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# Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16



Telford & Wrekin  
**COUNCIL**

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## **Chair's Foreword**

I am pleased to present the 2015/16 Scrutiny Annual Report.

The report describes the breadth of work scrutiny has carried out this year and shows how scrutiny can be a positive force for change.

Telford & Wrekin Council, as other authorities, continues to face ever more challenging financial pressures and never has Scrutiny played a more important role in ensuring decision making remains transparent and in the best interests of local residents.

We have met many people in the course of our work and would like to thank all those who have contributed to scrutiny during the year.

This year we reviewed our co-optee arrangements and welcomed a number of new scrutiny co-optees many of them from Town and Parish Councils. I am confident that scrutiny will benefit from their expertise.

I would like to highlight some of the key achievements from this year.

- ‘Everyone’s Business - Scrutiny Review of Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation’ by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is the culmination of 18 month’s work and shows how scrutiny can engage partners around a complex and sensitive issue and – critically – give people affected by exploitation a channel to be heard. The report makes 38 recommendations to a range of local and national organisations and has been widely commended for its depth and integrity.
- The Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee this year focused on savings proposals that we felt would impact on local people. As a result of concerns raised by the committee, proposed cuts in transport to Age UK day centres were reconsidered in the final proposals put to Council.
- The Customer, Community & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee was called on by the Cabinet member to provide a view on part-time traffic lights which had become a hot issue for some members of the public. The Committee put safety first and reported back to the Cabinet member that the Council should not switch off any signals. This showed the value of scrutiny in providing an independent, cross-party view.
- The Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee has continued to monitor savings in adult care and the impact on local people and the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee continued its vital and difficult work in scrutinising the process for consulting on changes to local hospital services.

Looking ahead, we will continue our role in holding decision makers to account and acting as a voice for local residents to make a difference where ever we can. We welcome any suggestions for scrutiny and information about how to get involved is included in this report.

Cllr Shirley Reynolds  
Lead Scrutiny Member  
Chair Scrutiny Management Board and Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

## **What is Scrutiny?**

Scrutiny is a key part of the checks and balances necessary to hold the Council's Cabinet to account and to improve policies and performance. It can help ensure that services respond to the needs of the local community and are efficient, cost effective and easy to use.

Local authorities with a Cabinet system – where a relatively small number of elected members are responsible for day-to-day decision making – have a scrutiny function. Scrutiny enables 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?**

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 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 issues, 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.
- **Making recommendations to Cabinet** – a common measure of the impact of scrutiny is the number of recommendations made to and accepted by Cabinet. The majority of scrutiny recommendations in the past have been accepted.
- **Making recommendations to other organisations** – there are certain organisations with a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny reports 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.
- **Contributing to policy development** – this is where scrutiny examines or tests out ideas and makes suggestions about what should be done before Cabinet makes a decision.
- **Consultation on health services and holding health commissioners and providers to account** – the NHS has a statutory duty to consult scrutiny committees on proposed changes to health services that would affect a substantial number of people in the area or have a substantial effect on some people. Scrutiny helps ensure decisions are made in accordance with statutory requirements and can challenge commissioners and providers on performance issues.

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

## **What issues did we look at in 2015/16 and what difference did we make?**

<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b> Cllrs. Kevin Guy (Chair), Steve Barnes, Jayne Greenaway, Joy Francis, Janice Jones, Jackie Loveridge, Jane Pinter, Karen Tomlinson Co-optees: Austin Atkinson, Carolyn Healy, Sandra Osman, Steve Rayner, Mel Ward		<b>Meetings</b> 27
<b>Issue</b>	<b>What we did</b>	<b>What difference we made</b>
<b>Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)</b>	<p>Following high profile reports which had criticised local authorities in other areas, a priority for our committee was to review in detail how organisations in Telford and Wrekin are working together to prevent CSE, to protect and support victims and their families and to prosecute perpetrators</p> <p>This was a wide ranging and complex review involving senior managers and key workers from the Council, police, health services, education, criminal justice system, housing, voluntary and community groups, parents/carers and young people. Key to our review was evidence provided by victims and survivors of CSE and their families.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations to Cabinet and external organisations</b></p> <p>We concluded that on the basis of evidence presented organisations in Telford and Wrekin are working well to respond to known cases of CSE. Of particular note is the multi-agency hub at Family Connect and the work of the CATE team.</p> <p>However we made a total of 38 recommendations to Cabinet, key partners and national bodies where we felt things could be strengthened. Our recommendations focus on a number of key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection to understand the scale and nature of the issues locally to inform strategies and resourcing</li> <li>• Awareness raising, particularly by schools and colleges, to help keep children and young people safe</li> <li>• Awareness raising with parents</li> <li>• Support for victims/survivors and their families</li> <li>• Information sharing to help disrupt CSE activity and prosecute perpetrators.</li> </ul> <p>The Council's Cabinet and Local Children Safeguarding Board will respond to scrutiny's recommendations in June/July 2016.</p>

<b>Customer Community &amp; Partnership Scrutiny Committee</b> Cllrs. Nathan England (Chair), John Ashford, Graham Cook, Kevin Guy, Stephen Reynolds, Peter Scott, Jacqui Seymour, Barry Tillotson		<b>Meetings</b> 6
<b>Issue</b>	<b>What we did</b>	<b>What difference we made</b>
<b>Bus Subsidy Policy</b>	<p>The existing Bus Subsidy Policy had become out of date and was no longer fit-for-purpose for evaluating routes for subsidy ahead of contract renewals later in the year. We examined the proposed new Bus Subsidy Policy and assessment framework for evaluating routes for subsidy.</p> <p>We also considered how Arriva was consulting on proposed changes to their commercial network.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations to Cabinet</b> By examining the draft Policy we were satisfied that the Policy and score weightings were as fair as possible for local people. Further, we recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underpinning data is kept up to date to ensure the validity of the scoring process</li> <li>• Consider use of the Council's fleet to help deliver services</li> <li>• Continued national lobbying to strengthen the requirement for private operators to consult on changes to their networks</li> </ul> <p>All our recommendations were considered and responded to by Cabinet.</p>
<b>Engagement in the Local Plan</b>	We examined the communication and engagement strategy for the Local Plan to ensure local people were given every chance to take part.	<p><b>Recommendations to Cabinet</b> The engagement strategy was comprehensive but we made recommendations to strengthen some areas so that people would have the best possible opportunity to get involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town and Parish Councils should be engaged early on</li> <li>• More open sessions</li> <li>• Easy to read documentation</li> <li>• Cross-reference events so people in one area could attend sessions in neighbouring areas</li> </ul> <p>All our recommendations were fully implemented.</p>
<b>Housing Allocations Policy</b>	We took part in consultation on the draft Housing Allocations Policy and Tenancy Strategy, drawing on previous scrutiny work.	<p><b>Policy development</b> We submitted a comprehensive response as part of the consultation with the aim of supporting and strengthening key elements of the Policy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the use of strong local connection as a priority for housing and the use of Local Lettings Plans</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving awareness about and accessibility of housing information and advice for local people</li> <li>• Supported the development of the Overall Nominations Agreement with Registered Providers and expectations of providers Tenancy Strategies A recommendation to share the draft Policy with all elected members during the consultation was actioned immediately.</li> </ul>
<b>Council Tax Support Scheme</b>	We worked with the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee to examine the implications of the range of options for Council Tax Support put forward for consultation. We also considered the consultation process and how easy it was for members of the public to put forward their views.	<p><b>Policy development</b></p> <p>We examined the options in the consultation document and other options considered by Cabinet from the point of view of affected groups, other Council Tax payers and affordability for the Council to support the recommended option as the fairest and most balanced option.</p>
<b>Traffic Signals</b>	There had been strenuous calls from some members of the public to remove or operate part-time signals at some key interchanges in the borough. Scrutiny was asked to carry out an independent review of the issues and options and to make a recommendation to Cabinet. We examined in detail the options for managing traffic flow at junctions and roundabouts, the actions being taken to address issues, how other options had been considered and how the Council was planning the network to cope with the projected increase in road users.	<p><b>Recommendations to Cabinet</b></p> <p>We considered the issues and options and supported the Council's approach to traffic management at key interchanges, recommending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the interests of the safety of all road users, existing signals should not be removed or switched to part time operation in contravention of national guidelines and best practice.</li> <li>• More should be done to make the public aware of safety issues and the measures being put in place to manage traffic.</li> </ul> <p>Following our recommendations no proposals have come forward from Cabinet to change existing traffic signalling.</p>
<b>Customer services</b>	The Committee was concerned about long waiting times at the contact centre and about the risk of residents without smart phones or the internet being marginalised by the Council moving more services on-line. We considered a detailed presentation on the 'channel shift' strategy (how and where the	<p><b>Policy development (on-going)</b></p> <p>The committee was assured to hear that new digital channels were being developed to meet customer demand and expectation but that telephone and face-to-face services would still be available for people who do not or cannot use on-line technology. We were also assured</p>

	<p>council is moving towards digital technology), how issues with waiting times at the contact centre were being addressed and what performance data showed.</p>	<p>by the steps being taken to address waiting times at the contact centre. We will follow-up on this work by testing some of the new technology for ourselves and we will continue to monitor performance of the contact centre.</p>
<b>Business support and inward investment</b>	<p>We wanted to follow up on previous scrutiny recommendations made in reports Developing Skills for Business, First Point for Business and Tackling Youth Unemployment. Supporting economic growth and attracting investment is critical to ensuring the future prosperity and wellbeing of the borough, and to securing income as authorities become more reliant on income from business rates. We received a comprehensive presentation on the Council's business support and inward investment activity from 2013 to date and key strands of work for the future.</p>	<p><b>Policy review</b>  We supported the Council's approach to supporting businesses and attracting investment to the borough. We suggested that more should be done to raise awareness with residents of the good work the Council is doing in this area. We also made suggestions about how information on the website could be improved.</p>

<b>Finance &amp; Enterprise Scrutiny Committee</b> Cllrs. Shirley Reynolds, Stephen Bentley, Stephen Burrell, Nigel Dugmore, Rae Evans, Rob Sloan, Charles Smith, David Wright Co-optees: Cindy Mason-Morris, Roy Williams		<b>No. of meetings</b> 5
Issue	What we did	What difference we made
<b>Service &amp; Financial Planning 2016/17-2017/18 (budget proposals)</b>	<p>The Service &amp; Financial Planning strategy for the first time proposed to make savings from front line services. For this reason we focused our attention on individual savings proposals which would affect service users or the wider public.</p> <p>We questioned 5 Cabinet members and 9 senior managers and received a number of written reports.</p> <p>Key areas examined were the adult care budget and the introduction of the 2% Council Tax adult care precept; the proposals affecting library services; changes to the school transport policy; savings from public health; transport to Age UK day centres; the process for consulting with partners on the future of library and other services affected by the budget; the budget consultation process. We also considered how proposals to reduce staff would impact on the delivery of services for the public.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations to Cabinet</b></p> <p>We submitted a full response to Cabinet. Specifically, we recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location of libraries with other partners/services to help sustain services</li> <li>• Reconsideration of proposals to reduce the book fund and to end the mobile library</li> <li>• Specific efficiencies in public health</li> <li>• Reconsideration of savings from transport to Age UK day centres</li> <li>• Locality-based consultation with partners and local people to help sustain services affected by the cuts, including use of the Town Park.</li> </ul> <p>As a result of our recommendations, savings proposals for transport to Age UK day centres and the closure of the Town Park Visitor Centre over the winter were reconsidered and went on to be agreed by Full Council.</p> <p>Specific suggestions for efficiencies and savings in public health will be taken up by the Cabinet member and Assistant Director for further consideration.</p>

<b>Health &amp; Adult Care Scrutiny Committee</b> Cllrs. Andy Burford (Chair), Mark Boylan, Veronica Fletcher, Clive Mollett, Tim Nelson, Jane Pinter, Robert Sloan, Chris Turley Co-optees: Jean Gulliver, Rajash Mehta, Barry Parnaby, Dag Saunders		<b>No. of meetings</b> 3
Issue	What we did	What difference we made
<b>Adult Care Budget and Saving</b>	We have monitored the adult care budget and the delivery of savings through the new ways of working. We supported the implementation of the brokerage service which we were informed will increase independence and reduce costs.	<b>Holding to Account</b> The Cabinet Member and Senior managers have been held to account for the delivery of the savings target. It was agreed that the Committee will continue to scrutinise this delivery of the adult care savings.
<b>NHS Continuing Healthcare</b>	We have monitored the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Report in 2013.	<b>Holding to Account</b> The Committee received assurance that joint working between the local authority and CCG has improved and that an independent review of 49 cases would be carried out. The Committee will receive a report on the outcome of this review.
<b>NHS consultation on the future of Castle Lodge</b>	The Committee scrutinised the proposals to close the mental health facility at Castle Lodge and the Committee's response to the consultation was considered by the CCG Board.	<b>Statutory Consultation</b> Having considered all the issues the Committee agreed to support the recommendation made by the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Health Care NHS Foundation Trust to permanently close Castle Lodge and the disposal of this facility subject to a number of recommendations. These recommendations were subsequently incorporated into the Commissioning Review of Mental Health Services.
<b>Commissioning Review of Mental Health Services</b>	We have monitored the planning and implementation of the joint Mental Health Commission Review of Mental Health Services by the Local Authority and CCG at 2 Committee meetings.	<b>Holding to Account</b> Commissioners have been held to account for the planning of these services.
<b>Town Centre GP services and of NHS Walk in Centres in Telford and Wrekin</b>	We scrutinised the proposals to close the Town Centre Walk in Centre and transfer the capacity to the Walk in Centre located at the Princess Royal Hospital and also to close the GP practice provided by IMH Malling in the Town Centre.	<b>Consultation on NHS Services</b> We received assurance that the transfer of the Walk in Centre to the PRH site would reduce pressure on the A&E services and that the GP service in the Town Centre would no longer be viable. On this basis the Committee supported the proposals on the understanding that further consultation would be

		carried out on the future provision of the NHS Walk in Service in Telford and Wrekin
<b>Non-emergency Patient Transport Service</b>	We scrutinised the CCG's proposals to change the criteria for non-emergency patient transport services.	<b>Consultation on NHS Services</b> We supported the proposals as these were in line with NHS guidance and made recommendations to ensure that information about the new criteria was available on the CCG and Local authority website.

<b>Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Shropshire and Telford &amp; Wrekin</b>  Cllrs. Andy Burford (Chair), Veronica Fletcher, Robert Sloan Co-optees: Rajash Mehta, Barry Parnaby, Dag Saunders		<b>No. of meetings</b> 4
<b>NHS Future Fit Programme</b>	We have questioned NHS executives about the planning for the Future Fit Programme.	NHS Executives have accounted to the planning of this programme. We have made recommendations regarding the need to communicate the reason for the programme to the public and ensure that the proposals are clinically led. We were informed that the Community Fit programme and the planning for the rural urgent care centres would take place outside the Future Fit Programme.
<b>Maintaining safe, effective and dignified A&amp;E services</b>	We were informed of the hospital trust's plans to consult on the provision of this service, the actions needed to continue the provision of this service across both hospital sites until the conclusion of the Future Fit programme and the identification of the 'tipping point' which would indicate that the service is no longer sustainable on both sites	We were assured that A&E services are currently safe recognised the need for the Trust to build this into the business continuity planning.
<b>NHS Deficit Reduction Plan and Strategic Transformation Plan (STP)</b>	We have been informed of the plans for local NHS organisations to manage the deficit in the local health economy and develop a 6 year plan to deliver sustainable health services and improve the quality of care.	The committee has been informed of the process across Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire for the STP. The NHS organisations were questioned regarding the involvement of both local authorities and non NHS providers in this process. The Committee will continue to scrutinise the development and delivery of this plan.
<b>Hospital Discharge</b>	We have scrutinised the working across the NHS and Adult Care	We recommended that organisations should agree a

	services to improve the discharge process from hospital.	common understanding of the terminology relating to hospital discharge and that organisations should continue to monitor the quality of hospital discharge and feedback from patients and carers.
<b>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</b>	We scrutinised the proposals to develop an Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 0-25 year olds and the proposed consultation on this work.	We supported the development of an emotional health and wellbeing service for 0-25 year olds and the improved access to this service that was proposed. It was agreed that following the consultation any substantial changes to the service would be brought back to the committee?
<b>NHS Out of Hours and 111 services</b>	We scrutinised the proposals for the future provision of the 111 service for Telford and Wrekin and how this would work with the existing out of hours service and the longer term commissioning arrangements.	The Committee supported the commissioning arrangements for the regional 111 service and the extension of the existing out of hours for Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire.

<b>Scrutiny Management Board</b> Cllrs. Shirley Reynolds (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Andy Burford, Nathan England, Veronica Fletcher, Jayne Greenaway, Kevin Guy, Jacqui Seymour		<b>No. of meetings</b> 4
<b>Holding the Executive to Account</b>	<p>During 2015/16 we questioned in public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader of the Council</li> <li>• Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Housing, Public Health &amp; Protection</li> <li>• Cabinet member for Business, Neighbourhood &amp; Customer Services</li> <li>• Cabinet member for Children, Young People &amp; Families</li> <li>• Cabinet member for Employment &amp; Skills</li> <li>• Cabinet member for Leisure Services &amp; Culture</li> </ul>	<b>Executive held to account</b> The sessions were also used to enable members of the scrutiny committees to ask questions about issues not included in the work programme

## **How to get involved**

You can get involved by:

- Making a suggestion for scrutiny
- Coming to a Scrutiny Committee meeting to hear the debate
- Putting forward your views as part of a scrutiny review
- Becoming a co-optee on one of our Scrutiny Committees

For more information about how to get involved go to [www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny) or contact the scrutiny team at [scrutiny@telford.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@telford.gov.uk) or call 01952 383215.

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