



Telford & Wrekin
C O U N C I L

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Annual Scrutiny Report 2016/17

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Foreword



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Council's Scrutiny Committees for 2016/17.

I would like to begin by expressing my thanks and best wishes to Councillor Shirley Reynolds who has been Lead Scrutiny Member for a number of years now but took up a position as Cabinet Member in the 2017/18 municipal year.

The role of Scrutiny in local government is becoming increasingly important. Ongoing budget cuts mean that it is crucial that the Council's Cabinet and senior officers are challenged to ensure that every penny they spend is spent well to provide essential and effective services to the people living and working in Telford and Wrekin.

The Annual Report highlights areas where elected Members have worked on a cross-party basis to look in detail at some of the most important issues facing residents of the Borough.

Concerns around the future of hospital provision in Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire continues to be a major concern and the work of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been imperative, and will continue to be of utmost importance, in ensuring that elected Councillors are consulted on proposals and that the concerns of local residents, patients, service users and other stakeholders are taken into account during the "Future Fit" process.

Similarly, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remains prominent in the public consciousness and has been a topic of fervent debate in Council meetings. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee continues to provide robust challenge to the Council and its partners to demonstrate that they are doing everything possible to safeguard vulnerable young people. This year, the Committee have monitored the recommendations of last year's review of the multi-agency approach to CSE and important related issues.

Whilst these are significant areas of work, Scrutiny's remit is wide-ranging and the highlights of each Committee's year are set out on the pages that follow. Customer, Communities & Partnerships and Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committees in particular have added value to the policy development process this year with their work on the Homelessness Strategy, Selective Licensing and Civil Parking Enforcement.

It is important to note that we are not experts in the areas we scrutinise – our job is to talk to the people who are experts and ask the questions that we think the people of Telford and Wrekin would want answers to. Whenever possible, we also like to meet with service users and use their comments to inform our discussions and recommendations to the Cabinet. We engage with service users

in a variety of ways, for example through informal scrutiny meetings or visits and surveys, so this important element of our work often goes unpublicised.

It would also be remiss of me not to note that our dedicated Scrutiny Officers left the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team this year. I would like to thank Fiona Bottrill and Stephanie Jones for their dedication and support over the years. Scrutiny Chairs have worked closely with the Team to limit the impact on the Scrutiny function as far as possible.

Finally, the latter few months of this municipal year were somewhat impacted by the calling of the 'snap' general election on 8 June 2017 and I am grateful to those involved for their forbearance whilst this work was re-programmed. I would also like to thank all the Officers, colleagues from other organisations and members of the public who have helped us in our work throughout the year by providing us with high quality evidence about an extremely wide range of issues. We hope to hear from even more of you in 2017/18, and we are always ready to hear your suggestions for topics Scrutiny may wish to consider for review.

Councillor Nathan England
Lead Scrutiny Member 2017/18

What is Scrutiny?

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

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

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

Who carries out scrutiny work?

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

In 2015/16 Telford & Wrekin had five scrutiny committees:

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

How is scrutiny work carried out?

Scrutiny is can be carried out in many different ways.

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

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

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

How do we monitor the effectiveness of scrutiny?

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

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

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

Scrutiny Management Board

Members: Councillors Shirley Reynolds (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Andy Burford, Nathan England, Veronica Fletcher, Jayne Greenaway, Kevin Guy, Jacqui Seymour and Chris Turley



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

This year we have continued our practice of inviting Members of the Cabinet to attend our meetings to be held to account for the decisions they make. We have had some interesting discussions with the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care & Older People, Children, Young People & Communities, and Transport, Customer & Neighbourhood Services. These sessions were used to enable Scrutiny to ask questions about issues not included in the work programme. I'd like to thank the Cabinet, not only for their candid approach, but also for their continued support for Scrutiny.

Officers supporting Scrutiny now have a twin-hat role, and also support the Council's Executive and Regulatory functions. The Board has worked with the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team to limit the impact on the Scrutiny function as far as possible. These efforts include the cessation of rolling work programmes to enable focussed and current work programmes to be devised. This change meant that the work programming process for the 2017/18 municipal year began at an earlier stage which will maximise the time available for Scrutiny in the coming year.

In 2016/17 we held 3 meetings. Our final meeting of the year was cancelled as it was scheduled to take place during the pre-election period for the 'snap' general election called on 8 June.

Call-In

Call-in is a way for scrutiny members to examine a decision taken by Cabinet, or by officers under delegated authority, before the decision is implemented. The rules for calling in decisions are set out in the Council's Constitution and in the Scrutiny Handbook. There were no call-in requests to the Scrutiny Management Board during 2016/17.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Kevin Guy (Chair), Steve Barnes, Joy Francis, Janice Jones, Nicola Lowery, Kuldip Sahota, Jane Pinter, Shirley Reynolds and Karen Tomlinson

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



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

In 2016/17 the Committee held three formal meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation

Following the in-depth review which the Committee undertook in 2015/16, the Committee received an interim update on the implementation of the recommendations made in last year's report to Cabinet, holding Senior Managers and Key Stakeholders to account on progress. A 12 month progress review will place in the next municipal year.

Ofsted single inspection of children's services

Following the Ofsted report published in August 2016 following the single inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (SIF), the Committee received the "Getting to Good" Children and Family Services Improvement Plan 2016-17 in order to hold the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Communities, and Senior Managers to account on progress against the recommendations. The Committee also identified key aspects of the Plan for focussed scrutiny in the coming year.

Educational Attainment

The Committee received an update on the current education agenda, including significant changes in the assessment process and new primary curriculum. The Committee also received an update on primary and secondary level performance data compared to national averages. We were delighted with the remarkable Progress 8 score achieved by HLC and it's ranking as not only the highest performing school in the borough for pupil progress, but registering in the top 100 in the country.

SEND reforms

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Children and Family Act (2014) with particular reference to Special Educational Needs and Disability. Over the course of a series of meetings, Senior Managers were held to account for the Council's performance with regard to statutory assessment and cost of provision.

Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Nathan England (Chair), John Ashford, Kevin Guy, Leon Murray, Steve Reynolds, Peter Scott, Jacqui Seymour, Barry Tillotson and Chris Turley

Co-optees: Mrs P Doherty and Mr D Johnson



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

In 2016/17 the Committee held ten meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below. The Committee has also engaged with the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review of Civil Parking Enforcement.

Customer services (including channel shift)

As part of this review, the Committee engaged in extensive testing of the My Telford application to inform development prior to the application launch. We also received an update on the performance of the Customer Contact Centre and provided feedback for further investigation. The Committee have also trialled paperless working at meetings and our experiences have informed the content of forthcoming member training on the use of Surface Pros.

Traffic Signals

The Committee had previously supported the Council's approach to not remove or switch existing traffic lights at roundabouts to part-time operation for safety reasons but we had requested an update on the impact of new signalling technology on traffic flows and journey times. The Committee were pleased to note the improved performance reported.

Waste management services

As successor to the Housing Economy & Infrastructure Committee we received an update on the procurement of waste management services including receiving an overview of Veolia and the TWS service, details of performance and customer satisfaction, data on recycling rates and the impact on landfill and an update on Household Recycling Centres. The Committee commended the improved performance following the implementation of the waste contract and also the re-engagement by Veolia with the recycling collection service offered to Harper Adams. We have also identified potential for further monitoring and engagement

if the work programme in 2017/18 allows.

Housing needs and Homelessness

As part of our work programme, the Committee began looking at Enforcement in the borough and we chose to focus on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Following an update on the Homelessness Strategy, including a report on data collection in relation to HMOs and options to address related issues, the Committee were invited to engage in development of Policy in two areas: the Homelessness Strategy and the Selective Licensing Policy. The Committee supported the business case for Selective Licensing made several recommendations to the Cabinet in support of the preventative approach to Homelessness.

Flood and Water Management

Due to the Committee's statutory responsibility for Flood and Water Management, an update on drainage and flood management was received. The Committee recommended more promotional activity of the Council's good work in this area.

Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Shirley Reynolds (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Stephen Burrell, Andy Burford, Nigel Dugmore, Raj Mehta, Rob Sloan, Charles Smith and Dave Wright

Co-optees: Mrs C Mason-Morris and Mr R Williams



In recent years, the work of the Finance and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee has focussed almost exclusively on its constitutional role as a budget consultee. However, this year the Committee was able to devote some resource to a review of Civil Parking Enforcement.

In 2016/17 we held 5 meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

Service & Financial Planning 2017/18 to 2019/20

During January and February 2017, the Committee held a series of four focussed meetings with Cabinet Members and the Council's senior budget holders to review, scrutinise, and consider the financial environment as part of the development of the draft Service & Financial Planning 2017/18-2018/19 strategy and the alternative budget proposals put forward by the main opposition group. A key part of these discussions focused on the adult care precept. The Committee submitted a full response to Cabinet and specifically recommended that the adult social care precept should be implemented at a rate of 2% a year for three years (2017/18-2019/20).

Civil Parking Enforcement

At the request of Cabinet and following a motion referred by Council, an in-depth review of the Council's approach to Civil Parking Enforcement has begun. The Committee has worked with the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee to undertake initial investigations and further data has been requested to inform a decision on whether or not the Council should prepare a Business Case for the adoption of enforcement powers.

Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Andy Burford (Chair), Mark Boylan, Veronica Fletcher, Leon Murray, Tim Nelson, Jane Pinter, Raj Mehta and Rob Sloan

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



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

In 2016/17 we held 6 Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meetings and some of the highlights of our work are set out below.

Adult Social Care: Performance, Budget and Savings (including Continuing Healthcare)

The Committee was pleased to be able to agree the key indicators to be reported to the Committee with Senior Managers to enable performance, budget and savings to be presented in a format which is easily monitored and the Committee have regularly received monitoring reports in order to hold Senior Managers to account for the implementation of plans and the delivery of savings. The Committee also received a demonstration of Adult Care financial modelling and continued monitoring the level of CHC funded cases. The Committee have raised questions in relation to the independent care home market and intend to consider this issue in further detail.

The Committee also received feedback from the Adult Social Care Peer Challenge on key strengths and areas identified by the Peer Review Team for consideration.

This monitoring work has enabled the Committee to identify key areas for more focussed scrutiny: STP Neighbourhood Working, the independent care home market, and Adult Care Consultation.

STP Neighbourhood Working

Following on from our work above, the Committee received a presentation on the approach to neighbourhood working and scoping of an in-depth review is underway.

Town Centre GP services and NHS walk-in centres

The Committee received an update on the closure of the IMH Malling Health Practice and an update on consultation findings in relation to the development of service specification for future GP Walk-in services. Following the closure of the Malling Health Wrekin (MHW) GP Walk-In Centre service and displacement of 8,000 registered patients, the Committee heard representations from Wellington

Town Council and held the CCG to account for the decision, particularly making recommendations about communication to allay patient fears.

Adult Safeguarding Board Report

The Committee received a progress report on the work of the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Adults Board since its set up in April 2015 and provided feedback on the Board's work in relation to care homes and domiciliary care.

Joint Mental Health Commissioning

The Committee received an update on the progress of the Telford and Wrekin Mental Health Action Plan and provided feedback. The Committee have also engaged with the Mental Health Forum to consider identifiable issues for an in-depth review of Mental Health Services.

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Andy Burford (Co-Chair), Veronica Fletcher and Rob Sloan
Co-Optees: Mrs C Henniker, Mrs H Knight and Mr D Saunders



The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee met eleven times in 2016/17, and some of the highlights of the work we have carried out with colleagues at Shropshire Council are set out below.

Future Fit Programme and submission of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

The Committee have received regular updates and question and answer sessions with NHS representatives and a briefing on proposals for Emergency Department and Urgent Care Centres. The Committee also visited Urgent Care Centres at Runcorn and Widnes to see firsthand how these centres operate, and we also met with Halton Borough Council Health Scrutiny Committee Members to discuss their experiences with regard to the introduction of an Urgent Care Centre.

Sustainability of Services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust

Closely linked to the Committee's work on Future Fit and the STP, regular updates and question and answer sessions with NHS representatives have taken place.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire

The Committee received an update on the engagement activities carried out to support the procurement of the 0-25 emotional health and wellbeing service together a summary of the changes and proposed changes to be made as a result. Comments and recommendations from Committee informed the service specification and tendering information.

Funding for Community Pharmacy Services

The Committee received a report from the Shropshire Local Pharmacy Committee on funding cuts to pharmacy needs and costs of service. In response, the Committee wrote to David Mowatt MP and Philip Dunne MP expressing the Committee's concerns regarding cuts to community pharmacy services.

Looking Ahead

A few changes were made to the membership of the Scrutiny Committees at Annual Council on 25 May 2017, notably the appointment of new chairs of the Scrutiny Management Board, Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee and the Customer, Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

During June the Scrutiny Management Board agreed the suggestions and issues which should be prioritised for the 2017/18 work programme and recommended to the Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

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

http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20237/scrutiny/371/scrutiny_work_programme

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 or call the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team on 01952 383215.

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