

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: CLLR DEREK WHITE LEAD SCRUTINY MEMBER

REVIEW OF SCRUTINY EFFECTIVENESS 2019-2021

REPORT OF ANTHEA LOWE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR: POLICY & GOVERNANCE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

Local Authorities face an unprecedented number of challenges as the end of the 2020-2021 municipal year draws to a close, such as responding to an ageing population, economic instability, net reduction in funding from National Government and more recently, COVID-19. It is therefore imperative to ensure that all expenditure is carefully considered and every decision made, is the best for the locality. To this end, the role of Scrutiny has never been more important. This report intends to detail the effectiveness of the scrutiny committees at Telford & Wrekin Council on holding the Executive and key decisions makers to account, highlight the value added by the committees, but also hold the scrutiny function itself to account.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Annual Review of Scrutiny Effectiveness, attached in Appendix 1, is noted.

3. IMPACT OF ACTION

4. **SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes/No	<i>If yes, please list relevant Co-Operative Council objective(s)</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes/No	<i>If yes, briefly summarise any impact(s) – see separate guidance note for groups to consider</i>
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	<i>Insert date and if more than 6 months after the date of the Cabinet report, list key milestones</i>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes/No	<i>This must be decided by an officer from Finance. If yes, briefly summarise any impact(s) – financial impact must be completed by an officer from Finance</i>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes/No	<i>This must be decided by an officer from Legal. If yes, briefly summarise any impacts – legal issues must be completed by an officer from Legal Services</i>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes/No	<i>If yes, briefly list any other significant impacts, risks & opportunities- see separate guidance note for areas to consider</i>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes/No	<i>If yes, briefly summarise impact(s) on specific wards – otherwise state Borough-wide impact</i>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5. INFORMATION

In the 2020-2021 municipal year, it was decided that a review of scrutiny effectiveness at Telford & Wrekin Council would become a standing item measure how effective the Scrutiny function had been, and how and where it had added value to services. The effectiveness would be measured using a checklist, which is attached in appendix 1. This review concludes, that despite the challenges of the last two years, Telford & Wrekin scrutiny committees have been effective in undertaking its statutory functions.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published a report on the 7th May 2019 called “Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities” which summarised that effective overview and scrutiny should:

- provide constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge
- amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services

Further to this, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (formerly known as the Centre for Public Scrutiny) published a report called “The Good Scrutiny Guide” in June 2019, which further identified three key components which complemented the aforementioned principles for good scrutiny. These were:

- Accountability – an environment where responsibility for services and decisions is clear and where those holding responsibility can and are answerable for success and failure;
- Transparency – the publication, proactively, of information relating to services and decisions to allow local people, and others, to hold policymakers and decision-makers to account;
- Involvement – rules, principles and processes whereby a wide range of stakeholders (including elected representatives) can play active roles in holding to account, and influencing and directing the development of policy.

These core principles and components have been considered in the design of the framework in assessing the effectiveness of scrutiny at Telford & Wrekin Council, which is attached in appendix 1.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.

The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee are responsible for scrutinising and monitoring the planning and performance of the Council's services for children and young people, as well as the Council's Corporate Parenting role. For the municipal years for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the Committee held four formal meetings.

To summarise, some items heard in these meetings were related to Educational Attainment in Telford and Wrekin, reviewing the design and implementation for the consultation for the Travel Assistance Policy and Transport, the Knife Angel initiative, the Ofsted Report and Action Plan 2020. A motion on School Streets was introduced at Full Council, which was referred to this committee. Subsequently, a cross-committee working group was set up to explore the motion. The Working Group's first meeting was held on 30 March 2021 and is due to report its findings by July 2021.

Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee

The Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee is a consultee for the Council's budget proposals, as well as oversight of the service and financial performance of Council services, income generation and promoting economic growth.

The Committee scrutinised the budget proposals for 2021/22 – 2023/24. The Committee were supportive of the Council's budget proposals.

Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Communities Scrutiny Committee covers a wide range of services, including customer services, housing, work with partner organisations, transport and highways, waste and enforcement.

The Committee set up a cross-committee working group with the Environment Committee, to review environmental aspects, biodiversity net gain and urban greening, and of the proposed Local Plan Review. The Committee made several recommendations to Cabinet.

Environment Scrutiny Committee

The Environment Scrutiny Committee covers the Council's environmental policies.

The Committee have been involved in the cross-committee working group to consider the Local Plan, as well as being involved in the school streets working group. The Committee undertook a review of the use of single plastics and Members made their own pledges to reduce their environmental impact.

The Committee reviewed dual-use recycling bins in the Borough and made a recommendation to Cabinet for a trial of these bins within the Borough parks.

Health Scrutiny Committee

The Health Scrutiny Committee monitors the performance of health service matters in the Borough, as well as the planning and performance of the Council's Adult Social Care services. This committee also appoints Members to sit on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Shropshire Council.

The Committee undertook a review of the TELDOC reconfiguration proposals and received regular updates on general health and adult social care matters, particularly in relation to the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Scrutiny Recommendations Progress

Another method of measuring the effectiveness of scrutiny is by monitoring the number of recommendations made to decision-makers, along with the progression of those recommendations thereafter.

Travel Assistance Policy and Transport Review Consultation

Review of the Local Plan

On Street Waste and Recycling

TELDOC Proposed Site Reconfiguration

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*(Where you have answered 'yes' to any part of the impact assessment in Section 4, you can add additional information here if necessary. You should ensure that there is sufficient information for members to fully understand the impacts and risks of proposals before making decisions. **Information on financial and legal impacts must be completed by an officer from Finance or Legal).***

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual Scrutiny Report.
Scrutiny Handbook

Report prepared by Name, Post Title, Telephone: 01952 telephone extension

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