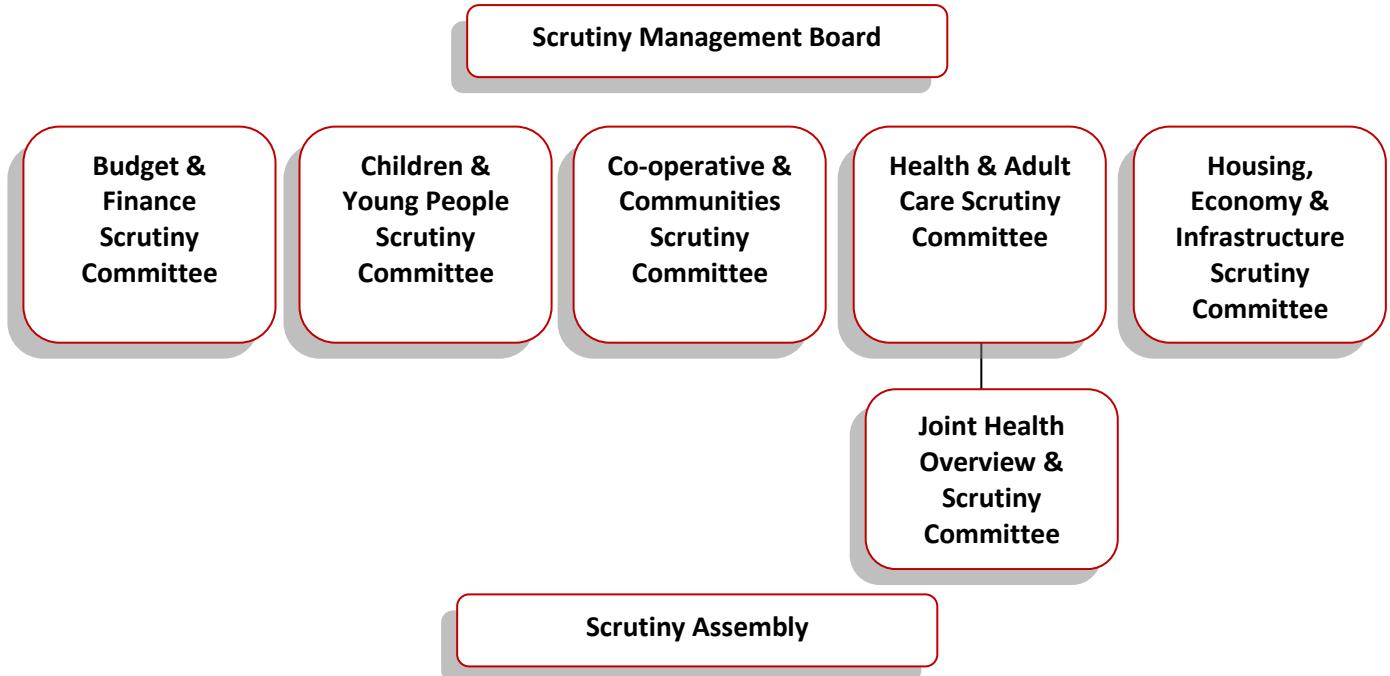
Scrutiny works in two main ways:

- a) By "holding to account" Cabinet members and other decision makers. Scrutiny can question and challenge Cabinet members (or other decision makers) in public about their decisions and about service performance. This helps ensure that decisions are 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 make recommendations to Cabinet or where appropriate to partner organisations. The Cabinet does not have to accept scrutiny's recommendations but must respond in public to say why. An important part of scrutiny work is to seek the views of service users, providers and members of the public as appropriate.

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 2013/14.



### Scrutiny Assembly

The Scrutiny Assembly is the collective term for all scrutiny members (all elected councillors except Cabinet members and the Mayor) and scrutiny co-optees. The co-optees are members of the public and Town & Parish Councillors who have been appointed to a scrutiny committee for their expertise or to represent certain organisations or groups. The Scrutiny Assembly is consulted on 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 elected 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 is made up of the Scrutiny Chairs and other scrutiny members to make the Board politically balanced, currently seven in total. The Board is responsible for strategic oversight of the scrutiny function and determining

the priorities for scrutiny, the allocation of resources and performance monitoring. The Board holds Cabinet members (“the Executive”) to account at their meetings, and may scrutinise matters of strategic importance that cut across the remit of the individual scrutiny committees. All of the Board’s meetings are held in public.

## What we did in 2013/14

In July 2012 the Scrutiny Management Board agreed to set a 2 year work programme for the period 2012/13-2013/14. Issues for the work programme were selected in accordance with the process set out in the Scrutiny Handbook with each scrutiny committee agreeing in-year adjustments as necessary to respond to changing circumstances and events.

The 2012/13 Annual Report described progress at the mid-point. This report provides performance information over the 2 year period and outcomes delivered during 2013/14.

### Delivery of the work programme

The table below shows the items selected for the 2012/13-2013/14 work programme and progress on delivery over the 2 year period. Items in **blue/bold** are topics added during 2013/14 and since the previous report.

Topic	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Scrutiny Management Board</b>		
Changing the Council & Local Communities Together- the Co-operative Way	G	n/a
Holding the Executive to Account	G	G
Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Police & Crime Panel (PCP) update and budgets	G	G
Domestic Violence	R	G
<b>Community Safety Plan</b>	n/a	G
Homelessness Strategy	R	G
Flood & Water Management	R	G
Appointment of Town & Parish Council co-optees	G	n/a
Scrutiny Chairs' Updates	G	G
Scrutiny Recommendations Database	A	A
Managing cross-cutting issues	G	n/a
Changes to the Constitution and Scrutiny Handbook from changes to legislation	A	G
<b>Budget &amp; Finance Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Service & Financial Planning Report – 2011/12 Outturn	G	n/a
Local Government Finance: Business Rates Retention, New Homes Bonus etc.	G	n/a
Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14 – 2014/15 (budget proposals)	G	n/a
Capital receipts (Audit Committee)	G	n/a
Savings proposals agreed September 2012	G	n/a
New Funding Formula for Schools	G	n/a
Welfare Benefit Reform policies (with Co-operative & Communities)	G	G

<b>Topic</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Safeguarding and Early Intervention Cost Improvement Plan, and Securing Permanency report	G	G
<b>Cabinet response to comments on the budget</b>	n/a	G
<b>MD's response to comments on the budget – the Way Forward</b>	n/a	G
<b>2012/13 Outturn report</b>	n/a	G
<b>Care Placement Costs (with CYP)</b>	n/a	G
<b>Service &amp; Financial Planning Strategy 2014/15-2015/16 (budget proposals)</b>	n/a	G
<b>Opposition group alternative budget proposals</b>	n/a	G
<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Children in Care Placement Strategy (in-depth review)	G	n/a
Provision of Primary School Places (in-depth review)	A	G
Youth Offending Service	R	G
Ofsted action plan (Safeguarding and LAC)	G	G
Ofsted action plan (Fostering)	G	G
CIC Performance Monitoring Dashboard	G	G
Education attainment	G	G
Youth Unemployment (In-depth review Youth Services)	R	A
LCSB briefing	G	R
Early Intervention programmes (in-depth review)	R	R
<b>Leaving Care Grant</b>	n/a	G
<b>Care Placement Costs (with Budget &amp; Finance)</b>	n/a	G
<b>Feedback from LGA Peer Review</b>	n/a	G
<b>Monitor implementation of recommendations incl:</b>	n/a	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRO Annual Report</li> <li>• Outcomes from Queensway Care Contract</li> <li>• Missing children return interviews</li> </ul>		
<b>School Improvement</b>	n/a	G
<b>Co-operative &amp; Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Co-operative Council updates	G	n/a
Welfare Benefit Reforms: Council Tax Support Scheme Discretionary Housing Payments Local Crisis and Resettlement Assistance	G	G
Welfare Benefit Reforms: How the Council and partners are supporting people through changes	A	n/a
First Point for Business update	G	n/a
Impact of changes to leisure concessions policy	G	n/a
In-depth review of Co-operative Values and Employee Commission	A	G
Provision of debt advice, role of credit union, capacity of food banks	R	G
<b>Implications of the withdrawal of Local Crisis Assistance and Local Resettlement Assistance funding</b>	n/a	G

<b>Topic</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
<b>Support for Adults with Learning Disability who have had their benefit sanctioned</b>	n/a	G
<b>Impact of recommendations on the Management of Community Centres</b>	n/a	G
<b>Health &amp; Adult Care Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Continuing Healthcare	G	A
Meals on Wheels	A	G
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	R	R
Public Health Transition	A	A
Alcohol Strategy	R	A
Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report	R	
Standing item: Health and Social Care Policy Developments (including changes to Health Scrutiny)	G	G
<b>Telford &amp; Wrekin and Shropshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Travel and Transport Plan	A	G
Stroke Review	A	G
West Midlands Ambulance Service and Make Ready	A	G
Reconfiguration of Hospital Services	A	G
111 Service	A	G
Ophthalmology	G	n/a
SaTH Foundation Trust Application	A	n/a
Relocation of Head and Neck Surgery	G	n/a
Children's Surgery	A	G
Emergency Department Review	A	G
End of Life Care	R	A
<b>Housing, Economy &amp; Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee</b>		
Questions to Cabinet member for holding to account session	G	n/a
Waste Services Procurement process	A	G
Empty Properties and Private Landlords (in-depth)	A	G
S106 / CIL (deferred in line with Shaping Places)	R	R
Business Improvement Districts / attracting jobs to Telford & Wrekin (deferred to next municipal year)	R	R
Marches Local Transport Body	n/a	R
<b>Shaping Places consultation process</b>	n/a	G

**G**

Item completed, including where further monitoring or other work was identified

**A**

Item under way and partially completed

**R**

Item outstanding or deferred beyond the period of the work programme

## Scrutiny Meetings

The Scrutiny Committees hold as many meetings as possible in public session in the interests of transparency and public involvement. However, members may hold informal working group meetings to gather evidence for a scrutiny review.

The Scrutiny Management Board set a benchmark of six formal meetings per committee per year. The table below shows the number of meetings held by each committee during 2012/13 and 2013/14 and the total over the period.

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

Meetings of other Council Committees attended by scrutiny members to fulfil the scrutiny work programme have been counted as informal meetings.

Committee	Benchmark total	Formal committee 2012/13	Working group 2012/13	Formal committee 2013/14	Working group 2013/14	Total
Scrutiny Management Board	12	6	0	4	2	12
Budget & Finance	12	7	0	7	1	15
Children & Young People	12	6	4	7	4	21
Co-operative & Communities	12	4	4	3	1	12
Health & Adult Care and Joint HOSC	12	8	11	7	4	30
Housing, Economy & Infrastructure	12	1	5	2	6	14
Total	72	32 <sup>1</sup>	24	30 <sup>2</sup>	18	104

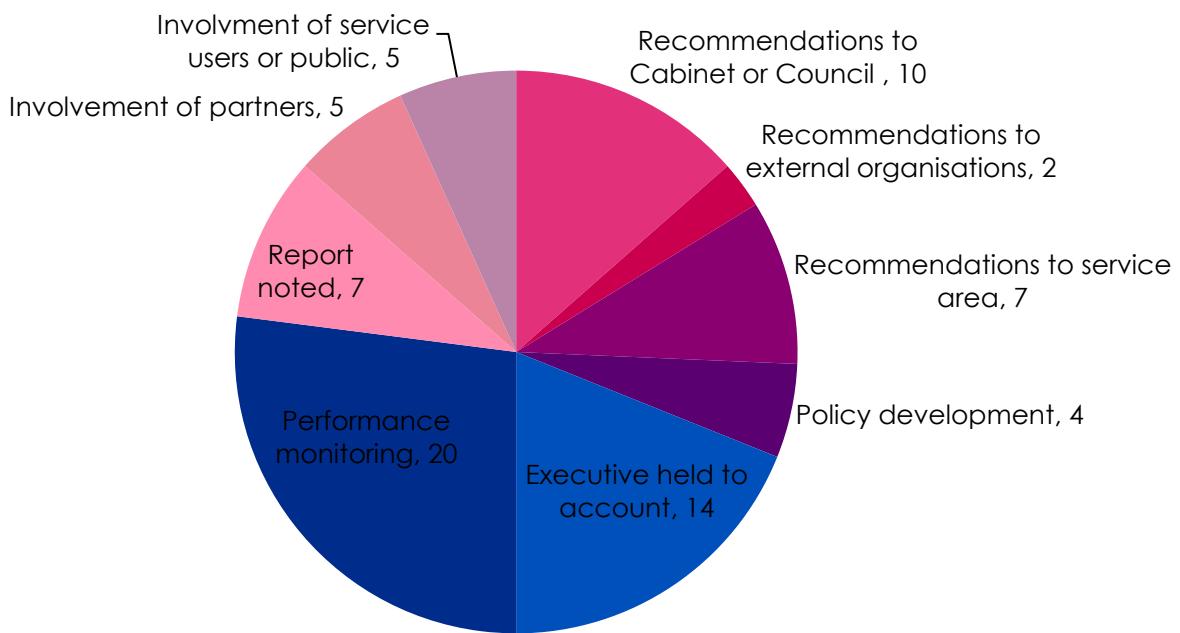
<sup>1</sup> 5 were joint meetings with other scrutiny or council committees

<sup>2</sup> 5 were joint meetings with other scrutiny or council committees

## Outcomes from scrutiny reviews

### a) Scrutiny outcomes

Scrutiny has many roles and a number of indicators can be used to measure effective scrutiny. The chart below shows the balance of outcomes from scrutiny work during 2013/14. There were a total of 42 pieces of work and there can be multiple outcomes from one piece of work. Full details are provided in Appendix 1. Each number represents one outcome so for example Recommendations to Cabinet represents the number of items of work which resulted in recommendations being made, not the number of recommendations.



### b) Scrutiny recommendations

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

Summary of Recommendations 2012/13-2013/14						
Recommendation made to:	Made	Accepted	Rejected	Partially accepted	Awaiting response	Unknown
Cabinet	66	38 (57%)	2 ( 3%)	13 (20%)	13 (20%)	
SMT / service area	8	7	0	0	0	1
Employees	1	0	0	0	0	1
Scrutiny	2	2	0	0	0	
External organisations	25				25	
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>47 (46%)</b>	<b>2 (2%)</b>	<b>13 (13%)</b>	<b>38 (37%)</b>	<b>2 (2%)</b>

### c) Responses to consultations

During 2012/13-2013/14 scrutiny responded to the following consultations:

- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
- Local Crisis Assistance and Resettlement Assistance
- Council Tax Transition Grant
- Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2013/14-2014/15
- Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2014/15-2015/16
- Main Opposition Group Budget Proposals

- Homelessness Strategy
- Shaping Places Consultation Process
- Quality Accounts for Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

## **Regional and national scrutiny work**

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

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

Led by Cllr. Derek White, 2013/14 saw the network going from strength to strength.

The network brings scrutiny members and officers together to exchange information and views on policy changes affecting scrutiny. The network has no formal standing as a joint scrutiny committee and meets on an informal basis but has started to carve out its own identity and establish a national reputation for its pioneering ways of working.

Cllr. Derek White was appointed Chair in 2013/14 and reappointed in 2014/15. His priority as Chair has been to increase the influence of local government scrutiny in the West Midlands at national level through the Parliamentary Select Committees. Over the past 12 months, the network has been working with the Select Committee Parliamentary Outreach Worker to help identify and establish routes to influence, and in November 2013 Telford & Wrekin welcomed David Natzler, Director General of Chamber and Committee Services at Parliament, to a regional meeting to discuss opportunities for the network to work with the Select Committees. A submission from the network to a Health Select Committee call for evidence provided useful case study and learning points for the future.

Cllr. White will continue this work during 2014/15.

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

Cllr. Derek White attended all of the meetings in 2013/14. The information is used to inform the work of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **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.

There were no Call-in requests during 2013/14.

### **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.

Notification of exemption of Cabinet report 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Voice, Data and Wide Area Network Procurement. Cllr. Derek White was notified as chair of the Scrutiny Management Board.

## Good Scrutiny Awards

In 2013 we were delighted that Telford & Wrekin received national recognition as a runner-up in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's **Good Scrutiny Awards** for the work of the Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees on the welfare benefit reforms.

This year, the Scrutiny Management Board selected 3 pieces of scrutiny work to submit for the 2014 Good Scrutiny Awards to showcase the impact of scrutiny in Telford & Wrekin.

The entries are:

- **System Leadership by the Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

This demonstrates the Joint HOSC's role in bringing health bodies together in a public debate about the future of acute services in the county.

The full submission can be found at:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7073/submission\\_form-joint\\_hosc](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7073/submission_form-joint_hosc)

- **The work of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on the care placement strategy: It's not just about the numbers.**

This demonstrates the impact of scrutiny recommendations on the safety, value for money and budget for children in care placements. The work was strongly endorsed by West Mercia Police and the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board.

To find out more about the work and its impact go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6959/poster-children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_scrutiny\\_committee](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6959/poster-children_and_young_people_scrutiny_committee)

- **The Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee review of the Management of Community Centres: Putting the heart into communities.**

This demonstrates the impact that scrutiny recommendations can have on improving local services for local people, as reflected in the endorsement from a local residents group.

To find out more about the work and its impact go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6960/poster-co-operative\\_and\\_communities\\_scrutiny\\_committee](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6960/poster-co-operative_and_communities_scrutiny_committee)

## Case Studies

### Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee consultation on the Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2014/15-2015/16 and Main Opposition Group Budget Proposals



*"Scrutinising the budget proposals is the most important part of our annual work programme – checking the Council is planning to spend within budget and on services that local people want and need. This year we also scrutinised alternative proposals put forward by the main opposition group."*

Cllr. Shirley Reynolds, Chair Budget & Finance Scrutiny

A key focus for scrutiny of the budget proposals this year was the adult social care budget. The scale of savings needed - £10.5m over the next 2 years – and the potential impact on vulnerable adults made this a key issue. The committee joined up with the Health & Adult Care committee to consider the impact of proposals on the budget and on service users.

In terms of the overall budget strategy, the committee welcomed proposals to invest in tackling youth unemployment, the creation of a draw-down contingency for safeguarding in response to a scrutiny recommendation, the increase in the leaving care grant and the investment in Destination Telford. The new approach to debt repayment was strongly supported. But the committee were concerned about the delivery of savings in adult care which were highlighted in the response to Cabinet and the committee will continue to monitor over the coming year. The committee's formal response was presented to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

This year for the first time the committee was presented with alternative proposals brought forward by the main opposition group. The committee considered both sets of proposals on their own merits and produced separate responses to each. The committee commented on a number of specific proposals in the alternative budget but agreed it was a healthy part of the democratic process. The committee's response was included in the reported to Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

To view the response to the Service & Financial Planning Strategy go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6950/scrutiny\\_response\\_to\\_service\\_and\\_financial\\_planning\\_strategy\\_201415-201516](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6950/scrutiny_response_to_service_and_financial_planning_strategy_201415-201516)

To view the response to the Main Opposition Group Budget Proposals go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6951/scrutiny\\_response\\_to\\_main\\_opposition\\_group\\_budget\\_proposals\\_201415](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6951/scrutiny_response_to_main_opposition_group_budget_proposals_201415)

## **Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee review of Local Arrangements for the Planning and Provision of Primary School Places**



*"There has been a lot of national media about the shortage of primary school places in some parts of the country. With the recent increase in the birth rate and growing demand from housing development, a key question for our committee was whether there was a ticking time bomb in Telford and Wrekin."*

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

The committee spent a number of months looking at how the Council projects, plans for and provides primary school places to ensure there will be sufficient capacity to meet the demand from population and housing growth. The review had three key lines of enquiry:

1. How does the borough plan for additional places in the primary phase?
2. How does the local admissions policy work and how are primary school governing bodies involved?
3. How is the provision of places (capacity) linked to improving educational outcomes (quality of provision)?

Members took evidence from Primary Headteachers, a school governor, the National Governors' Association, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families and senior Council officers.

Members concluded that, notwithstanding some challenging local pressures, overall there would be enough places to meet the demand from growing pupil numbers across the borough for the next 5-10 years. The committee was satisfied that Council officers have a clear grasp of the challenges, and that the tracking and monitoring of the related data undertaken by senior officers is of high quality.

The committee made eight recommendations to address issues which emerged from the review. Key amongst these was that the Council should publish a S106 Annual Report and other recommendations in response to issues raised by headteachers.

The report was presented to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> May. All the recommendations were accepted or partially accepted. To view the full report, go to:  
[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6949/review\\_of\\_local\\_arrangements\\_for\\_the\\_planning\\_and\\_provision\\_of\\_primary\\_school\\_places](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6949/review_of_local_arrangements_for_the_planning_and_provision_of_primary_school_places)

## **Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee review of the Employee Commission and Co-operative Values**



*"Making sure local people get the services they need at the right time depends on the Council having a motivated workforce who understand customer needs and whose knowledge and experience is used to shape the planning and running of services."*

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

The Council announced its intention to be a “Co-operative Council” in 2011. This was essentially about three things:

- Bringing more public services together so that people get what they need in the right place and at the right time;
- Involving local people and employees more in planning and running services;
- As a Council, supporting our community better and encouraging people to do more to help their own communities.

The Co-operative approach was seen as fundamental to working with local people to design and deliver services in way that would meet the challenges posed by cuts to the authority's funding.

In March 2012, Cabinet agreed the adoption of a set of Co-operative Values: Openness and Honesty; Fairness and Respect; Involvement; Ownership to underpin the co-operative approach.

Two years on, the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee wanted to find out how far Council employees understood the Co-operative approach and Values and what practical difference they were making for local people. Members spoke to staff from right across the organisation, in different services and locations, to find out what they thought.

A key finding from the review was that the Co-operative Values were well understood by staff and the areas where they had had the greatest impact were on customer service and partnership working. Examples such as the Street Champions, Snow Wardens and Parish Environmental Teams were given as good examples of co-operative working in practice.

The committee made a number of recommendations to senior management team to ensure progress continued.

## **Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee review of Community Meals Service (Meals on Wheels) and work of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



*"The hot meals service is so much greater than the provision of food - from talking to service users we found that people value the meals, but the regular contact with someone coming to their home was just as important. We wanted to look at the impact of proposed funding reductions and options for the future of the service."*

Cllr. Derek White, Chair Health & Adult Scrutiny Committee and Co-chair of the Joint HOSC

The Scrutiny Committee wanted to ensure that any changes to the meals on wheels service took into account the views of the service users and the volunteers who deliver the meals.

The key findings of the review were:

- The service users and their families valued the regular contact as much as the hot meals that were provided
- There are health benefits from the service
- There are opportunities to develop other models for a hot meals service working with local food providers

The Committee recommended that the current hot meals service should continue while discussions take place about developing a Good Neighbours Service in Telford and Wrekin.

To view the full report, go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6956/review\\_of\\_the\\_meals\\_on\\_wheels\\_hot\\_meals\\_service](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6956/review_of_the_meals_on_wheels_hot_meals_service)

Some of the members of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee also sit on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Shropshire Council (Joint HOSC). This looks at health services that serve both local authority areas. There have been two main areas of work for Joint HOSC

- Sustainability of acute and community hospital services

As a committee we recognised that the problems faced by the acute trust were a symptom of the wider issues in the health and social care system. We wanted to make sure that all the partner organisations worked together to come up with a solution that would meet not only the needs of this generation – but also the next.

- Review of community mental health services

We have raised concerns with the providers and commissioners of mental health services which has resulted in a review of the service. We want to ensure that service users and local organisations are involved in this review and that the service can support people with longer term mental health needs and with crisis situations.

## Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee review of **Empty Properties and Private Landlords**



*"Empty properties can be a waste of housing and, if left to deteriorate, can become a problem for neighbours and blight on local areas. Our committee wanted to find out how the Council could help bring empty properties – mainly owned by private landlords – back to use."*

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

In 2013 the Council estimated there were about 400 properties in the borough which had been empty for 6 months or more. The issue of empty properties in Telford and Wrekin is by no means acute compared to other areas, but each empty property is a waste of housing opportunity and a loss of potential income to the Council from the New Homes Bonus.

The committee spent a number of months reviewing 2 key lines of enquiry:

1. How to identify empty properties as early possible – the less time a property is empty, the easier it is to prevent deterioration and bring back to occupation.
2. How to address issues of poor practice by private landlords – around 97% of empty properties are in private ownership.

The committee took evidence from Cabinet Member, Council officers, Chairs and Clerks of two Town and Parish Councils and an officer from Sandwell Council as well as gathering case studies from written reports.

The committee concluded that the Council is moving in the right direction but recognised that it is early days. The report makes 19 recommendations which are largely practical ideas drawn from other areas. A key recommendation is that the Council should be clear in how resources are targeted so it is transparent for members of the public to understand. The committee also recommended awareness raising with Town & Parish Councils to improve early reporting.

The report was presented to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Seventeen of 19 recommendations were wholly or partially accepted.

To view the report, go to:

[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6948/review\\_of\\_empty\\_properties\\_and\\_private\\_landlords](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6948/review_of_empty_properties_and_private_landlords)

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



*"The Scrutiny Management Board sets the strategic priorities for scrutiny and ensures that the work programme is focussed on Council priorities and issues that are important to the people of Telford and Wrekin."*

Cllr. Derek White, Chair Scrutiny Management Board

A key role for scrutiny is in holding the Executive to account. Over the course of the 2012/13-2013/14 work programme, the Leader and all Cabinet members have attended the Scrutiny Management Board to be held to account by answering questions about their decisions and priorities in public session.

The Scrutiny Management Board is designated with the statutory powers of scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership – in Telford and Wrekin this is the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership – and of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Board, and these are regular items in the annual work programme.

The Board may also scrutinise cross-cutting strategic issues and in 2014 took part in the consultation on the Homelessness Strategy. The Board submitted a response to the consultation which was informed by evidence taken at meetings from providers.

## Looking Ahead

In May 2014 the Scrutiny Management Board agreed to carry out a light-touch refresh of the work programme for 2014/15 rather than undergo a full work programme setting process. This was a pragmatic decision to allow outstanding work to continue across municipal years and to be completed in the relatively short period before the borough election in May 2015.

A few changes were made to the membership of the scrutiny committees at Annual Council on 29<sup>th</sup> May, notably the appointment of a new chair of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee following the stand down of the previous chair.

During June and July the Scrutiny Management Board and scrutiny committees selected topics for the 2014/15 work programme. To view the list, go to:

[https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6961/scrutiny\\_work\\_programme\\_2014\\_15](https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6961/scrutiny_work_programme_2014_15)

As financial pressure continues and resources become ever more precious, it is more important than ever that the scrutiny function delivers value for money for local people and scrutiny members are mindful of this at all times.

## Contacts

To find out more about scrutiny, go to:

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

To find meeting dates and agendas for scrutiny meetings go to:

[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.

If you would like to contact a member of the Scrutiny team, our contact details are below:

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**General Enquiries**

Scrutiny Team

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[scrutiny@telford.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@telford.gov.uk)

## 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 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/)
4. If you would like to give evidence to a Scrutiny Committee for a review which is on the work programme, please contact the Scrutiny Team. The list of topics which may be scrutinised in 2014/15 can be found at:  
[http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6961/scrutiny\\_work\\_programme\\_201415](http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/6961/scrutiny_work_programme_201415)

## Appendix 1

Qualitative outcomes from scrutiny reviews carried out during 2013/14

Item	Recommendations to Cabinet / Council	Recommendations to external organisation	Recommendations to service area	Contributed to policy development	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service users or public	Other
<b>Scrutiny Management Board</b>										
Holding the Executive to Account					Y					
PCC and PCP update and budgets							Y			
Domestic Violence							Y			
Community Safety Plan							Y			
Homelessness Strategy				Y				Y		Responded to consultation
Flood & Water Management			Y			Y	Y			
Scrutiny Chairs' Updates						Y				
<b>Budget &amp; Finance Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Safeguarding and Early Intervention Cost Improvement Plan, and Securing Permanency report					Y	Y	Y			
Cabinet response to comment on the budget					Y					
MD's response to comments on the budget - the Way Forward			Y			Y	Y			
2012/13 Outturn report							Y			
Care Placement costs (with CYP)	Y					Y				
Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2014/15-2015/16 (budget proposals)	Y				Y					
Opposition group alternative budget proposals										Written response to Council
<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Provision of Primary School	Y					Y		Y	Y	

Item	Recommendations to Cabinet / Council	Recommendations to external organisation	Recommendations to service area	Contributed to policy development	Executive held to account	Performance monitoring	Report noted	Involvement of partners	Involvement of service users or public	Other
Places (in-depth review)										
Youth Offending Service					Y					
Ofsted action plan (Safeguarding and LAC)					Y					
Ofsted action plan (Fostering)					Y					
CIC Performance Monitoring Dashboard					Y					
Education attainment					Y					
Youth Unemployment (In-depth review Youth Services)				Y	Y		Y	Y	On-going	
Leaving Care Grant	Y	Y	Y		Y					
Feedback from LGA Peer Review					Y	Y				
Implementation of recommendations on care placement strategy.					Y				Good Scrutiny Award submission	
School Improvement					Y				On-going	
<b>Co-operative &amp; Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Welfare Benefit Reforms update (with Budget & Finance)	Y					Y				
In-depth review of Co-operative Values and Employee Commission	Y		Y			Y			Y	
Update on Management of Community Centres						Y			Good Scrutiny Award submission	
<b>Health &amp; Adult Care Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Continuing Healthcare	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y	
Meals on Wheels	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	
Public Health Transition					Y					Ongoing
Alcohol Strategy								Y		
Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report					Y					
Standing item: Health and Social Care Policy	Y									

<b>Item</b>	<b>Recommendations to Cabinet / Council</b>	<b>Recommendations to external organisation</b>	<b>Recommendations to service area</b>	<b>Contributed to policy development</b>	<b>Executive held to account</b>	<b>Performance monitoring</b>	<b>Report noted</b>	<b>Involvement of partners</b>	<b>Involvement of service users or public</b>	<b>Other</b>
Developments (including changes to Health Scrutiny)										
<b>Shropshire and Telford &amp; Wrekin Joint Health Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Travel and Transport Plan					Y					
Stroke Review					Y					
West Midlands Ambulance Service and Make Ready					Y					
Reconfiguration of Hospital Services (Future Fit including emergency department review)					Y					Good Scrutiny Award submission
111 Service					Y					
Children's Surgery					Y					
<b>Housing, Economy &amp; Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee</b>										
Waste Services Procurement process				Y		Y		Y		
Empty Properties and Private Landlords (in-depth)	Y		Y					Y		
Shaping Places consultation process			Y							