

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday 27 September 2010**

Time: **9.30 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny)

Tel: 01432 260239

Email: tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on 01432 260239 or e-mail tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman	Councillor PJ Edwards
Vice-Chairman	Councillor WLS Bowen
	Councillor PA Andrews
	Councillor ME Cooper
	Councillor AE Gray
	Councillor KG Grumbley
	Councillor TM James
	Councillor RI Matthews
	Councillor PM Morgan
	Councillor AT Oliver
	Councillor PJ Watts

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is. A Councillor who has declared a prejudicial interest at a meeting may nevertheless be able to address that meeting, but only in circumstances where an ordinary member of the public would be also allowed to speak. In such circumstances, the Councillor concerned will have the same opportunity to address the meeting and on the same terms. However, a Councillor exercising their ability to speak in these circumstances must leave the meeting immediately after they have spoken.

AGENDA

		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3.	MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2010.	1 - 10
4.	SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
5.	SHARED SERVICES UPDATE REPORT To provide the Committee (OSC) with an update on the Shared Services programme and to seek its views on the proposals.	11 - 20
6.	EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: LIBERATING THE NHS - HEREFORDSHIRE'S RESPONSE To note the arrangements in place in Herefordshire for responding to the White Paper and associated consultation documents, and to comment on the proposed response.	21 - 24
7.	INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 2010-11 To consider an overview of performance against the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 for the first quarter of 2010-11 using content from Performance Plus (P+), the electronic performance management system being used by Herefordshire Public Services.	25 - 50
8.	BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010/11 To consider the forecast financial position for both revenue and capital budgets to 31 March 2011, provide an update on Directorates' recovery plans instigated to address projected overspends; and note treasury management activities in the first four months of 2010/11.	51 - 80
9.	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC ABOUT SERVICES AND ACCESS TO THOSE SERVICES. To consider the report of the scrutiny review of communication with the public about services and access to those services.	81 - 120
10.	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE WINTER WEATHER AND THE RESPONSE TO IT - EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE To consider Cabinet's response to the recommendations made to it in the Scrutiny Review of the impact of the winter weather and the response to it.	121 - 140
11.	WORK PROGRAMME To consider the work programmes of the scrutiny committees.	141 - 152

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Children's Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. An Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises corporate matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committees to investigate.

There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings

You can submit a question for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question you are asking is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than two working days before the meeting** to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting. Contact details for the Committee Officer can be found on the front page of this agenda.

Generally, members of the public will also be able to contribute to the discussion at the meeting. This will be at the Chairman's discretion.

(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing

Statutory functions for adult social services and Strategic Housing.

Children's Services

Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care, and youth services.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Cultural Services, Community Safety (including Crime and Disorder), Economic Development and Youth Services.

Health

Scrutiny of the planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area.

Environment

*Environmental Issues
Highways and Transportation*

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

*Corporate Strategy and Finance
Resources
Corporate and Customer Services
Human Resources*

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Please Note:

Agenda and individual reports can be made available in large print. Please contact the officer named on the front cover of this agenda **in advance** of the meeting who will be pleased to deal with your request.

The Council Chamber where the meeting will be held is accessible for visitors in wheelchairs, for whom toilets are also available.

A public telephone is available in the reception area.

Public Transport Links

- Public transport access can be gained to Brockington via the service runs approximately every half hour from the 'Hopper' bus station at the Tesco store in Bewell Street (next to the roundabout junction of Blueschool Street / Victoria Street / Edgar Street).
- The nearest bus stop to Brockington is located in Old Eign Hill near to its junction with Hafod Road. The return journey can be made from the same bus stop.

If you have any questions about this agenda, how the Council works or would like more information or wish to exercise your rights to access the information described above, you may do so either by telephoning the officer named on the front cover of this agenda or by visiting in person during office hours (8.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m. Friday) at the Council Offices, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.



Where possible this agenda is printed on paper made from 100% Post-Consumer waste. De-inked without bleaching and free from optical brightening agents (OBA). Awarded the Nordic Swan for low emissions during production and the Blue Angel environmental label.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit.

You should then proceed to Assembly Point J which is located at the southern entrance to the car park. A check will be undertaken to ensure that those recorded as present have vacated the building following which further instructions will be given.

Please do not allow any items of clothing, etc. to obstruct any of the exits.

Do not delay your vacation of the building by stopping or returning to collect coats or other personal belongings.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday 2 July 2010 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor PJ Edwards (Chairman)
Councillor WLS Bowen (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, ME Cooper, KG Grumbley, TM James, RI Matthews, PM Morgan, AT Oliver and PJ Watts

In attendance: Councillors: PL Bettington, H Bramer (Cabinet Member - Resources), JP French (Cabinet Member - Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) and PD Price (Cabinet Member - ICT, Education and Achievement)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor AE Gray. The Committee also noted an apology from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor PJ Edwards declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Shared Services).

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

There were none.

5. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (ICT, EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) reviewing past performance, identifying key issues and commenting on future plans.

The Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) presented the agenda report and highlighted significant savings had been made through the re-tendering of the Community Network Contract and through the investment in upgrading the Thorn Data Centre. A number of ICT systems had been implemented for directorates including an SMS service which could be further developed to accommodate the requirements mentioned in the Review of Winter Weather. Progress and benefits were being delivered by the Social Care System – Frameworki. A survey of system users indicated that there were still a number of concerns to be addressed and further training would be provided. Priorities for 2010/11 included a significant amount of organisational change including the establishment of the Joint Venture Company (JVCo) which would include ICT. Following a fire at Plough Lane which housed the uninterrupted power supply (UPS) causing significant down-time, work had already commenced on increasing resilience to the system. The Herefordshire Connects programme had now been subsumed into the Shared Services work programme. The

implementation of the 'Agresso' system, which, through closer working with NHS Herefordshire, had enabled further contract savings to be made, would be a significant enabler of shared services. Items likely to be put to Cabinet were listed in the report.

The principal points noted during discussion were:

- Responding to the issues raised through the Frameworki survey of users and comments by the Committee concerning the lengthy implementation time for the whole system the Joint Director of ICT reported that the survey had been undertaken soon after implementation and therefore had indicated a number of teething problems which would be addressed through further training. He also pointed out the benefits of the system, listed in the agenda report. However, due to legislation more information was required to be recorded and this inputting time may be the cause of some initial irritation. The Committee noted that financial and HR elements were due to be implemented later in the timeline. The Committee welcomed that a user survey had been undertaken and suggested that a similar survey be undertaken after 6 months to see what improvements had been made and to ensure that the system was meeting the Council's requirements.
- Comment was made that the APP (Authority Public Protection) supplied by Civica was unsatisfactory and cumbersome for use by the Planning Service and that the Document Management System for scanning planning applications (the EDRMS) was still awaited. The Joint Director of ICT responded that there had been significant engagement with key planning team staff before the installation. While other local authorities typically used 2 or 3 modules of the system Herefordshire were using significantly more modules concurrently as configured under the contract. He assured the Committee that issues identified were the subject of ongoing discussions with the provider.
- Work had started on the design and build stage of the Agresso system and financial information would be transferred in time.
- In relation to contract periods and the medium to long term planning for ICT the Joint Director of ICT commented that in view of the rapidly moving technical advances in ICT, Herefordshire was well placed to see how technology developed and then take advantage.
- Responding to whether Plough Lane had adequate broadband speed to accommodate the Shared Services JVCo, the Joint Director of ICT reported that good capacity and speeds were available.
- Questioned on the barriers to the development of a joint ICT network across Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire the Committee noted that while not complex from a technical point of view the development of a joint network had raised significant security and information governance issues. An overarching governance agreement had been reached and lower level agreements were being developed.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) for providing the agenda report and for answering member's questions.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. the report by the Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) be noted; and**

2. **the Committee's concerns regarding the efficient roll-out of the new ICT systems e.g. Frameworki, Agresso, EDRMS and Civica be noted by the Cabinet Member.**

6. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (RESOURCES)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Resources) reviewing past performance, identifying key issues and commenting on future plans.

The Cabinet Member (Resources) presented the agenda report and particularly highlighted that the purchase of Plough Lane had been completed; the new livestock market was underway; the development of Earl Mortimer College (formerly Minster College) continued to plan; savings of £95,000pa had been achieved through successful rating appeals for school premises; improvements in benefit processing times had been achieved despite the increase in caseloads; the continuing low level of benefit errors meant that the service had maintained the level of increased subsidy income; the final accounts had been approved by the statutory deadline and a balanced budget had been achieved. His report also identified 24 statements arising out of the Employee Opinion Survey where the service area results had been significantly better than the Council average.

During debate the following principal points were noted:

- The Committee noted that through the Carbon Reduction Commitment, Property Services were supporting the delivery of the enhanced target.
- Questioned on the rent reviews for smallholdings the Deputy Leader of the Council responded that she anticipated a full report would be made during September.
- A number of Members commended the Head of Benefit and Exchequer Service and his team for the quick responses received on benefit matters.
- Questioned why only 34.5% of businesses received small business rate relief the Director of Resources responded that not all businesses were entitled, however, the service was being proactive in informing businesses about the relief.
- Comments were made that the presentation of the Employees Opinion survey results had been confusing and the Director of Resources noted this for future reports.
- Discussions had been held with the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) over bill preparation to ensure that town and parish councils were clear about their future financial commitments e.g. elections.
- Responding to whether the West Midlands Construction Framework would apply to school building programmes the Director of Resources reported that the framework would provide another way of procuring and delivering large building schemes.
- Questioned on realising the assets from the LEA Pool site the Committee was informed that discussions were on going regarding the site disposal. The Committee requested that a briefing note on the asset value arising from the site be provided

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member (Resources) for providing the agenda report and for answering questions.

RESOLVED: that

- 1. the report by the Cabinet Member (Resources) be noted and**
- 2. a briefing note on the asset value arising from the Local Education Pool (the LEA Pool) be provided to committee Members.**

7. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES)

The Committee received a presentation by the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) reviewing past performance, identifying key issues and commenting on future plans.

The Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) presented the agenda report and highlighted: the budget for the whole of the Deputy Chief Executive's directorate in 2009-10 was under-spent by £98k, a creditable performance particularly considering the in year pressures in areas like Legal & Democratic services; while the Council and NHS Herefordshire were at the leading edge of joint working it was important that residents and staff were kept informed about how this would make a difference and how services were to be delivered; feedback from surveys etc needed to be backed up by evidence so that appropriate actions could be considered. She also highlighted: new ICT packages must be delivered to specification and show they were delivering improved efficiencies; staff and Members had received appropriate training on the new ICT packages and were now required to use the facilities to improve performance and deliver value for money; there were likely to be reductions in staff numbers and there would be a need to support staff through redeployment; in relation to salary levels the County experienced difficulty in recruiting high calibre staff, however, the Council and NHS Herefordshire were sharing managers to drive further savings; Members costs also need to be addressed; and in the autumn budget round consideration would need to be given to how to protect the vulnerable in the county.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) for providing a comprehensive report for the agenda.

During debate the following principal points were noted:

- Questioned about the pressures in Legal Services with particular reference to the backlog in investigating standards complaints the Cabinet Member referred the Committee to the report in the Standards Committee agenda. However, she commented that there had been a growth in the number of complaints needing investigation and there had been a knock on effect on the level of support needed.
- Referring to agenda page 40, - Local-% of key performance indicators improving on last year - and that the direction of travel was 'behind that for the same period last year' the Cabinet Member acknowledged that while the situation wasn't bad it certainly wasn't satisfactory.
- Questioned on aspects of the Customer Service Centres the Cabinet Member responded that appropriate staff had now been moved from directorates to run the service, however, budgets hadn't always moved with them and this was being addressed. Ongoing training was being given to ensure an appropriate level of knowledge was held within the Customer Services Team to enable more queries to be answered directly, reducing the need to refer the enquirer back to the directorate. When compared with other local authorities the service was under resourced and currently the overall performance of the service wasn't as she

wished. She added that it usually became more costly to achieve ever higher targets and therefore a balance had to be struck.

- During debate on salary levels, comment was made that the County needed to offer an appropriate level of salary if it was to attract high calibre staff. The Cabinet Member responded that the Council needed to have managers to manage its services. While it was right that the public should be informed about public sector top level salaries, as recently published in the press, the public were unable to make any informed comparison of salary levels until private sector top level salaries were also made available. The Director of Resources reported that directors were looking at management and process costs and driving efficiencies to ensure that frontline services were protected.
- The Committee noted that in a number of cases external funding or the introduction of new work systems had brought with it the need to manage a temporary increase to staffing. The Agresso system would give quicker access to HR and payroll data. Further decisions concerning staffing levels were expected in the autumn.
- During brief debate on LAA target funding comment was made that targets needed to be retained to ensure progress was being made. It was suggested that, where appropriate, common targets between the Council and NHS Herefordshire needed to be joined up and only those targets that could be achievable should be retained. The Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) agreed that some targets were still needed, however, resources for target monitoring needed to be closely controlled.

RESOLVED: That the Report by the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) be noted.

At this point the Committee adjourned for approximately 5 minutes and resumed at 11.05am

8. SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Councillor PJ Edwards declared a personal interest.

The Committee was advised of the progress and status of the Shared Services business transformation activity.

The Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic, presented the agenda report and gave a presentation setting out: why the Shared Services Strategy had come about; the key drivers, principles to be applied and the strategic context; the current position and case for shared services and the preferred delivery model identified.

The next steps in the strategy would be: the refinement of the business case through an investment appraisal to ensure that the anticipated savings could be achieved. This element had commenced and indications were still promising. The Legal Advisors would provide advice on setting-up the joint venture company and the preferred model in detail. The planned timetable is that in September 2010 a report would be made to Cabinet and in October 2010 the service transition would commence. The HR and Finance modules of Agresso would be implemented in April 2011.

During debate the following principal points were noted:

- Questioned whether savings were already being made the Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic reported that savings were being made through procurement and in other service areas around how the Council undertook its business. Larger savings would be achieved from standardising procedures.
- Responding to comments concerning negative staff morale the Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic responded that while some staff would be concerned, Shared Services could present staff with opportunities to develop their skills into other areas. Good levels of communication were in place to keep staff informed of progress.
- Asked how the projected saving of between £4.2 to £5.4m had been arrived at, the Interim Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic, reported that comparisons had been made with other comparable organisations. Unfortunately there were variations, and different factors may apply in Herefordshire which means that the projected savings could not be definitive. That was the reason for the detailed review of the business case, the full investment appraisal, appraisal of the various models and service change managers in each service working up detailed proposals to deliver the maximum savings as part of shared service.
- Responding to whether the three organisations would be able to quantify the savings the Director of Resources responded that initial work for the Investment Appraisal, which contained the current costs in the three organisations, was being reviewed. He anticipated that this element would be included in the report to Cabinet in September.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. the progress made on Shared Services be noted; and**
- 2. noting that Cabinet was due to receive a further report and make a decision on the terms of the Council's participation in the Joint Venture Company (JVCo) in September 2010 the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to ensure that the Committee had the opportunity to make further input in some form prior to Cabinet's consideration.**

9. ANNUAL CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009/10

The Committee considered the end of year performance for 2009-10 against the Council's key indicators and associated projects and programmes in its Annual Operating Statement 2009-10.

The Head of Policy and Performance presented the year end report which had been considered by Cabinet on 17 June. He referred to the key points summary and advised that the rate of improvement was slowing and that target setting was a weakness. He also highlighted that targets NI59, NI117, NI136 and 'local – Average staff sickness', were considered to be particularly important indicators which was why they were always highlighted whatever their performance. He further highlighted that the level 1 high-level summary (appendix 2) should by now be indicating a consistently improving picture. This wasn't the case. Cabinet had noted the performance and asked the Committee to consider and make recommendations on the Local Area Agreement targets and priorities and asked Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to consider and make recommendations on improved performance at Key Stages 1 & 2.

The principal points noted during discussion were:

- Comment was made that the targets should be retained but applied intelligently i.e. challenging but also realistic. It should also be possible to reduce the number of targets by linking together those common to both the Council and NHS Herefordshire. The Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee commented that the health related targets should be kept as the health of the population could have a long term cost. The Chairman of Adult Social Care & Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee concurred but added that targets should only be kept if they were realistically achievable.
- While noting that an action plan had been developed, concern was expressed that there may be underlying problems affecting NI 131 – Delayed transfer of care from hospitals – and the Committee requested a briefing note on: how future performance was to be improved; any problems with assessment, and an indication of the current levels of support given. The briefing note should also be issued to members of the Health Scrutiny and Adult Social Care & Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committees.
- The Chairman of Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee reported that Key Stage 1 & 2 performance would be considered by the Committee on 22 October.
- Concerned about the reduced performance for NI 39 - Alcohol related admission rates – it was reported that this target related to admissions from long term abuse i.e. over the last 15-20 years. While a serious issue, the Committee questioned the effectiveness of having this target.
- Arising from discussion on the planning and licensing functions the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) reported that the Constitutional Review Working Group (CRWG) were undertaking a review incorporating the wider organisational work stream on Regulatory Functions. The Committee welcomed the review and requested that the resultant report be circulated to Committee Members.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report on the Annual Corporate Performance Report 2009/10 be noted;
2. the outcome of the Children’s Services Committee’s consideration of Key Stage 1 & 2 performance, scheduled for consideration 22 October, be reported to this Committee on 29 November;
3. no further issues be identified for referral to individual scrutiny committees;
4. the Committee recommends to Cabinet that in principle the LAA targets be retained, however:
 - a. Cabinet should consider whether any of the targets can sensibly be amalgamated or joined up to those used by the PCT.
 - b. Only those targets that can realistically be achieved should be retained.
5. the report resulting from the review being undertaken by Constitutional Review Working Group (CRWG) incorporating the wider organisational work stream on Regulatory Functions be circulated to Committee Members; and
6. A briefing note be issued to members of Overview & Scrutiny; Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees setting out how improvements were

being made to address the underperformance against NI131 target 'delayed transfer of care from hospitals'

10. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2009/10

The Committee considered the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2009/10 and the creation of new reserves in the 2009/10 accounts.

The Director of Resources presented the report and reported that Cabinet on 17 June had approved the final outturn for 2009/10 and approved the movements to a number of new reserves as detailed in the report. He highlighted that the Council had delivered a balanced budget for 2009/10 and took the Committee through the report on a directorate by directorate basis. He said he would be looking in detail at the Integrated Commissioning overspend. He outlined the movement in the General Reserve and expressed some surprise at the increased level of school balances under the Earmarked Reserves. Additional reserves had been established for insurance; pool car; Local Development Framework and Area Based Grant. Recovery plans would be agreed with the six schools in a deficit position. Benefits subsidy had been higher than expected due to the level of authority error being within Department for Works & Pensions (DWP) threshold limits. The Capital outturn had been close to forecast and changes had been reported throughout the year. The Treasury Management update (appendix C) had been reported to Cabinet in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations.

Arising from debate the following principal points were noted:

- On considering the overspend in Integrated Commissioning it was appreciated that it had been the first full year of the implementation of social care Personal Budgets and that care packages were expensive. However, what services were provided and how they were provided may need to be looked at.
- Questioned how significant savings were being delivered through the introduction of a new mileage form the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) reported that staff were claiming less mileage and management action had been taken to reduce journeys. Member's mileage claims would also be reviewed.
- Questioned on the increase in school balances the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) agreed that further information should be sought. The Director of Resources responded that while it was a matter for the school governing body further investigations would be undertaken.
- Clarification was sought regarding the Ross on Wye Flood Alleviation scheme. The Environment Scrutiny Committee had recently been informed that the scheme had now been fully funded by the Environment Agency, however, it was now reported that the financial position had not been completed. The Director of Resources reported that while the scheme had been completed a dispute resolution through an adjudication process was proceeding. The Committee requested a briefing note setting out the latest financial position.

RESOLVED: That the Final Revenue and Capital outturn report 2009/10 be noted and the Committee be provided with a briefing note setting out the latest financial position regarding the Ross on Wye Flood Alleviation scheme.

11. 2010/11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SAVINGS

The Committee received a report on the 2010/11 Local Government savings package.

The Director of Resources presented the report previously considered by Cabinet on 17 June and reported that on 17th May the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced that the “coalition has agreed that £6 billion of savings to non-front line public services should be made this financial year”. He highlighted that for local authorities the general Formula Grant had not been reduced and remained at the level approved by parliament of £29 billion. Similarly, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had not been reduced. The breakdown of the £1.165 billion local government savings indicated £805 million was to be found from revenue grants with the balance of £360 million coming from capital grants. The 2010/11 revenue grant reductions had been capped at 2% and no local authority would face a reduction greater than this percentage. This was not relevant to Herefordshire as the Council’s revenue grant reduction totalled £1.158 million or 0.7% of grant. The grants affected include those now within Area Based Grant (ABG), Kickstart Grant, Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) scheme and Local Area Agreement (LAA) Reward grant. The known position for Herefordshire was that £1.158 million of revenue grants and £640k of capital grants would not be received. In addition an estimated £836k of grant would not be received. However these grants were not confirmed prior to the council’s budget setting and therefore their loss impacted on the ability to add to existing budgets rather than requiring reduction to existing commitments.

Questioned on the position of ring-fenced finance the Director of Resources reported that the government’s announcement had confirmed that a series of revenue and capital grants would no longer be “ring fenced”. For non schools revenue and capital funding it is estimated that ring fencing had been reduced this year from 10.7% (£4.5 billion) to 7.7% (£3.2 billion). The agenda report set out the effect for Herefordshire and other areas of grant funding affected.

The Deputy Chief Executive commented that the Partnership Team were looking at how the changes to the Area Based Grant might affect Herefordshire.

RESOLVED: That the position set out in the 2010/11 Local Government Savings report be noted.

12. CUSTOMER INSIGHT UNIT (COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS)

The Committee received an update on the work to develop a joint Herefordshire Public Services (HPS) feedback policy and the Customer Insight Unit (CIU).

The Head of Customer Services presented the agenda report which set out the background to the setting up of the CIU; feedback statistics since January 2010 and how the service would be further developed. He highlighted that a major advantage of the CIU and the adoption of a standard process ensured there was a single administrative system (SAP CRM) used to manage the feedback coming into the Council and PCT. Before the CIU, the system had been used inconsistently across the Council and so a picture of overall levels of feedback and trends had been impossible to determine. To date, a total of 529 contacts had been received of which 177 were compliments and 352 were complaints. None of the complaints had so far been escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman. Further details were set out in the report.

Questioned on how the feedback would be used to drive improvement the Head of Customer Services reported that the resultant details would be cascaded through the relevant Director for action by the service areas concerned.

RESOLVED: That the position set out in the Customer Insight Unit (Compliments, Complaints and Comments) report be noted and the continued development of the joint working arrangements as detailed in the report be supported.

13. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE WINTER WEATHER AND THE RESPONSE TO IT

The Committee considered the report of the scrutiny review of the impact of the winter weather December 2009-2010 and the response to it.

In February 2010 the Committee had accepted the Leader of the Council's invitation to conduct a review of the impact of the recent severe winter weather on communities in the County and across the public services.

On considering the findings of the review it was suggested that in relation to recommendations (p) and (r) the emphasis should be on how the Council could support or assist the body or organisation concerned in managing their own situation/premises rather than the Council itself undertaking the work e.g. snow clearance, and thereby possibly setting a precedent for other areas.

The Chairman thanked the organisations, Members and officers for contributing to the review.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. recommendation (p) be slightly amended to reflect that consideration be given to how the Council can assist in the gritting arrangements for the city bus station;**
- 2. recommendation (r) be amended to reflect that consideration needs to be given to how the Council can assist in facilitating schools to be kept open and to encourage greater local resilience;**
- 3. Subject to reflecting the amendments to recommendations (p) and (r) the findings of the Scrutiny Review of the impact of the winter weather be agreed and the findings be forwarded to the Leader of the Council for consideration; and**
- 4. the Executive's response to the review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had approved it response.**

14. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programmes of the scrutiny committees.

Concern was expressed about the administration of a number of the Council's major building projects. It was agreed that Project Design and Development Management be the subject of a future report to ensure that good practice was being incorporated.

In response to questions on the Accommodation Strategy, particularly in relation to Plough Lane, the Committee decided that an update be scheduled into the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED: that subject to the Committee's work programme being amended to reflect the issues identified at this meeting the work programme be approved.

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm

CHAIRMAN

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	SHARED SERVICES UPDATE REPORT
REPORT BY:	SHARED SERVICES TEAM

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) with an update on the Shared Services programme and to seek its views on the proposals as they are being developed to be presented to Cabinet for decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the Committee notes that the business case for Shared Services is being reviewed;
- (b) the Committee notes that a number of options are being considered as models for delivering shared services in Herefordshire and that Cabinet will be deciding in October on the options available.
- (c) the Committee reviews and questions the proposals on delivery models for Shared Services being presented by the Transition team and
- (d) the Committee provide feedback to inform the decision making process.

Key Points Summary

- Since the last report to this Committee in July 2010, the revision of the business case is being completed. External advice has been received on the refined investment appraisal from Capita plc to ensure that the process is robust. Work is continuing with service change managers in each service area to refine and develop the individual savings and efficiency proposals in line with the overall business case.
- Legal advice is being received from Mills and Reeve LLP and they have begun the review of powers of the partners to participate in a commercial partnership and assess the suitability of each model, producing a Heads of Terms outline for use in detailed negotiations, providing advice on employment considerations and taxation.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Akif Kazi, Shared Services Team on (01432) 263898

Alternative Options

- 1 The alternative options being considered as models for delivering Shared Services are set out from paragraph 17 below.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will form part of the report to Cabinet in October on Shared Services.

Introduction and Background

- 3 On 18 March 2010 the Cabinet agreed that the Council's preferred option for the delivery and commissioning of shared services would be a Joint Venture (representing a public public partnership) involving Herefordshire Council (HC), NHS Herefordshire (NHS) and Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust (HHT).
- 4 The Cabinet authorised the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) to progress and take all necessary steps to establish the Joint Venture in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Trust Boards. A further report seeking a formal decision to agree terms of the Council's participation in the Joint Venture was presented in July.
- 5 The OSC received an update on Shared Services on 2 July 2010.
- 6 The challenging economic environment has increased the need for all public sector organisations to reduce costs.
- 7 Herefordshire remains 'ahead of the game' in terms of transitioning to a Shared Service provision for 'back office' services.
- 8 Shared Services is part of the 'Streamlining the business' work-stream within the Herefordshire Public Services (HPS) Transformation Programme.
- 9 The Agresso project is progressing and will implement a new system for four of the key in-scope services – Human Resources, Payroll, Finance and procurement in April 2011. This will help in the transition to Shared Services.

Key Considerations

- 10 A number of key public service drivers underpin the Shared Services work, these include:
 - Making local public services more joined up, customer focused and responsive, so that they are easier to understand and access;
 - Maintaining a strong sense of place for Herefordshire
 - Consideration the likely outcomes of the Public Sector finance review and need to secure efficiencies and provide value for money
 - Increasing the quality of service with against a background of increasing demand for many front line services

- 11 The Comprehensive Spending Review will report in October 2010. This is expected to set out in detail the allocation of public sector expenditure for the duration of the current parliament. It is likely to require significant further efficiency savings.
- 12 In July 2010, the Department of Health published a white paper entitled "Equity and Excellence - Liberating the NHS". This report set out the future direction of key health organisations including the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Trusts. The Primary Care Trust network will cease to exist by 2013 with General Practice (GP) consortia leading the commissioning of health care services.
- 13 These changes are in line with Herefordshire's approach but further change will need to take place to ensure that adequate support is in place.
- 14 The current scope of services included in the Shared Services programme are:
 - Finance
 - Procurement
 - ICT Services
 - Human Resources
 - Payroll and Expenses
 - Asset Management and Property
 - Transport
 - Revenues and Benefits
 - Internal Audit
 - Legal
 - Communications and PR
- 15 A Service Change Manager has been appointed for each service and a detailed assessment is being completed as to which part of these in-scope services will transition to the Shared Services Organisation (SSO) and how each service will deliver the savings.
- 16 A key consideration will be ensuring that the service user requirements of the new Shared Service Organisation (SSO), such as front line service staff, are captured as part of the analysis.
- 17 The Committee will recall that the original PA business case was presented last year. This business case and its investment appraisal are being reviewed. This was done so as to ensure that it remains viable and takes into account changes in the national economic and political environment.

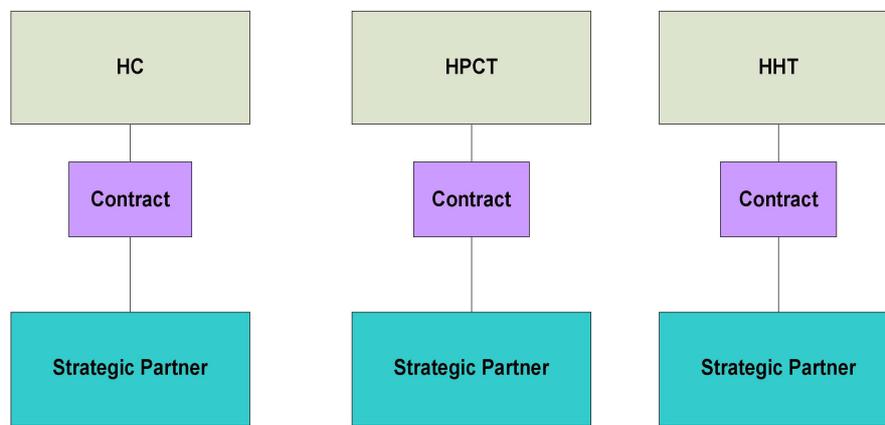
- 18 Independent advice has been received from Capita plc to ensure the integrity and robustness of the financial model.
- 19 Several models are being considered for delivering Shared Services. These are set out below. Additional models comprising mutual or other forms of social enterprise are also being evaluated.
- 20 A comprehensive evaluation is being conducted and members will be updated on the results of this assessment in October as part of the decision making process. This report is presented at this time to enable early scrutiny input into the decision making process.
- 21 The models under consideration are considered in the next section of the report.

2. Options for delivering Shared Services in Herefordshire

- 22 Given the complexity of each model it is not possible to explain the merits of each option in great detail in this report. Therefore a summary is presented here.

Option A: Joint procurement:

- 23 Under this arrangement, the 3 partners could conduct a joint procurement exercise resulting in 3 separate contractual arrangements under a shared framework with a strategic partner. The costs and benefits of each contract would be borne or realised by the partner organisation.



Advantages:

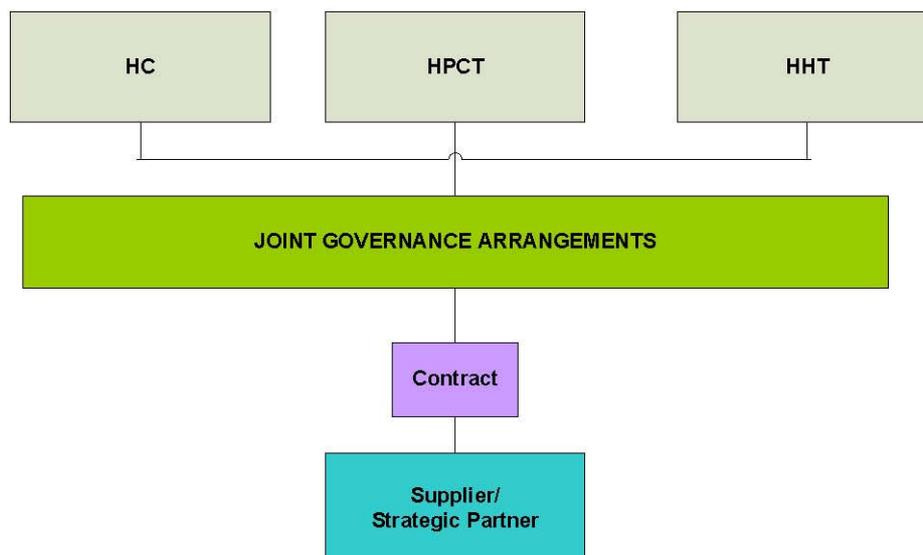
- Each partner free to specify own requirements.
- No need for detailed governance arrangements between the 3 partners.
- Separate financial liabilities.
- If requirements can be identified up front, might be possible to use the restricted procedure (or even the accelerated restricted procedure) as opposed to the competitive dialogue process, reducing the procurement timescales.

Disadvantages:

- Whilst the three entities would have a common supplier/strategic partner, and there may be some integration by that partner, it would not achieve integration in the governance arrangements, management integration or service specification.
- This would not achieve a true shared service arrangement.
- Likely to limit cost savings opportunities, as the strategic partner will view each partner as a separate client. Cost savings will be in the hands of the supplier.
- Procurement issues in transferring additional services to the partnership later on, unless they can be properly specified and evaluated prior to contract signature.

Option B - Transfer the services to a private sector strategic partner:

24 The three partner organisations conduct a joint procurement exercise to appoint a private sector party to run the support services on behalf of the three partners. In contrast to 2.1 (where three totally separate contracts are awarded with no joint governance arrangements), the relationship with the strategic partner is managed on a joint basis – either through a contract board mechanism (see paragraph 3.1 below) or through a formal joint venture company.



Advantages:

- Able to access skills and expertise which may not be available within the 3 partner organisations.
- Can contractually incentivise strategic partner to deliver efficiencies/transformation/other benefits. Strategic partner can be committed to delivering investment and achieving efficiencies.
- Can procure on behalf of other Herefordshire organisations which may join later.

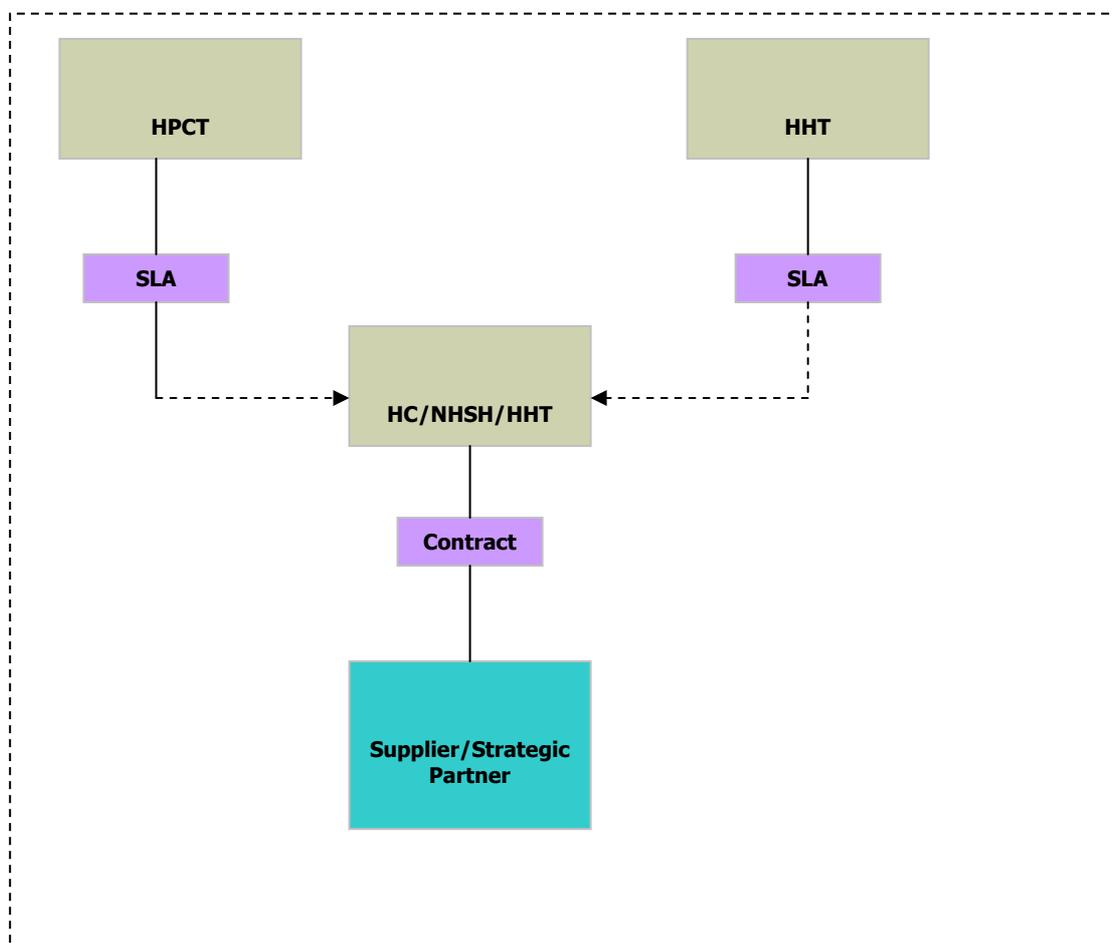
Disadvantages:

- Appointment of strategic partner requires full OJEU procurement exercise which will take time and incur significant costs.
- Procurement rules require all services to be tendered and evaluated before contract signed, so this may constrain ability to transfer additional services into partnership later on and limit the extent to which other Herefordshire organisations with different service needs can join at a later date.
- Strategic partner likely to want medium/long-term contract to justify bid/investment costs.
- Even if only a joint contract board, there will need to be joint governance arrangements, and there will need to be an agreement on contribution/liability apportionment between the 3 partners.
- Consideration of Strategic Health Authority sign off required (particularly if a separate joint venture company is established).

Option C - Lead commissioner/provider:

- 25 One of the three partners takes over the relevant support functions and staff, and then provides (or commissions) services on behalf of the other two partner organisations. The arrangements would be formalised into a set of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between

the lead partner and the other two partners. By way of illustration the following diagram shows this arrangement with Herefordshire Council as lead commissioner/provider:



Advantages:

- The costs/benefits would be shared between the partners.
- Provided the SLAs do not constitute contracts for consideration, there should be no need for a formal procurement exercise unless the lead organisation commissions services externally.
- Potential to start off with limited scope allowing early realisation of 'quick win' savings. Different arrangements could be introduced for different services over time. Potential to move from provider to commissioner over time, if desired.
- Potential for employment costs savings to be achieved by co-location and integration of staff and bringing them onto a common set of terms and conditions.

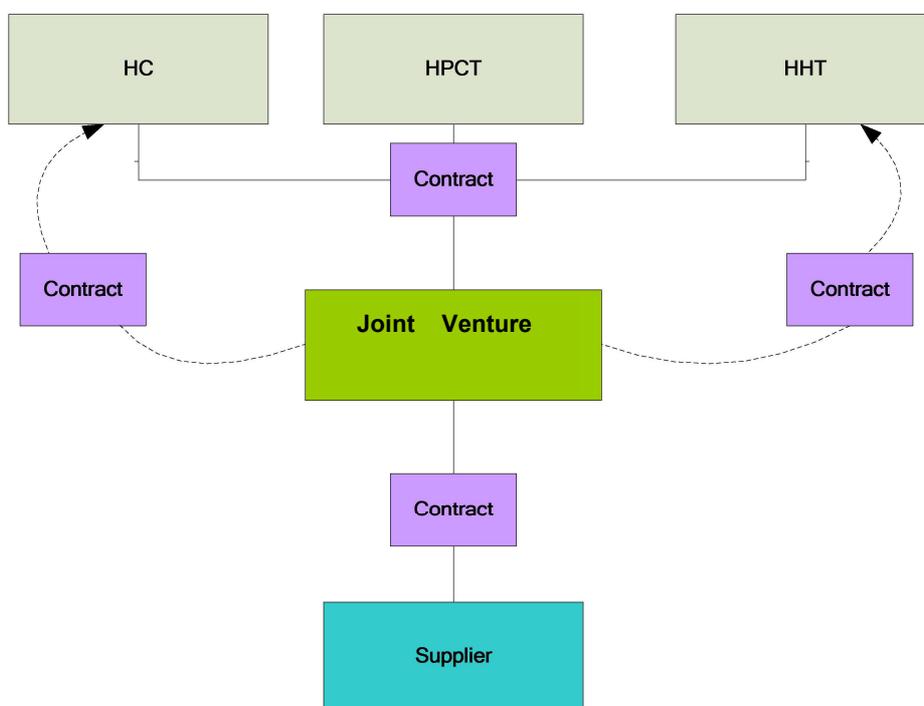
Disadvantages:

- Majority of risks will be transferred to the lead partner organisation and/or risk allocation between organisations lacks certainty due to SLA structure.
- If binding contracts between Hereford organisations are considered necessary, this may trigger need to tender these contracts under the public procurement rules.

- Ability to deliver savings (and speed of their realisation) depends on appetite/ability to drive out efficiencies.
- Need to consider possible governance issues.

Option D - Establish public/public shared services entity:

- 26 The three partner organisations set up a shared services entity – a public/public joint venture acting as commissioner/provider – wholly owned (in agreed proportions) and closely controlled (by each of the partners).
- 27 The Joint Venture (JV) could either be a corporate Joint Venture with its own separate legal identity or could be a Joint Venture contractual partnership.
- 28 Both forms of the Joint Venture could both provide to and commission services on behalf of the partners, employ staff (on its own terms and conditions subject to TUPE compliance) and buy-in capacity and skills to supplement that transferring into it. For procurement reasons it could not provide services to third parties, save possibly to other public bodies which acceded as joint controlling entities. This could ultimately include an exercise to procure a strategic partner.



Advantages:

- Can be undertaken on a phased approach, perhaps initially with co-location and then with staff/assets (including buildings?)/services being transferred over time.
- No need for procurement exercise to set up JV, so savings can be delivered earlier.
- Ability to ‘pick and choose’ right solution for each service – i.e. some delivered internally; some externalised.
- Can buy in additional capacity to deliver integration.
- Other Herefordshire public bodies can buy in/join in at any time.

Disadvantages:

- Ability to deliver savings (and speed of their realisation) depends on appetite/ability to drive out efficiencies.
- Establishment of JV will require focused engagement between 3 partner organisations and could take time to set up.
- More detailed consideration of Strategic Health Authority sign off required.

3. Conclusion

- 29 The process of assessing the models is continuing. The Cabinet and PCT/HHT Boards will be taking decisions in October on the proposals for implementing Shared Services.
- 30 Overview and Scrutiny views on the proposals on the delivery models will form part of this decision making process.
- 31 The Shared Services Transition Team will be giving a presentation to the OSC on 27th September and will facilitate a questions and answer and feedback session at the meeting.

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: LIBERATING THE NHS- HEREFORDSHIRE'S RESPONSE
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the arrangements in place in Herefordshire for responding to the White Paper and associated consultation documents, and to comment on the proposed response.

Recommendation(s)

THAT the Committee:

- a) notes the arrangements in place to respond to the White Paper and associated consultation documents; and
- b) provides any further comments on the proposed response.

.Introduction and Background

- 1 The Government published the White Paper, Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS, and four supplementary consultation documents in July.
- 2 At the joint request of the Leader of the Council and NHS Herefordshire Chair, a partnership consultation event on the White Paper was hosted by this Committee on 9 September. This provided an opportunity to brief partners and other interested people on the White Paper, discuss the potential implications for Herefordshire and inform the development of the key elements of a response.

Key Considerations

- 3 The government is seeking responses to the White Paper proposals by 5th October, and to the four consultation documents by 11th October. Given these deadlines, and to enable the views of the stakeholders attending the consultation event on the 9th September, NHS Herefordshire Board members and relevant Cabinet colleagues to be brought together, a draft of the response will be tabled at the meeting for Committee members to note and add any

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tony Geeson, Head of Policy and Performance on (01432) 261855

further comments.

Community Impact

- 4 The intention of the Government White Paper *Liberating the NHS* is to create an NHS which is much more responsive to patients and achieves better outcomes, with increased autonomy and increased accountability. The proposals represent the most fundamental changes to the NHS since its inception, but are, however, consistent with the vision and direction of travel that has been adopted in Herefordshire.
- 5 The consultation document, *Commissioning for Patients*, provides further detail on proposals to devolve commissioning responsibilities and budgets as far as possible to those who are best placed to act as patients' advocates and support them in their healthcare choices. GPs, practice nurses and other primary care professionals are already supporting patients in managing their health, promoting continuity and coordination of care, and making referrals to more specialist services. In empowering GP practices to come together in wider groupings, or 'consortia', to commission care on their patients' behalf and manage NHS resources, it is intended to build on these foundations.
- 6 The consultation document, *Local Democratic Legitimacy in Health*, provides further information on proposals for new local and national governance arrangements to increase local democratic involvement and accountability for health services. The paper proposes:
 - Strengthened patient and public involvement through the creation of a new local HealthWatch replacing the local LINKs and to act as a local consumer champion, to promote public and patient involvement, to perform a wider citizen's advice bureau role and to sign post patients and public to services
 - Improved integrated working delivering services designed around the needs of the patient and the public through the creation of a new Statutory Health and Wellbeing Board within the local authority to lead the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, to promote partnership and integration, to support joint commissioning and pooled budgets and to undertake the local health scrutiny function
 - Health improvement led locally by local authority by transferring responsibility and funding for local health improvement to the local authority and creating a new national Public Health Service to integrate existing health improvement and protection bodies
- 7 The consultation document, *Regulating Health Care Providers*, provides further information on proposals to free Foundation Trusts from constraints and create the world's largest and most vibrant social enterprise sector and to introduce of a system of independent economic regulation to sit alongside independent quality regulation.
- 8 The final consultation document, *Transparency in Outcomes*, proposes the establishment of an NHS Outcomes Framework that will be made up of a focussed set of national outcome goals which will give an indication of the overall performance of the NHS. These outcome goals will provide a means by which patients, the public and Parliament can hold the Secretary of State for Health to account for the overall performance of the NHS. They will also provide a mechanism by which the Secretary of State can hold the new NHS Commissioning Board to account for securing improved health outcomes for patients through the commissioning process. Beyond accountability, it is intended that the NHS Outcomes Framework will act as a catalyst for driving up quality across all NHS services.

Financial Implications

- 9 None at this national consultation stage

Legal Implications

10 None at this national consultation stage.

Risk Management

11 None at this national consultation stage

Consultees

12 Partners and a range of key stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Response – To be tabled.

Background Papers

White Paper and consultation documents



MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - - QUARTER 1 2010-11
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider an overview of performance against the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 for the first quarter of 2010-11 using content from Performance Plus (P+), the electronic performance management system being used by Herefordshire Public Services.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make;**
- (b) the Committee considers whether there are any other issues that should be referred to individual scrutiny committees for further investigation; and**
- (c) the Committee considers whether it wishes to make any other comments to Cabinet.**

Introduction and Background

1. The report to Cabinet on 16 September is appended. Cabinet noted performance to the end of June 2010 and the measures being taken to address areas of under-performance, noting that a more comprehensive report would be presented in October; noted the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the indicators in the Local Area Agreement, and agreed that the opportunity be taken to review the indicators and projects that are in the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13, using the forthcoming review of the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 to do this.

Background Papers

- None identified.

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	16 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 1 2010-11
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To provide Cabinet with an overview of performance against the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 for the first quarter of 2010-11 using content from Performance Plus (P+), the electronic performance management system being used by Herefordshire Public Services.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

THAT Cabinet

- a. **considers performance to the end of June 2010 and the measures being taken to address areas of under-performance, noting that a more comprehensive report will be presented in October; and**
- b. **considers the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the indicators in the Local Area Agreement, and take the opportunity to review the indicators and projects that are in the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13, using the forthcoming review of the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 to do this.**

Key Points Summary

- This report is a transitional one moving from reporting performance against the Annual Operating Statement to managing performance against the Joint Corporate Plan. Thus both the format of the report and the measures of performance being used differ from previous reports to Cabinet. In addition, the move away from centrally imposed national indicators will allow more local freedom to set measures and targets that are important to Herefordshire.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tony Geeson, Head of Policy and Performance, on (01432) 261855

During the months ahead the format and process will be refined. The views of Cabinet members, individually or collectively, are a crucial part of this development process and will be very welcome.

- A large number of indicators are reported annually, so in-year judgements can only currently be made on a selection of indicators. Of those where data is available, the majority are on track to achieve target (24 on or ahead of target; 13 behind target).
- The majority of projects are being delivered to schedule (90 on or ahead of schedule; 8 behind schedule).
- PerformancePlus (P+) is a new system for the organisation, and is yet to be fully implemented. Population of the system with additional historical data in the coming period will ensure that an even fuller presentation of performance is available for the next performance report. It is intended that future reports are based on current information to a schedule agreed by Cabinet rather than rigid quarterly reporting. The Joint Management Team monitors performance on a regular basis and Cabinet Members are updated by Directors on key issues as appropriate

Alternative Options

1. The Joint Performance Improvement Framework provides that Cabinet will formally review performance against the Joint Corporate Plan quarterly. There are therefore no alternative options.

Reasons for Recommendations

2. To ensure that progress against the priorities, targets and commitments, as set out in the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13, are understood. Further, to ensure that the reasons for important areas of actual or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the Cabinet's satisfaction.

Introduction and Background

3. The Integrated Corporate Performance Report is a quarterly report, focusing on progress towards achievement of the seven themes (39 outcomes) in the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13. Progress is measured through the management and monitoring of selected performance indicators and projects, using our performance management system, 'PerformancePlus' (P+). The appendices to this report include:
 - Appendix 1 a key to what the symbols used in P+ represent, and a list of outcomes;
 - Appendix 2a exception report for those indicators and projects that are ahead of target; and
 - Appendix 2b exception report for those indicators and projects that are behind target.
4. The more detailed financial context for this report is set out in the budget monitoring report elsewhere on your agenda. The key financial headlines are included in the commentary in the scorecard below.

Key Considerations

5. Based on a balanced scorecard approach, the following six elements have been identified to provide an overview of the key issues in enabling the Council and NHS Herefordshire to achieve the desired outcomes of the Joint Corporate Plan. These elements are monitored bi-monthly by the Joint Management Team

Performance at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)
<p>At this period of the year there are few indicators for which in-year performance data is available. Where current data is available, improved performance is being achieved, in particular, within the theme of Children and Young People, where all but one indicator is achieving or ahead of target.</p> <p>The positive trend of reducing accidents on our roads has continued during the first six months of this year, and current performance shows that we are on course to achieve our stretching LAA target.</p> <p>Performance in the area of supporting the economy is mixed; the Council is demonstrating support locally by prompt payment of invoices and identification of changes to customers housing and council tax benefits, although the processing of those changes is behind target.</p> <p>Achieving high levels of customer and citizen satisfaction is one of our 39 key outcomes; current performance shows a reduced level of satisfaction of people making a request for service through Info, and a continued high level of customer contact that could be avoidable. These issues will be addressed in future months through the implementation and delivery of a number of key projects as part of the Transformation Programme.</p>
Projects at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)
<p>The majority of projects are being delivered according to schedule. However, within the theme of Economic Development and Enterprise, there are three projects, including the Edgar Street Grid, that are behind schedule, awaiting decisions on future funding arrangements.</p> <p>The national Place Survey (known locally as the Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey), from which many of the indicators concerned with community perceptions have been provided, has been scrapped. Given the importance of some of the information this provided, consideration is being given to a more relevant, cost effective survey tailored to local needs.</p>
Finance at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)
<p>At the end of June the Council's overall Revenue Budget position for 2010-11 showed a projected overspend. In order to address the forecast position, the relevant directorates are required to deliver robust recovery plans, which are monitored by JMT. Treasury management to reduce the cost of loans may mitigate the overall position to a limited extent but the recovery actions by individual directorates must succeed to balance the overall Revenue Budget.</p> <p>The most significant overspend relates to Integrated Commissioning, in part carried forward from 2009-10 but also because activity levels continue to increase. The underlying reasons for this are being addressed as part of the current budget review process</p> <p>A more detailed report for the end of July is a separate item on this Cabinet Agenda.</p>

<p>Customers at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)</p>
<p>The customer insight unit has now been substantively established. This innovation has been cost-neutral. To date, it would appear that there have been no complaints received by Herefordshire council since January 4th 2010 which have been escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>Work is underway to review any opportunities to improve service delivery, in accordance to the principles of the Organisational Design principles and within the framework of the Customer Focus workstream of the Herefordshire Transformation programme. This will lead to proposals for improvements to a range of customer-facing services.</p> <p>A new basket of indicators which reflect the Customer Agenda have been developed and agreed. These are all regularly discussed between customer services officers and their service area counterparts as part of the regular liaison meeting framework which has been established since April 2010.</p>
<p>Employees at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)</p>
<p>Staffing levels within the Council and NHS Herefordshire remain constant. Sickness rates are similar to last year, and are either close to or achieving target.</p> <p>Future service planning and recruitment and retention initiatives are being developed to address the long-term continuity issue of 25% of Council staff and 30% of NHS Herefordshire staff being over 50.</p>
<p>Risks at the end of June (Q1 2010-11)</p>
<p>Effective risk management is demonstrated by maintaining up-to-date, clear and accessible risk registers that are used to help manage risks and to construct an overall assurance framework.</p> <p>The current process for updating and recording risk registers relies on directors and heads of service ensuring that there is a process in place for physically reviewing and updating risk registers. In addition escalating risks so that they are managed at the appropriate level is also necessary, but requires a sound adherence to the process.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive has commissioned a review in order to highlight gaps in our approach and make recommendations for improvements.</p> <p>One of the recommendations is that we should accelerate the use of Performance Plus for risk reporting, which will assist Directors and Heads of Service in this endeavour.</p> <p>The current Corporate Risk Register contains eight risks all of which require the appropriate director to review and update.</p>

6. At its meeting on 17 June 2010, Cabinet asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) consider and make recommendations on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and priorities. OSC considered the LAA at its meeting on 2 July, and recommended in principle that the LAA targets be retained. However, OSC also recommended that Cabinet consider whether any of the targets could sensibly be amalgamated or joined up to those used by the PCT and only keep those that can realistically be achieved. The LAA indicators are currently included within the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13. Cabinet may wish to take the opportunity to review the selection of indicators and projects during the forthcoming review of the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13.

Community Impact

7. Delivering the Joint Corporate Plan is central to achieving the positive impact the Council wishes to make across Herefordshire and all its communities.

Financial Implications

8. None.

Legal Implications

9. None.

Risk Management

10. By highlighting progress against the Council's Corporate Plan, including the major risks to achievement and how they are being mitigated, this report is an essential component of the Council's management of risks.

Consultees

11. None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Key to symbols and list of Joint Corporate Plan themes and outcomes
- Appendix 2a - Exception report (Green indicators and projects)
- Appendix 2b - Exception report (Red and Amber indicators and projects)

Background Papers

12. None.

Symbols

Key		
Measures		Tasks
Exceeded Target		Ahead of Plan
Met Target		On plan
Nearly On target		N/A
Under target		Not started or behind plan
Missing Data and Target		Missing Data and Target
Missing Data		Not rated
No Target		No Target
N/A		Task complete
Not active		N/A
Start date in the future		Start date in the future

List of Joint Corporate Plan themes and outcomes

Theme and Outcome	Lead Director
Theme 1 Economic Development and Enterprise	
HPS 1.1 Higher quality, better paid jobs and reduced unemployment	Geoff Hughes
HPS 1.2 Increased participation in learning and higher levels of skills and achievement	Geoff Hughes
HPS 1.3 More and higher-spending visitors to the county	Geoff Hughes
HPS 1.4 Improved quality & availability of business accommodation and employment land	Geoff Hughes
HPS 1.5 Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport	Geoff Hughes
Theme 2 Healthier Communities and Older People	
HPS 2.1 People have longer, healthier lives, with reduced inequalities between different groups and localities	Akeem Ali
HPS 2.2 Older people living fulfilled lives as active members of their communities	Ann Donkin
HPS 2.3 Vulnerable people able to live safely and independently in their own homes	Ann Donkin
HPS 2.4 Enhanced emotional well-being, with fewer suicides	Akeem Ali
HPS 2.5 Personalised health and social care services, which offer people much greater choice and influence over their care	Ann Donkin
HPS 2.6 Improved dental health	Ann Donkin
Theme 3 Children and Young People	
HPS 3.1 Children and young people are healthy and have healthy life-styles, with less obesity and substance mis-use, and better dental and sexual health	Akeem Ali
HPS 3.2 Children and young people are safe, secure and have stability	David Sanders

Theme and Outcome	Lead Director
HPS 3.3 Children and young people are enabled to develop personally, socially and emotionally, and to achieve high standards of educational attainment	David Sanders
HPS 3.4 Children and young people engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school	David Sanders
HPS 3.5 Children and young people engage in positive behaviour inside and out of school	David Sanders
HPS 3.6 Improved access to good quality care and other services for children, young people and their families through the work of Herefordshire's Children's Trust	David Sanders
Theme 4 Safer Communities	
HPS 4.1 Reduced levels of crime	Geoff Hughes
HPS 4.2 Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour	Geoff Hughes
HPS 4.3 Reduced harm from drugs and alcohol	Akeem Ali
HPS 4.4 Communities to have enhanced resilience and recovery from emergencies through effective partnership planning and co-ordination	Akeem Ali
HPS 4.5 Fewer accidents and injuries	Geoff Hughes
HPS 4.6 People feel as safe as they would like to be	Geoff Hughes
Theme 5 Stronger Communities	
HPS 5.1 Cohesive communities in which people feel accepted, confident and empowered, regardless of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief	Dean Taylor
HPS 5.2 Communities and individuals participating in local decisions and influencing them	Geoff Hughes
HPS 5.3 Affordable housing appropriate to people's needs and less homelessness, with support for vulnerable people to live independently	Geoff Hughes

Theme and Outcome	Lead Director
HPS 5.4 Fair access to the services residents need, including high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities	Geoff Hughes
HPS 5.5 People are able to participate in, the life of their communities	Geoff Hughes
Theme 6 The Environment	
HPS 6.1 Reduced waste and increased recycling	Geoff Hughes
HPS 6.2 Reduced CO2 emissions and successful adaptation to unavoidable impacts of climate change	Geoff Hughes
HPS 6.3 Increased biodiversity	Geoff Hughes
HPS 6.4 Natural resources are conserved and landscape character maintained, with sustainable land management	Geoff Hughes
HPS 6.5 Investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment	Geoff Hughes
Theme 7 Organisational Improvement and Greater Efficiency	
HPS 7.1 The highest standards of leadership, governance and integrity	Dean Taylor
HPS 7.2 Demonstrable value for money	David Powell
HPS 7.3 Streamlined, efficient operations, including the integrated delivery of services across the boundaries of different organisations	David Powell
HPS 7.4 High levels of customer and citizen satisfaction	Dean Taylor
HPS 7.5 A highly skilled, highly motivated workforce that works in effective partnership with other organisations	Dean Taylor
HPS 7.6 Highly rated under Comprehensive Area Assessment and World Class Commissioning, and recognised as exemplars regionally and nationally	Dean Taylor

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Green – 10% or more ahead of target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
HPS.2.5 People supported to live independently through social services (all adults) (NI 136)	Bigger is Better	Monthly	★	Jun-10	★	2,800	3,746
Comments: Positive performance for this indicator; significantly ahead of target, and on track to achieve the end-of-year LAA target. Performance at the end of Quarter 1 last year was 2,543.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.3.2 Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time (NI 65)	Smaller is Better	Quarterly	★	Jun-10	★	13	6
Comments: Ahead of target and better than at Quarter 1 last year when 12.6% were the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time. However, the crucial issue is that children are safe and numbers may rise on occasions, reflecting 'bigger is better'.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.3.2 No. of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessments completed across all agencies	Bigger is Better	Monthly	No comparison figure for June 2009 ¹	Jun-10	★	>100	120
Comments: • The number of CAFs completed to date is ahead of target. However, the number cannot increase indefinitely; there is a natural limit of 100% CAFs.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS 4.2 No. of criminal damage incidents recorded by the police	Smaller is Better	Monthly (4 week delay)	★	Jun-10	★	597	460

¹ Historical data for this, and others similarly marked indicators, is only available from September 2009. A Direction of Travel judgement will be available for the next report.

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Green – 10% or more ahead of target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
Comments: Criminal damage incidents continue to fall across the County with 164 fewer incidents recorded in the first quarter compared to the same period in 2009-10. It should be noted that the number of incidents recorded started to reduce after June 2009 when Community Resolution commenced.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS 4.5 No. of people killed in road traffic collisions	Smaller is Better	Monthly (6 week delay)	<i>New indicator</i>	Jun-10	★	8	3
Comments: • This proxy indicator, although subject to change by West Mercia Constabulary at the end of the financial year, suggests that performance is well on track to meet the target. The Planning and Transportation's Road Safety and Accident Investigation and Prevention teams continue to lead on a wide range of education, training and publicity and engineering measures to address road traffic accidents.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS 4.5 No. of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (NI 48)	Smaller is Better	Monthly (6 week delay)	★	Jun-10	★	6	2
Comments: • This proxy indicator, although subject to change by West Mercia Constabulary at the end of the financial year, suggests that performance is well on track to meet the target. The Planning and Transportation's Road Safety and Accident Investigation and Prevention teams continue to lead on a wide range of education, training and publicity and engineering measures to address road traffic accidents.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.4.5 No. of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (NI 47)	Smaller is Better	Monthly (6 week delay)	★	Jun-10	★	54	27
Comments: • This proxy indicator, although subject to change by West Mercia Constabulary at the end of the financial year, suggests that performance is well on track to meet the target. The Planning and Transportation's Road Safety and Accident Investigation and Prevention teams continue to lead on a wide range of education, training and publicity and engineering measures to address road traffic accidents.							
Date of comment Jun-10							

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Green – 10% or more ahead of target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
HPS.5.3 No. of households living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council under homelessness legislation (NI 156)	Smaller is Better	Quarterly		Jun-10		82	64
Comments: The number of households in temporary accommodation has continued to decrease into the new financial year. There were 79 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2010 and this has decreased further.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS 6.1 The number of kilograms of residual household waste collected per household (NI 191)	Smaller is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		180	158.04
Comments: • Ahead of target and better than the same period last year, which was 173.9 kg.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.7.3 Average number of days taken by the Council to pay an invoice	Smaller is Better	Monthly	<i>New indicator</i>	Jun-10		15	13.47
Comments: • Performance is expected to dip due to delays in school processing during the holiday period.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.7.3 The number of changes in circumstances leading to a change in Housing / Council Tax benefit entitlement identified and processed by the authority, per 1,000 claimants (NI 180)	Bigger is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		375	430
Comments: • An increased number of changes received in May/June have been responded to by the service, representing good performance.							
Date of comment Jun-10							

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Green – 10% or more ahead of target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
HPS.7.5 Average sickness FTE (Council)	Smaller is Better	Monthly	No comparison figure for June 2009 ¹	Jun-10	★	4.3	3.8
<p>Comments: • Performance is better than target, with continued deeper analysis within individual directorates highlighting staff groups that have experienced higher levels than others of either long-term absence; short-term absence, or a combination of both during the last year. Many long-term absence cases have now been resolved and work is continuing in managing those that remain.</p> <p>There are instances of short-term sickness which have reached the 'trigger points' as set out in the Managing Attendance Policy in many staff groups and these are being addressed with assistance from HR. The continuation of this work should result in lower levels of sickness in the future.</p>							
Date of comment Jun-10							

Projects – Exceptions (Green – ahead of schedule)			
Project	Responsible Officer	Latest rating	Due Date
HPS 3.3 Implementation of additional needs strategy	Knight, Les	★	31/03/2013
Comments: Review of current provision completed.			
			Date of comment Jun-10
HPS 3.6 Children's Trust Commissioning Framework	Sanders, David	★	31/03/2013
Comments: Framework has been agreed by the Children's Trust Board and implementation of the priorities is underway.			
			Date of comment Jun-10
HPS 3.6 Delivery of a Children's Trust Workforce Strategy	Baird, Chris	★	31/03/2013
Comments: There was a delay in agreeing the Strategy but the action plan is underway and on schedule for completion.			
			Date of comment Jun-10
HPS 6.1 Introduce recycling for schedule 2 household	Wood, Richard	★	31/12/2010
Comments: This relates to properties that are non-domestic properties such as schools, village halls etc. A pre-service survey has been completed in order to establish what schedule 2 customers would like to receive, and a recycling collection service has now been completed.			
			Date of comment Jun-10

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Red and Amber – behind target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
HPS 1.3 The number of people attending the "University of the Great Outdoors" event	Bigger is Better	Annual	<i>New indicator</i>	Jun-10		4,500	3,000
Remedial Actions • Target attendance not met, mainly due to the bad weather however the income generated was equal to that of the 2009 event.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS 1.4 Percentage of major planning applications dealt with within 13 weeks (NI 157a)	Bigger is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		60	56
Remedial Actions • A sudden influx of Planning Applications and pre-applications has meant that this part of the indicator has come in slightly below target at the end of the quarter after being well above target for the previous two months. The ongoing focus remains on major and strategic projects.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS 1.4 Percentage of other planning applications dealt with within 8 weeks (NI 157c)	Bigger is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		80	79
Remedial Actions • See comment for other planning indicator (NI 157a) above.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.2.3 The percentage of new social care clients aged 18 or over, where the time from first contact with social services to completion of assessment is four weeks or less (NI 132)	Bigger is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		91	85.5
Remedial Actions • Performance continues to be in the mid eighties for NI 132 though there has been a slight dip in the last month. This is being followed up with locality managers via the improved management information they now receive to ascertain whether there are reasons							

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Red and Amber – behind target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
for this slight decline in performance. The general trend however over the last few months has been an upward one (albeit lower than the same period 12 months ago) and this has in part been due to increasing data quality and better provision of information to operational managers. This was despite the severe winter weather pressures and the volume of safeguarding work in residential care, which is still having an impact on performance, and remains above the national average.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.2.3 The percentage of new social care clients for whom the time from completion of assessment to provision of all services in the care package is less than or equal to 4 weeks (NI 133)	Bigger is Better	Monthly	No comparison figure for May 2009 ¹	May-10		92	90.32
Remedial Actions • There has been an improvement over the last few months in NI133. Latest performance is now above 90% against a target of 92%. Performance has been impacted by transitions cases that have stretched the period from assessment to delivery of services for young adults. It is also recognised that delays may sometimes occur due to service users wishing to take further time to consider their choice of service to meet their needs. However, a new panel for allocating resources and the streamlining of processes is seemingly having a positive impact on performance.							
Date of comment May 10							
HPS.2.3 The average weekly rate of delayed transfers of care from all NHS hospitals per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (NI 131)	Smaller is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		25	28.5
Remedial Actions • A community wide action plan to address under-performance has been developed and is in the early stages of implementation. Some of the initiatives identified that are underway: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily monitoring of delays has to be established across providers; 2. System wide bed management process has been developed between providers; 3. Repetition of assessments between health and social care has to be avoided; 							

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Red and Amber – behind target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
4. Review of panels and the benefit of joint panels; 5. Review of the discharge policy; 6. Monitoring of readmission rates to ensure appropriate transfers; and 7. Accountability for the system wide target to be established.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.3.5 The percentage of pupils who are permanently excluded from school during the academic year (NI 114)	Smaller is Better	Monthly	No comparison figure for June 2009 ¹	Jun-10	▲	0.06	0.07
Comments: • The above target equates to 16 exclusions during the academic year. For the academic year to June, there have been a total of 18 exclusions. Although there is no comparative figure for the same 11 month period last year, performance compares favourably with the full year's outturn of 0.1%. This itself was better than the national average when compared with all other authorities. The number of pupils excluded is available on a monthly and termly basis.							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.4.2 No. of anti-social behaviour incidents recorded by the police	Smaller is Better	Monthly (8 week delay)	<i>New indicator</i>	Apr-10	▲	920	980
Remedial Actions • Expect average of 920 ASB recorded incidents per month. April 2010 = 980, therefore 60 over monthly target. Please note there are seasonal peaks, especially around Bank Holidays (Easter fell early April). Expect an increase during World Cup, Summer and Christmas periods. Activity: July edition of Herefordshire Matters will feature a section on crime and reductions of crime in the county and a focus on ASB. Safer Herefordshire are currently working with the Research Team and progressing further research and consultation on perceptions of ASB - linked heavily to NI21. Continued proactive work by the multi-agency tasking and co-ordination group (MATAC). Safer Herefordshire annual strategic assessment commencing which involved community engagement, currently consulting with Parish							

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Red and Amber – behind target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
Councils.							
Date of comment Apr 10							
HPS.5.3 No. of affordable homes delivered (NI 155)	Bigger is Better	Quarterly		Jun-10		42.5	21
Remedial Actions • There is an affordable housing action plan that is in place that indicates what housing is due to be delivered and when, each year. The number of completions is low at this time of year and this number increases as developers build housing within the current financial year before the financial year end.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.6.1 % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting (NI 192)	Bigger is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		41	38.23
Remedial Actions • The performance of this NI has increased significantly on the previous year due to the implementation of the new refuse and recycling collection service in November 2009. However Quarter 1 performance still falls short of the 41% target for 2010-11. We are in the process of introducing recycling services to flatted developments and we are currently planning to expand the recycling service to village halls and charities (subject to budget availability) which will help improve future performance.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.7.3 The average time taken in calendar days to process all new claims and changes of circumstance for Housing / Council Tax benefits. (NI 181)	Smaller is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		11	12.2
Remedial Actions • Higher than anticipated number of changes affect capacity to process within timescales.							
Date of comment Jun 10							
HPS.7.4 The percentage of customer contacts with council services that are assessed as being avoidable (NI 14)	Smaller is Better	Monthly		Jun-10		25	34.96

Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions (Red and Amber – behind target)							
Outcome & Measure		Frequency of reporting	DoT since last year	Date of judgement	Performance (Year To Date)	Target (Year To Date)	Actual (Year To Date)
<p>Remedial Actions • There are a number of service areas which are contributing to the under-performance of this indicator. For the Benefits and Exchequer service, the changes to the payments system are a significant factor, as customers contact the council seeking clarification on how to use the system, or with problems accessing the 'All Pay' telephone service. Customers continue to seek clarification regarding the information on bills, as there are more than one contact point listed. There are continuing issues also regarding the change in circumstances process. For 'Planning Services', the cause of avoidable contact is the functionality of the website, which causes customers to contact the council seeking advice on its use. In a similar vein, customers also have cause to seek help as planning notification letters are sent out prior to planning applications being available to view. For Waste Management services, the major cause of avoidable contact is missed bins. Each service area and customer services are establishing action plans to address the issues outlined.</p>							
Date of comment Jun-10							
HPS.7.4 % of people making a request for service through Info that are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Bigger is Better	Monthly	<i>New indicator</i>	Jun-10	▲	95	80
<p>Remedial Actions • This is derived from Customer Satisfaction surveys sent out each month to a proportion of customers who have been in contact with the council. Overall performance was 80% compared to a target of 95%. This was due to a number of factors and was seen across all service areas. However, the Benefits and Exchequer service was the poorest performing at 78%. Further investigation is underway into the causes of this between the service area and customer services. This is an issue discussed at the regular liaison meetings held between Customer Service Officers and individual services. Remedial action will be discussed and agreed at these meetings.</p>							
Date of comment Jun-10							

Projects Exceptions (Red – behind schedule)			
Project	Judgement	Responsible Officer	Due Date
Park and Ride Scheme	▲	Lane, Mairead	Jun-12
Remedial Actions Feasibility study complete, short term project in current programme but currently being reviewed in light of reductions in capital funding.			
Date of comment Jun-10			
Progress the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) Scheme	▲	Webster, Nick	Dec-11
Remedial Actions • The project is part of an AWM internal funding review and therefore the finance is at risk for certain key elements of the project. Alternative funding solutions are therefore being considered. In the meantime, the project is now being managed by Hereford Futures, which has a wider city remit and all actions are now proceeding as agreed.			
Date of comment Jun 10			
Support home working businesses and small business growth	▲	Webster, Nick	Mar-11
Remedial Actions • Projects have been delayed due to the hold on ABG funding.			
Date of comment Jun 10			
Assistive Technologies	▲	Fabbro, Wendy	not set
Remedial Actions • Awaiting tele-healthcare 'Toolkit' which will enable evaluation of current service provision and identify business case for future investments and potential cost savings. Meeting arranged with SHA tele-healthcare lead late July. This meeting will lead to creation of tele-healthcare strategy group.			
Date of comment Jun 10			
Place Survey	▲	Gibson, Isobel	Mar-11
Remedial Actions • The place survey has been cancelled nationally. A local decision will be taken in the next month.			
Date of comment Jun 10			
Shared Services	▲	Teale, Mike	Dec-11
Remedial Actions • Shared Services has begun work with the Service Change Managers. Legal advisors were appointed on the 28 th June 2010. Key deliverables are dependant upon the completion of this Legal Work. An update paper was submitted to Cabinet on the 22 nd July			

Projects Exceptions (Red – behind schedule)			
Project	Judgement	Responsible Officer	Due Date
2010. The outputs from the Legal work will inform a key decision paper due to be submitted to Cabinet in October. The White Paper "Liberating the NHS" has implications for Shared Services which are currently being investigated.			
Date of comment Jun 10			
Listening Service	▲	Beavan-Pearson, Richard	Mar-11
Remedial Actions • This element of the Customer Strategy is primarily concerned with customer engagement. Overall, progress has been excellent, as the Herefordshire Partnership HOS has led on the progress regarding the mapping of engagement opportunities. There have been some slippage regarding HPS in particular, but is anticipated that this will be reconciled over the next reporting period.			
Date of comment Jun-10			
Trusted Services	▲	Beavan-Pearson, Richard	Mar-11
Remedial Actions • Work continues to develop a reputation strategy. This is being co-ordinated by the Head of Communications and Head of Customer Services. Further slippage has been experienced for a variety of reasons. A review of this particular piece of work has recently been agreed and will be presented to the customer focus board in due course. This will result in a revision of the timelines for this piece of work and will also ensure that the work reflects current organisational priorities.			
Date of comment Jun-10			



MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010/11
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider the forecast financial position for both revenue and capital budgets to 31 March 2011, provide an update on Directorates' recovery plans instigated to address projected overspends; and note treasury management activities in the first four months of 2010/11.

Recommendation

THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make.

Introduction and Background

1. The report to Cabinet on 16 September is appended. Cabinet noted the report and the forecast deficit position of £1.9 million; and the Chief Executive's requirement that Directors deliver recovery plans to ensure a balanced revenue budget.

Background Papers

- None identified.

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	16 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010/11
PORTFOLIO AREA:	RESOURCES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To report the forecast financial position for both revenue and capital to 31st March 2011 and provide an update on Directorates' recovery plans instigated to address projected overspends.

The report also provides information on treasury management activities in the first four months of 2010/11.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet

- a) **Note the report and the forecast deficit position of £1.9 million; and**
- b) **Note the Chief Executive's requirement that Directors deliver recovery plans to ensure a balanced revenue budget.**

Key Points Summary

- As of the end of July the overall revenue budget position for 2010/11 shows a projected £1.9m overspend. This is approximately 1.4% of the Council's £143m million revenue budget (excluding Dedicated Schools Grant funding).
- The forecast capital outturn has decreased from the original budget position by £0.2m to £77.7m.
- Virements exceeding £140k are highlighted throughout the documents.

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure Cabinet is informed of the forecast outturn and receive assurance that officers take appropriate action as necessary to ensure a balanced outturn position is delivered. To ensure there is the appropriate use of virements to fund the revenue deficits and the reprofiling of capital funding where schemes have slipped into 2011/12.
- 3 To ensure that Cabinet is kept informed of treasury management activities in accordance with CIPFAs recommended best practice.

Introduction and Background

- 4 The Council's revenue and capital position is reported to Cabinet quarterly throughout the year. (The first report of the year uses the July position to extrapolate a forecast position) The information provides an indication of the Council's performance against budgets.
- 5 CIPFA best practice recommends Members are informed of Treasury Management activities on a regular basis and as a result Cabinet receives an update every quarter. Treasury management is a key activity for the council and given concerns about financial markets in the recent past it is important that Cabinet remains aware of performance.

Key Considerations

- 6 Appendix A includes the detailed revenue budget monitoring report. The key areas of concern are Integrated Commissioning Directorate, with a projected £2.3m overspend and the Children and Young People's Directorate, with a £0.5m projected overspend.
- 7 Both directorates have produced recovery plans and Cabinet should note the actions detailed in Appendix A which will continue to be effectively monitored over the coming months. The delivery of the recovery plan is essential to mitigate the effect of the overspends rolling into 2011/12. This is more pressing than at any previous times given the likely reduction in funding to be announced in October's Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 8 The Council's overall financial performance has a direct bearing on the level of reserve balance at year end as any overspend on the revenue account would be funded from this source.
- 9 For Integrated Commissioning, their 2009/10 deficit outturn and the full year impact of placements meant a starting budget shortfall of £3.7m, which has in part (£2.2m) been mitigated by central budgets. The Directorate has an ongoing recovery plan of £1.9m to meet 2009/10 shortfalls, and in addition is establishing what further measures are required to balance the £2.3m current year overspend.
- 10 The capital programme budget monitoring is provided at Appendix B. The forecast outturn has decreased by £0.2m to £77.7m. Where possible, use of time limited grants will be maximised before other more flexible resources.
- 11 Appendix C is the quarterly update on treasury management, which ensures the Council is following best practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations. Maximising investment interest and rescheduling loans, should see the delivery of £800k above budget, to assist the financial concerns highlighted in Appendix A. This sum is included in the mitigations of the overall revenue position.

Community Impact

12 Not applicable.

Financial Implications

13 These are contained in the report.

Legal Implications

14 None.

Risk Management

15 Effective financial reports, used to facilitate robust budget monitoring are an essential element in the management of risks and the delivery of the Council's and Herefordshire Partnership's priorities.

Consultees

15 None.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Revenue Budget Monitoring
- Appendix B – Capital Programme
- Appendix C – Treasury Management Update

Background Papers

- None identified.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING
Summary

1. The following table summarises the 2010-11 projected outturn based on the financial position at the end of July 2010.

£'000	Budget	Projected net (over) or under spend
Integrated Commissioning	40,695	(2,260)
Children & Young People	24,116	(503)
Deputy Chief Executive	13,628	(150)
Sustainable Communities	34,240	(125)
Public Health	2,136	(35)
Central Services	2,914	0
Resources	7,210	340
Directorate Position	124,939	(2,733)
Borrowing	15,380	800
Revenue contribution to capital	320	0
Centrally held budget	1,535	0
WMS Profit Share	(546)	0
Transfer to Reserves	1,465	0
Total	<u>142,844</u>	<u>(1,933)</u>

2. As of the end of July the overall revenue budget position for 2010-11 shows a projected £1.9m overspend. This is approximately 1.4% of the council's £143m million revenue budget (excluding Dedicated Schools Grant funding). In order to address the forecast position the delivery of recovery plans is required by the relevant Directorates, and ongoing monitoring by JMT of those recovery actions and their success takes place.
3. The most significant overspend relates to Integrated Commissioning, the overspend in part has carried over from last year, but in addition activity levels continue to increase. Other service deficits are being mitigated by the recovery plans.
4. Appendix C provides a Treasury Management update and explains why there will be a £800k underspend on borrowing costs. In summary there is a programme of loan rescheduling, replacing higher cost loans with lower rates and new borrowing is likely to be at lower rates than budgeted.
5. Throughout the report reference is made to virements that have been actioned across the services.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Anne Phillips Head of Financial Services on 01432 383173

Reserves Update

6. The general reserve balance as at 1st April 2010 is £6.4m after being replenished by £1m as part of the agreed budget setting process.
7. The council held the following earmarked reserves of £14.2 million at 31st March 2010.

	31.03.09	Transfer (to)/from	31.3.10
Commuted sums	78	0	78
Schools balances in hand	5,476	21	5,497
Industrial Estates - maintenance	333	39	372
Support Services & Equipment renewals	80	(80)	0
Schools Balance of Risk	85	88	173
Winter maintenance	500	(500)	0
Planning	24	0	24
College Hill Community Centre	180	0	180
Waste Disposal	2,774	0	2,774
LSC	32	(32)	0
Wye Valley AONB	104	(10)	94
Invest to Save	1,079	252	1,331
Contingent liabilities	300		300
Social care contingency	926	(772)	154
Modernisation plans	454	(454)	0
Edgar Street Grid	150	541	691
Whitecross school PFI	202	79	281
LPSA 2 reward grant	1,482	(1,258)	224
Carbon Reserve	30	(10)	20
Schools Redundancies	294	(284)	10
Service Delivery Review	112	(112)	0
Schools Rates Reserve	869		869
Economic Development	346	(80)	266
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board	21		21
Accommodation	133	(133)	0
Insurance reserve	0	544	544
Pool car reserve	0	10	10
Local development framework	0	270	270
Area based grant	0	53	53
	16,064	(1,828)	14,236

Write Off

8. The table below sets out the numbers and amounts written off for individual debts exceeding £1,000 for the period year ended 31st March 2010, the previous years information is provided for comparison.

Income Type	2009/10 (Full year)		2008/9 (Full year)	
	No. of cases	Amount	No. of cases	Amount
Council Tax	41	£70,477.72	9	£14,661.12
Business Rates	55	£304,193.6	33	£158,687.53
Benefit Overpayments	16	£31,912.82	8	£18,069.87
Debtors	36	£149,001.28	49	£123,496.52

9. For Business Rates (National Non-Domestic Rates), irrecoverable amounts are fully reimbursed by Central Government subject to the approval of the Audit Commission; therefore, there is no cost to the Authority. The amount written off increased in 2009/10 because of the difficult financial climate which affected some larger businesses.
10. For benefit overpayments, a provision is made for irrecoverable amounts from the budget subsidy which is paid by the Department for Work and Pensions. Irrecoverable amounts for Sundry Debtors are recharged to the originating department.
11. In general, debts considered for write-off fall into the following categories:
- Bankruptcy or liquidation
 - Debt relief order
 - Remitted by Magistrates at a Committal hearing
 - Unable to trace debtors
 - Debtor deceased with no estate
 - No further action possible
12. For bankruptcies and liquidations, a claim is lodged with the Receiver and no further effective action can be taken as, under current legislation, local authority debts are non-preferential.
13. An individual with debts of less than £15,000 and a low income can apply for a debt relief order if they cannot afford to pay off their debts. It is granted by the Insolvency Service and is a cheaper option than bankruptcy.
14. Council Tax and Business Rates cases are, where possible, progressed to the Committal stage of recovery. Although the Magistrates have the power to remit part or all of the debt, the amount remitted is written off.
15. A summary of the key variations between projected outturn and budget for each directorate is provided in the following paragraphs.

INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING DIRECTORATE

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over) spend
Learning Disabilities	12,377	(615)
Mental Health	7,407	(111)
Older People	13,737	(1,260)
Physical Disabilities / Sensory Impairment	4,296	(293)
Section 75 Arrangements	936	(54)
Commissioning Directorate	1,620	0
Other Services	322	73
Total	40,695	(2,260)

Overview

16. The 2010/11 budget has been set using actual outturn activity and predicted increase in demographics and client numbers phased throughout the year, alongside contract inflation that has been given to providers. This gives a realistic target to the service areas and demonstrates the deficit starting position that has to be recovered.
17. Area Based Grant has been topsliced by 6% which has an impact of a £194k and further cuts are being reviewed by the Partnership Board, especially in areas where funding is as yet uncommitted.
18. The forecast is a net overspend of £2.26m. This is based on existing commitments projected forward in combination with realistic assumptions about the recovery measures of £929k and a further £1m yet to be identified and costed. This also includes budget virements of £2.2m from central services, being monies allocated to services as part of budget setting, but held centrally pending business cases to substantiate the need for virement.

Major Budget Exceptions

19. Learning Disabilities - Total predicted over spend for the full year is £615k.
20. The full year anticipated over spend relates to increased costs in:
 - Residential and nursing care packages costs have increased due to more complex needs. There was an overspend in 2009/10 of £1m at year end, this is included in the budget assumptions for 2010/11 with a growth factor of 8% in the number of clients supported.
 - An increase in the number of new clients choosing to take personal budgets. In 2009/10 the number of personal budget increased from 36 to 53, the increase built into the assumption for 2010/11 is to increase by a further 15% to 61 packages.
21. Mental Health - Anticipated over spend of £111k
22. To date there has been an increase in the use of respite and projected outturn has increased by £105k. An increase in agency staff within the Mental Health Older People Team, to cover the increase in workload relating to the number of safeguarding cases, has a financial impact

of £43k if it continues for the full year.

23. Older People - Total predicted over spend £1,259k
24. Since March, an increase of 10 placements, for residential and nursing care packages and more expensive packages put in place for complex needs. There is a predicted over spend £115k. Domiciliary care over spent by £1m last year, this deficit has rolled into 2010/11, the budget also assumes a 5% rise on that actual spend. Year to date there is an additional overspend on the budgeted figure of £164k, thus the predicted outturn has been increased to reflect this, a rise of £278k.
25. Physical Disabilities Full year forecast over spend of £293k
26. The budget for residential and nursing packages assumed a reduction in the number of packages. This has yet to happen and thus the forecast has been increased by £31k.
27. Year to date domiciliary care is over spent by £48k, thus the predicted outturn has increased by £111k.
28. Section 75 agreements. Total predicted over spend is £54k
29. There is an anticipated over spend within the Community Equipment Store of £133k, split 50:50 with the PCT, due to the high demand for equipment and in particular specialist equipment. If demand increases, as expected with the implementation of the Personalisation Agenda, to keep more people at home and be more independent, there will extra items required from the Equipment Store putting more pressure on the budget.
30. Hillside is predicting an overspend of £110k with the Council's contribution to this being £32k. The year end forecast is based on current pressures of agency physiotherapy cover, utilities and unachieved efficiency savings.

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

31. All directorates projecting a overspend are required to submit a recovery plan.
32. The Recovery Plan actions for Integrated Commissioning include
 - review of Out of County Placements for all client groups
 - savings in transferring clients into supported living
 - contracts review – including a major review of the Shaw contract - voids and maximising value from all contracts and clawback from under performance
 - review of in-house services to improve efficiency, including review of STARRS
 - review of daycare services
 - Implementing a new charging policy, potentially instigating new and increased charges
 - introduction of the Electronic Monitoring System – reducing inefficiencies within payments to suppliers in line with actual hours delivered

Other Risks

33. Independent Living funding (ILF) criteria has changed in 2010/11. It has been announced that no new applications will be accepted in order to protect those already receiving funding. The impact is likely to be around £20k per year.

34. The grant budget assumed a 6% cut in the ABG (approx impact £200k) which has been re-allocated by the Partnership. The recently announced cut in ABG amounts to £1.158m for the council as a whole. The impact of this reduction is currently being assessed.
35. Demographics. The budget assumes that the number of people over 65 will increase by 18% over the next 5 years. Mental Health and Physical disabilities following a trend of 4% rise in the number of clients. There is a risk that this is exceeded.
36. Transitions from Children's Services involving expensive packages transferred (estimated to be £279k). The budget assumes a savings target of 30% due to the redesign of care.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE (CYPD)

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over) Spend
Improvement & Inclusion	4,895	(154)
Safeguarding and Assessment	12,240	(117)
Planning, Performance & Development (PP&D)	6,932	265
Community Operations	301	205
Central Directorate	(252)	(702)
Total	24,116	(503)

Overview

37. The original budget has been updated to reflect the recently confirmed budget virement of £450k for additional funds to support growth in residential and agency placements.
38. To reach a balanced budget position for 2010/11 the Children's Services budget included a 5% vacancy management target of £493k and a savings target of £857k. Current indications are that the directorate is on track to achieve the vacancy management target. To date other savings have been identified totalling £700k.
39. However, in year pressures totalling £646k have been highlighted, £143k of the identified savings will help to offset the pressures but there remains a forecast over-spend of £503k. Further work is ongoing in terms of identifying savings for example through the development of income generation and the restructure which may deliver some savings in year dependent.

Major Budget Exceptions

40. The principal pressures included in the forecast are:
 - Complex Additional Needs (JAM) £300k – increasing numbers of placements (this has an equivalent impact on Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)). Numbers of children have been increasing over recent years whilst the budget has not increased.
 - Costs of interim director / recruitment of new director £90k
 - Safeguarding pressures include costs for adoption agency (£50k) for two difficult to place children, additional specific family support (£52k) and £70k of redundancy costs.
 - Herefordshire share of redundancy costs from the transfer of student finance services from Worcestershire to the Student Loan Company equating to £27k.
 - Additional HR support costs required to deliver the restructure (£35k).

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

41. Following the restructure review senior managers were tasked with identifying 10% in year savings. These proposals have been independently reviewed by Financial Services to confirm the validity and timing of the savings and incorporated into an action plan that has been shared with the Director of Resources. The outcomes from this form the basis of the savings to cover the unidentified 5% target saving built into the base budget.

Other Risks

42. Redundancies (Central) – Other than the Safeguarding redundancy costs the forecast does not include any estimate of the cost of potential redundancies arising from the restructuring as all efforts will be made to minimise the impacts through a combination of natural wastage, matching “at risk” staff to similar posts etc.
43. Looked After Children – there is huge volatility in the numbers of children being brought in to be looked after, for example recently in a single week 12 children had to be placed in emergency agency placements and whilst 5 of the children were returned to their families very quickly 7 of these children remain in placements. As the projected end dates for these placements are still being confirmed the costs are not yet factored into the forecast.
44. Severances – schools redundancy costs for 09/10 were approximately £200k above the original budget, but the over-spend was covered by reserves. As it cannot be quantified at the present time the extent of the spend for 2010/11 the forecast is held at the original 09/10 budget figure. Estimates will be available in February on the predicted spend for 2010/11.
45. Delivery of identified savings – some of the savings identified include the removal of posts or cancellation of contracts. For the savings to be achieved the notice must be given on the contracts and the restructure must be actioned if savings are to be achieved in Q4 as predicted.

Grants

46. ABG - The Department for Education (DfE) has cut £934k from the area based grant for Herefordshire for 2010/11, this equates to approximately 25% of the annual budget. Further work is underway to determine how the savings will be achieved across the Partnership.
47. Other Grants - The Think Family grant has been unringfenced which has enabled the funds to be utilised more widely and contribute to in year savings.
48. DSG– The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2010/11 (based on pupil numbers of 22,564) at a total £90.304m. This is £10k more than the planning assumptions used to set school budgets. Recoupment of grant for the Hereford Academy is estimated at £2.987m although this has yet to be confirmed by the DfE.

Schools

49. In addition to the JAM cost pressures mentioned above, the revaluation of school business rates (after school budgets had been issued) has resulted in increased costs of £198k. The DSG 2009/10 under-spend of £128k has been allocated to meet the increased costs for Pupil Referral Units introducing the minimum 25 hour tuition from September 2010. All of these additional costs are expected to feed through into 2011/12 and given the expected reduced DSG settlement in the autumn, difficult budget decisions will be necessary.

Academies

50. The government has offered the opportunity for outstanding schools to opt into the academies programme. If schools follow this path there will be a financial impact on both the DSG and the local authority budget. It is estimated that for a large high school the local authority budget will be top sliced by between £250k and £300k and DSG reduced by approximately £225k for a full year.
51. The top-slice of local authority budgets is based on the budget for school improvement and strategic management and is estimated by the DfE at £270 per pupil.
52. The DSG will be reduced in-year for schools taking academy status in 2010/11 however the Local Authority (LA) budget will not be reduced until 2011/12. The DfE will be consulting authorities on the final methodology for academy recoupment in the autumn. Depending on the number of schools opting for academy status there could be a significant financial impact

on both the DSG and LA budget although this cannot be calculated accurately until the numbers of schools transferring are known. The potential impact of academies has been included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy so that the potential cost is recognised in the budget process.

53. Currently one school is going through the formal process to become an academy – it is likely that John Kyrle High School will achieve academy status from 1st January 2011.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over)
		Forecast
Legal & Democratic Services	3,009	(350)
Communications	362	0
Director and Administration	202	0
Policy & Performance	707	0
Herefordshire Partnership	246	0
Customer Services	1,537	0
ICT	6,098	100
Corporate Programmes	(5)	0
Human Resources	1,517	100
Shared Services / Connects	(45)	0
	13,628	(150)

Major Budget Exceptions

54. There are two major pressures affecting the Legal budget:
- Local Land Charges is to become a FOI requirement; the service will not longer be able to charge for Personal Searches. An initial estimate suggests this will reduce the income achievable by £200k.
 - The cost of interim posts for the first half of 2010-11 for Legal and Democratic Services is likely to be £130k, additional agency staff are also being used within the service expected to cost 33k above budget.

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

55. The recruitment of permanent staff is underway to remove the use of interim posts. A review of Coroners Services should result in a reduction to costs, and the consolidation of Registrar Services will also create administration savings.
56. Long term sickness is being closely monitored to reduce the impact to the service. Corporate Programmes are also reviewing the services that are chargeable to maximise income without increasing charge out rates.

Major Virements Completed

57. The budget virements completed in 2009-10 for the Herefordshire Connects savings target of £700k have been rolled into 2010-11 for those savings identified on a recurrent basis. Connects savings were transferred from Sustainable Communities of £66k for P+ savings. Additionally Connects savings of £25k were transferred for savings in relation to the Civica system.
58. The Community Network savings for 2010/11 of £65,940 have been transferred from ICT to Central Services Corporate Management.
59. Procurement budget of £174,620 will transfer from Resources to the Deputy Chief Executive from the 1st August 2010, to mirror the management arrangements.

Other Risks

60. An impact assessment is currently underway covering changes to land charges income
61. ABG and Grant funding cuts will affect Corporate Training's ability to deliver the Adult Social Care training programme. The service currently receives 70% (£470k) of its funding from ABG. The Grant cuts will also affect the programme of work delivered by Diversity and Herefordshire Partnership.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over) Forecast
Highways, Transport & Community Services	12,458	(125)
Environment, Planning & Waste	13,644	0
Homes & Communities	2,595	0
Economy & Culture	5,019	0
Directorate Management & Support	524	0
	34,240	(125)

Major Budget Exceptions

62. Based on the income received to the end of July 2010, parking ticket income is 3% lower than the same period in 2009. The charges have not been increased for inflation and both these factors produce a shortfall of £170k against the budget. Income from Penalty charge notices will be below target by £60k.
63. Vacancy management savings of £105k have been identified mainly in the Countryside and Public Rights of Way teams and will be vired to reduce the Parking income budget.
64. It was previously reported that the Markets budget was under pressure in relation to a shortfall of rental income on the Hereford Butter Market of £90k, this has now reduced to a shortfall of £45k due to additional income received from Street Trading and the Hereford Open Retail Market. Income from Crematorium Fees has exceeded budget to date and this is expected to mitigate the overspend in Markets for the year.
65. The latest forecasts for Development Control income indicates a shortfall of £50k whilst Building Control indicates that income will come in on or near to budget. Due to the unpredictability of these income streams they will be closely monitored during the coming months and mitigation plans sought if the situation remains or deteriorates further. The current shortfall can be met from the receipt of the planning delivery grant.
66. The IDOX contract cost of document scanning in planning is now expected to continue throughout the current financial year at a cost of approximately £65k. This cost will be managed within existing budgets, but is not sustainable beyond this financial year.
67. The latest forecasts for public transport route subsidies indicate an over spend of £63k but this will be managed within existing budgets due in the main to staff vacancy savings.

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

68. The total savings target for this Directorate is £1.68m and following the disaggregation of the Environment and Culture Directorate savings have been identified across the services within this process. These will be closely monitored throughout the year.
69. Libraries have identified savings in relation to staffing levels and library opening hours to address the previously forecast overspend of £85k, this will be closely monitored throughout the year.

Major Virements Completed

70. Connects savings were transferred from Sustainable Communities of £66k for P+ savings.

71. A saving of £196k was achieved through the Organisational Restructure and is being held centrally.

Other Risks

72. The Transportation route subsidies rely heavily on the Area Based Grant so any reduction in this grant will cause further overspending if current contracts are maintained. It is however possible to end contracts and reduce costs accordingly but these will incur the payment of a financial penalty, dependant upon the individual contracts.
73. Community Safety staffing and Safer Roads Partnership funding is also reliant upon Area Based Grant funding so any significant loss of this funding could result in potential redundancies and reduced support to partners.

PUBLIC HEALTH

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over) Forecast
Environmental Health & Trading Standards	1,968	0
Emergency Planning	152	(35)
Public Health Support Team	16	0
	2,136	(35)

Major Budget Exceptions

74. In the development of the Joint Emergency Planning Unit, staffing costs for the Emergency Planning team are expected to exceed budget by £35k.

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

75. Whilst additional contributions are being negotiated with the Primary Care Trust and Hereford Hospital Trust which will mitigate the pressure on Emergency Planning budgets, this has not yet been agreed.
76. Annual savings of £189k have been identified through expected vacancy management savings.

Major Virements Completed

77. Connects savings of £25k were transferred for savings in relation to the Civica system.

CENTRAL SERVICES BUDGETS

£000's	Annual Budget	Under / (Over)
		Forecast
PST Chief Executive	393	0
Director of Public Health	296	0
Director of Clinical Leadership & Quality	55	0
Chairman's Fund	12	0
Lord Lieutenancy	10	0
Levies	208	0
Corporate Management	1,127	0
Pension Related Costs	591	0
Corporate Subscriptions	222	0
	2,914	0

Major Budget Exceptions

78. There are no expected variations from Budget. The Organisational and Development budget has been fully drawn down, both the PCT and the Council will need to make new contributions towards any costs incurred in the year.

Major Virements Completed

79. The Community Network savings for 2010/11 of £65,940 have been transferred from ICT and are now held centrally. Similarly the Environment directorate transferred £198,000 for the Director post that has been removed from the establishment.

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

£'000	Annual Budget	Under / (Over) Forecast
Asset Management & Property Services	3,139	0
Financial Services	1,952	0
Audit Services	426	0
Benefits and Exchequer Services	1,512	400
Central Budgets	181	(60)
Total	7,210	340

Current Position

80. Overall the Directorate is predicted to underspend by £340k. Historically the authority has received higher benefits subsidy than the actual costs of payments to claimants. Latest estimates show this continuing in the current year with an anticipated surplus of £400k which more than offsets unavoidable overspends in the central budget.

Major Budget Exceptions

81. Within Benefits and Exchequer there are some anticipated cost overspends including £23k for archiving costs, court and bailiff costs of £15k, ICT software £12k and agency staff covering staff diverted to Aggresso implementation.
82. The central budget is expected to overspend by £60k due to consultancy and additional staff time for the change management process.
83. In Financial Services overall employment costs are about £12k below budget but these will mitigate software overspends on maintaining the Cedar ledger. Income from schools SLAs is £28k more than anticipated.
84. Unbudgeted supplementary rent has continued to be received in respect of Maylord Orchards with some £54k having been received to date.

Recovery Plan Actions Instigated

85. Staff vacancies are being actively managed within Benefits and Exchequer to offset costs pressures identified above.
86. Staffing reductions in audit are due to be implemented at the end of July.

Major Virements Completed

87. The budget has been increased by £70k to cover the costs of extended reception opening times.

Other Risks

88. Charges to the Court Service for Shire Hall are still to be agreed with the Home Office. An income of £80k was accrued for 2009/10. If any items are disputed or agreed as ineligible this will impact on the current year.
89. A relatively high proportion of the property maintenance budget is spent on responsive maintenance which is necessarily difficult to predict.
90. Any unpredicted increases in benefits claims may affect Revenues and Benefits.

Capital Monitoring Summary

1. The capital forecast outturn for 2010/11 totals £77.7m, a summary by directorate spend and funding thereof is provided in Table A below.

Table A – Funding of 2010/11 Capital

£'000	2010/11 Forecast	SCE(R)	Prudential Borrowing	Grant	Revenue Contribution	Capital Receipts Reserves
Children's Services	31,739	915	480	29,951	65	328
Resources	4,708	-	3,926	33	-	749
Deputy Chief Executive	2,838	-	2,838	-	-	-
Adult Social Care	974	-	300	551	-	123
Sustainable Communities	37,133	12,315	7,061	9,912	-	7,845
Public Health	337	-	282	22	-	33
Total	77,729	13,230	14,887	40,469	65	9,078

2. The original forecast spends totalled £77.9m. Various changes to the original capital forecast have been identified recognising the inclusion of slippage from the previous year and reductions where funding cuts have been announced. Some capital projects are on hold pending confirmation of funding allocations. Revisions by use of the virement process exceeding £140k are listed below;-
- Disabled facilities grant funding has been increased by £215k through a funding allocation from housing capital receipts reserve
 - Affordable housing grants budget has been increased by £250k through a funding allocation from housing capital receipts reserve
 - Highways budget has been increased by £1,017k through the allocation of an extreme winter damage central government grant
 - £600k growth area grant funding has been vired to fund the new livestock market infrastructure costs
 - £347k has been vired from the highways maintenance budget to the highway staff costs budget
 - £860k growth area grant funding has been vired to fund the Connect 2 capital project costs
 - £288k prudential borrowing has been allocated to fund the purchase of three gritters, the annual capital financing cost is to be met from revenue which would otherwise be used to fund lease costs
 - The park and ride budget has been reduced by £540k following central government announcements of funding cuts
 - Schools harnessing technology budget has been cut in half - £543k - following central

government announcements of funding reductions

- Schools targeted capital funding has been reduced by £660k following central government announcements of funding cuts
3. Details of total capital scheme costs, funding, 2010/11 budget position and any potential issues for capital schemes with a forecast spend in 2010/11 exceeding £500k are provided in Table B below. Financial completion of the Riverside school should occur this year. This scheme has overspent due to the original contractor going into liquidation which has increased costs in relation to remedial works, site security costs, fees and new contractor costs to enable completion of the scheme. There are a number of proposals underway to recoup this overspend, being the sale of mobile classrooms, the settlement of the original contractor bond and the generation of a site capital receipt.

Table B - Schemes with an expected outturn exceeding £500k in 2010/11

Scheme	2010/11 Forecast £'000	Spend to end period 4 £'000	Comments
Children's Services			
Hereford Academy	13,256	3,250	Work in progress scheme on schedule both time and budget
Minster Replacement School	4,171	1,902	Work in progress scheme on schedule both time and budget
Co-location	3,328	246	A number of schemes are progressing, the largest based in Bromyard
Devolved Capital Programme	2,050	1,163	Devolved allocation of capital funding to schools
Intervention Centres	1,673	208	14 schemes at high schools are progressing
Primary Grant	1,500	82	This will fund the amalgamation of Leominster's junior and infants school
Childcare / QuAc	1,038	383	Various schemes to complete in 2010/11, waiting for full funding confirmation
TCF Standards and Diversity	675	76	Rural funding towards plant and equipment costs
Wave 2 Playbuilder	607	11	Funding recently unringfenced, waiting for go ahead
Condition property works	600	105	Annual programme of works at various sites committed on a highest need first basis, budget under pressure
Resources			
Corporate accommodation	3,000	63	Programme manager recently appointed
Smallholdings	723	61	Regulatory works at various sites
Hereford Leisure Pool	600	-	Refurbishment works recently approved
Deputy Chief Executive			
Herefordshire Connects	2,780	649	Anticipated HR and finance system to go live April 2011
Sustainable Communities			
Road, Bridge & Footway Maintenance	11,769	2,793	Annual programme of Amey works

Livestock Market	5,800	7	Access and preliminary works underway
Ledbury library	2,339	7	Scheme under review
Rural Enterprise Grant	1,667	484	Various grant funded schemes
Grange Court	1,500	20	Refurbishment works prior to lease
Credenhill flood alleviation scheme	1,500	149	Grant funded alleviation works in association with Hereford Futures
Affordable Housing Grants	1,338	216	Annual allocation of grants to various schemes
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant	1,230	308	Various schemes are referred and committed before expenditure is recorded
Extreme winter highway damage	1,017	-	Large amount of works expected to be completed in August
Ross library	1,000	25	Scheme under review
Hereford City Centre Enhancements	891	343	Improvement works to complete in November
Rotherwas Futures Estate Development Work	718	(395)	The negative spend to date represents an opening creditor for infrastructure costs
Private Sector Housing	697	43	Schemes will be reduced to be replaced by available Kickstart loans
Sustrans Connect 2	558	14	Permission required for identified scheme outstanding
Sub Total	68,025	12,160	
Schemes with a budget <£500k in 2010/11	9,704	1,113	This includes the Riverside capital scheme which is being temporarily funded from the primary grant funding allocation
Total	77,729	13,273	

4. This report has been presented to the Capital Strategy Working Group, whose remit is to focus and investigate any exceptional deviations from the approved capital scheme.

Prudential Borrowing

5. A summary of the Prudential Borrowing position is set out below.

	£'000	£'000
2010/11 Original Prudential Borrowing Forecast		18,601
Add: Slippage from 2009/10	4,789	
New funding allocations	467	
		5,256
Less: Slippage into future years	(8,869)	
No longer required	(101)	
		(8,970)
Expected use of Prudential Borrowing in 2010/11		14,887

The bulk of slippage into future years relates to the accommodation strategy, a forecast spend of £3m is expected this year.

Capital Receipts Reserve

6. The capital receipts reserve totalled £13.3m as at 31st March 2010; £9.1m of this is expected to fund the 2010/11 capital programme. The bulk of commitments include funding the provision of a livestock market.

This quarterly report ensures the council is embracing best practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations, by informing members of Treasury Management activity. Whilst the report is principally to cover the quarter to 30 June 2010, it also includes borrowing transactions to the end of July.

1. The Economy

1.1. Recent economic statistics show:

- The Bank Base Rate remaining unchanged at 0.50%.
- CPI inflation remaining relatively high: year on year inflation started the quarter at 3.4% and rose to a high of 3.7% in April before falling back to 3.2% in June
- GDP increasing by 1.1% in the second quarter of 2010 due to growth across the board.
- House prices falling slightly during the quarter and they are expected to remain fairly flat during the rest of 2010.
- The number of unemployed people falling by 34,000 in the quarter to May to a total of 2.47 million. The number of people in work rose by 160,000 in the three months which is the biggest rise since August 2006 although the majority of these (148,000) are only in part-time work.

1.2 Whilst the increase in the GDP figure was welcome news, a slow recovery is expected. No change in current policy is expected anytime soon, with Quantitative Easing remaining at £200bn and the base rate staying at 0.50%.

2. The Council's Investments

2.1 As at 30 June 2010 the council held the following investments:

Investment	Term	Maturity Date	Interest Rate	Amount invested	
				£m	£m
Instant access bank accounts					
National Westminster	N/A	N/A	1.10%	5.00	
Santander	N/A	N/A	0.80%	5.00	
Barclays Call	N/A	N/A	0.65%	5.00	
Clydesdale	N/A	N/A	0.75%	5.00	20.00
Fixed term deposits					
Bank of Scotland	364 days	27/01/11	1.82%	5.00	
Nationwide	183 days	24/12/10	0.96%	2.00	
Nationwide	123 days	25/10/10	0.74%	3.00	10.00
Instant access Money Market Funds					
Blackrock				2.05	
Standard Life				5.00	
Insight				5.00	12.05
Total					42.05

2.2 Due to a certain degree of confidence returning to the UK financial markets, the council is now placing more funds on term deposit to earn a higher rate of interest. On the advice of Arlingclose, the council's treasury advisor, the council is moving towards a rolling

programme of £1 million one-year deposits, with such deposits totalling £12 million at any one time and £1 million maturing and being reinvested each month.

- 2.3 Arlingclose recommends an investment limit of 15% per institution and the treasury team use a limit of £5 million (£33 million being a reasonable approximation of the average amount invested during the year). The only situation where this limit is increased is where there is a group of banks when a £7.5 million limit is applied. For example, the council has £5 million currently invested with the Bank of Scotland and so could only invest a further £2.5 million with Lloyds TSB.
- 2.4 The treasury team have investigated the possibility of using strong foreign banks but either the banks are not interested in taking council deposits or the interest rates offered are poor. Therefore, only UK banks continue to be used at present.
- 2.5 The council has earned interest on its investments as follows:

Month	Average Invested £m	Average rate of interest earned	Amount of interest earned
April 2010	23.7	1.02%	£19,866
May 2010	30.5	0.94%	£24,156
June 2010	44.7	0.80%	£29,272
July 2010	49.3	0.85%	£35,726
Total			£109,020

- 2.10 The 2010/11 budget for interest receivable is £249,000. Whilst the above figures are before deducting interest paid out to third parties such as schools and trust funds, this budget is regarded as achievable.

3. The Council's Borrowing

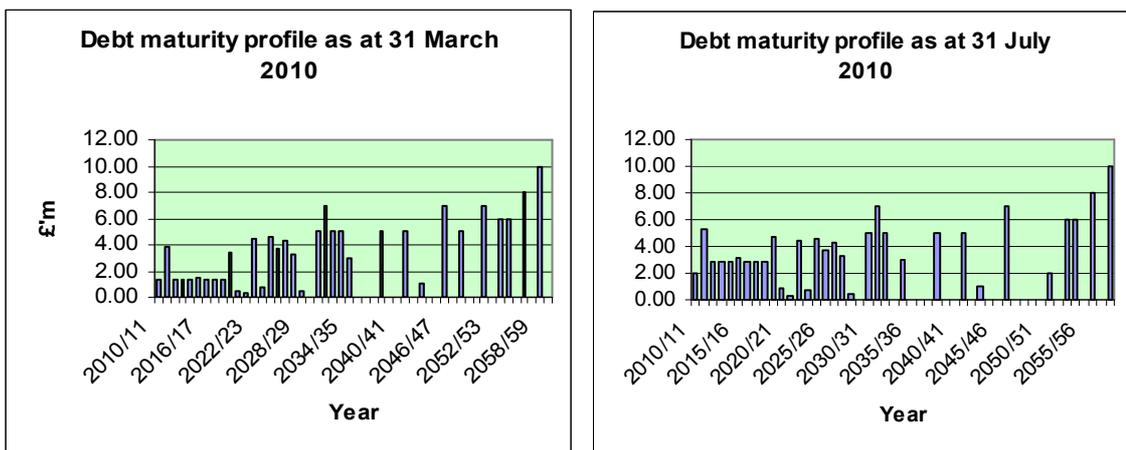
- 3.1 So far in the year to the end of July 2010 the council has taken out the following new loans:

Date	Term	Amount	Repayment method	Interest rate	6 monthly repayment of principal
26/06/10	10 years	£10 million	EIP	2.47%	£500,000
27/07/10	9 years	£5 million	EIP	2.24%	£277,778
EIP = Equal Instalments of Principal repaid every six months					

- 3.2 In addition the following loans have been repaid:

Date	Remaining term to maturity	Amount	Repayment method	Interest rate
28/07/10	23 years	£5 million	Maturity	4.25%
02/08/10	37 years	£5 million	Maturity	4.20%
02/08/10	41 years	£5 million	Maturity	4.20%
Maturity = All principal repaid at end of term (unless repaid earlier)				

- 3.3 By replacing the above loans with cheaper short-term loans the average maturity of the council's debt portfolio has reduced from 28.2 years to 24.9 years with the current average rate of interest falling from 4.35% as at 31 March 2010 to 4.13% today. Reducing the interest rate payable on £15 million from 4.216% to 2.393% should result in savings of around £182k in the eight months to 31 March 2010. In addition the council received discounts on repayment totalling £83,398.21 which will be spread over ten years (in accordance with current accounting practice) generating further savings of £8,340 per annum. Taken together, the new loans should generate total savings of around £1.47 million over their nine and ten year terms, however, because they are EIP loans (necessitating repayment of principal over the term of the loans) the exact savings will depend on the cost of refinancing amounts repaid.
- 3.4 The effect of replacing longer term maturity loans with shorter term EIP debt can be seen in the graphs below which compare the council's debt maturity profile at the start of the financial year to the profile as it stands today. EIP loans have the advantage of smoothing the council's maturity profile.



4.0 Projected outturn for borrowing costs

- 4.1 The projected outturn is difficult to quantify as it depends on the rate of interest payable on new loans taken out. Current projections indicate that the council will need to take out £20 million of additional loans before the year end. If interest rates are expected to stay low the council may take out PWLB variable rate borrowing (currently 0.70%) or even borrow from other local authorities (at 0.50% or less, including brokers commission). However, if rates are expected to increase the council will take out longer term fixed rates to try and lock in good rates for future years.
- 4.2 For example, if at the end of September the council were to take out a long-term loan of £20 million at a fixed interest rate of, say, 4.00% current projections of borrowing costs and Minimum Revenue Provision indicate that the underspend for the year will be around £800,000. Alternatively, if the council borrows £20 million at the end of September at a variable interest rate of say 1% the underspend may increase to £1.1 million. So the actual underspend will be determined by when the loans are taken out and the term of the loan/interest rate chosen. The council's treasury management team monitor rates on a daily basis and take advice from the council's treasury advisors Arlingclose

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC ABOUT SERVICES AND ACCESS TO THOSE SERVICES.
REPORT BY	HEAD OF PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT AND COMMITTEE MANAGER (SCRUTINY)

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the report of the scrutiny review of communication with the public about services and access to those services.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Committee considers whether it wishes to agree the findings of the Scrutiny Review of communication with the public about services and access to those services; and**
- (b) **subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response.**

Introduction and Background

1. In December 2009 the Committee agreed to conduct a review of communication with the public about services and access to those services. This was in the context of seeking to develop an external focus to the scrutiny work programme.
2. A copy of the report of the Scrutiny Review Group appointed to undertake the review is appended.

Appendices

Scrutiny Review of the communication with the public about services and access to those services.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Julie Gethin, Head of Partnership Support on 01432 260610 and
Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on 01432 260239

Background Papers

- None identified.

Scrutiny Review of Communication with the Public About Services and Access To Those Services

**For presentation to the Overview
and Scrutiny Committee on
27 September 2010**

**People
Excellence
Openness
Partnership
Listening
Environment**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of the review at its meeting on 2 July 2010. Subject to slight amendments to recommendations (p) and (r) the Committee agreed the findings and that the report be forwarded to the Leader of the Council for consideration.

This version contains the slight amendments referred to above.

Contents

	Page
Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Method of Gathering Information	5
Strategic Context	5
Current Methods of Communication and their Effectiveness	7
Herefordshire Matters and Other Local Media	7
Leaflets and Other Publications	12
Public Access to Computers in Libraries and Customer Service Centres	14
Statutory Notices	14
What Information Customers Wish to Receive	15
A Corporate Approach to Communication	15
Areas of Best Practice/Potential Development	17
Website	17
Social Media	19
Webcasting of Council Meetings	19
Expenditure on Communications	20
Next Steps	21
Summary of Recommendations	23
Appendices	25
Scoping Statement	25
List of Interviewees	29
Extract from Communication Strategy	31
ICT Measures Supporting Community Engagement	35

Foreword

How the Council communicates what it is doing, or plans to do, to the County residents is extremely important and this Scrutiny Review was established to see whether what we currently do is effective, clear and interesting, and in these financially straitened times, offers value for money.

It may be felt that the Review Group has over concentrated on 'Herefordshire Matters' but this magazine is a major method of communication with all Herefordshire households and one which regularly generates strong opinions from Council tax payers.

The Review Group hope that our findings and recommendations will ensure that communications with our residents can become even more effective.

As Chairman, I would also like to thank everyone who gave of their time to come and talk to the Review Group; their contributions were in some cases critical, but always helpful and illuminating. I would also like to thank the other review group members, Councillors Phil Cutter, Phil Edwards Terry James and Peter Watts for their invaluable suggestions, support and hard work.

Finally a huge vote of thanks to our two officers, Tim Brown and Julie Gethin whose help, good humour and ability to keep a group of vocal and strong minded Councillors 'on track' has been much appreciated.

Councillor PA Andrews
Chairman of the External Scrutiny Review Group

Introduction

1. In the context of developing an external focus to the work programme Members considered that improvements to various aspects of communication could be made. External communications have a bearing on the reputation of the Council and NHS Herefordshire and how they are perceived by the public, as well as having a direct impact on the ease with which customers are able to access services within the County. In this regard, the Committee's terms of reference for the review were:
 - To identify what external communication by the Council and NHS Herefordshire currently takes place to inform the public about services.
 - To establish what is already known from customers about what information they wish to receive and the effectiveness of current communications in meeting those needs. To consider what further information might need to be obtained from customers in this respect and to ask that it be obtained to inform this review.
 - To identify any areas of duplication both within each organisation and between organisations, as well as any potential savings.
 - To identify any areas of best practice.
 - To make recommendations that will improve public awareness of services and how to access them.
2. The following matters were excluded from the review: agendas and minutes, press releases, individual services such as the Communications Unit, Customer Services, Tourist Information Centres and the Library Service, consultation documents, general correspondence, job advertisements, internal communication, statutory notices, and tourist information. The Review Group has commented briefly on some aspects of these matters that have arisen as a consequence of its enquiries and also sought to ensure it was not duplicating other key pieces of work underway at the same time such as the scrutiny review of the impact of the Winter Weather and the response to it and the external review of the Communications Unit which has recently been completed.
3. The scoping statement for the review is attached at Appendix 1.

Method of Gathering Information

4. The Review Group considered relevant strategies and a range of other documentation and viewed a number of webcasts of meetings.
5. Interviews were held with a number of people to enable specific issues to be discussed in detail. A list of those interviewed is attached at appendix 2.
6. Members of the Review Group also visited several Council premises around the County to investigate what material was available to the public and how it was displayed.

Strategic Context

7. There are two key joint documents that set the strategic direction for the Council and NHS Herefordshire (the Primary Care Trust) in relation to communication with communities – the Communications Strategy and the HPS Customer Strategy.

8. The Communications Strategy sets out existing communications channels. The relevant extract from the Strategy is attached at appendix 3.
9. The Communications Unit leads on the implementation of this Strategy and its associated action plan. The Unit was the UK's first unified communications team for a local authority and primary care trust. As well as the strategy there is a single service plan, and joint communications policies, such as protocols, advertising and corporate identity guidelines, to support partnership working.
10. The Unit's role is to promote awareness, understanding and support for the vision, values and priorities of NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council among the diverse communities and stakeholders of Herefordshire, and the wider regional and national health and government audiences. Its scope of work includes:
 - Communication and marketing strategies and campaigns, often supporting change, consultation or engagement programmes
 - Media relations – including press release production, media enquiries, media monitoring and media training
 - Internal communications – including change management
 - Elected member and non-executive director communications
 - Brand management, visual identity, graphic design and print management
 - Publications – including the residents' newsletter and various corporate publications
 - Event management
 - Crisis management (working with emergency planning)
11. Herefordshire Public Services (the partnership between Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire) sets out in its Customer Strategy its commitment to deliver efficient, excellent services and improved outcomes for the citizens of, and visitors to, the County.
12. The four key commitments in the Customer Strategy are:
 - Improved outcomes for local people
 - Excellence in service delivery
 - Focus on customers' experience
 - Being efficient and delivering value for money
13. The aim of accessible services is to deliver reliable, flexible and responsive services at a time and in a way that is convenient to customers. Using a "one Stop" approach the intention is to continue to develop integrated front offices for services provided by Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire. This is alongside a range of engagement methods to develop meaningful, regular and joined up engagement with all sections of Herefordshire's communities. Becoming an organisation that listens through regular, systematic and co-ordinated consultation and engagement will ensure that public services reflect what local need and want. Also, by treating customers equally and fairly and striving to become trusted by communities Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire will be able to foster a sense of place and well being in all parts of the County.
14. Both of these strategies and their overarching objectives and approaches were considered by the Review Group.

Current methods of communication and their effectiveness

HEREFORDSHIRE MATTERS AND OTHER LOCAL MEDIA

15. Herefordshire Matters (HM) is the Council's magazine for patients, service users and residents. It is delivered to every household in the county, and outlets like libraries, customer service centres, reception areas, GP surgeries, youth centres, residential homes and day care centres. Its aim is to promote public services and how to access and engage in shaping them.
16. When the review was being undertaken the magazine was published bi-monthly. The council budgets for £12,500 per edition of Herefordshire Matters and if six editions are published and distributed to over 80,000 households and locations in a year. The gross annual cost to the Council is £75,000, offset by advertising revenue of £29,100 comprising recharges to Council Departments and NHS Herefordshire amounting to £14,900 and £14,200 from other sources. The Review Group has been informed that costs have since been reviewed and, based on a quarterly publication, the net cost will be less than £50,000. The cost per page of Herefordshire Matters compares favourably with the average cost of publications by other authorities based on a benchmarking report of 45 authorities produced by Public PR.
17. It is acknowledged that if Council or PCT advertising were placed elsewhere the reach may not be as great as through advertising with Herefordshire Matters. The Review Group has been advised that Services that do advertise in Herefordshire Matters report a much better response from Herefordshire Matters than other vehicles and that it could be argued that the publication offers the best and most cost effective penetration for service areas, with the further advantage that the money comes back to the organisation.
18. The Review Group notes that the Communications Strategy identifies as a risk control measure that a policy should be secured that all advertising targeted at citizens is considered first through Herefordshire Matters. This reflects a concern over Council services advertising with unproven or small circulation publications which solicit advertising with them and the poor value for money that this represents.
19. The Audit Commission in January 2010 published findings of research into council periodicals and communication with the public. This found that over 90% of English Councils publish a periodical but almost all of these are published once a month or less frequently.
20. The Commission stated, "Communication is important to inform the public of the services that councils provide and the functions they perform. It is also important to explain to voters and council tax payers the reasons for particular policies and priorities."
21. The Commission did recommend Councils should review their editorial policies to ensure that they are politically neutral and publicly defensible. It noted that the *Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity* states that councils need to communicate fairly and objectively about controversial issues.
22. The Commission found that a range of current practice in periodicals demonstrates that councils have taken different decisions about how to balance the community leadership role of all councillors, and the role of executive members in speaking for

the council, against the risk that the periodical may be viewed as politically biased by some readers.

23. The Commission also recommended that Councils should review the value for money of their spending on communications, including on periodicals. The Commission noted that “the financial information on council periodicals is particularly limited. The cost of periodicals is specifically described in around 10 per cent of council accounts. These accounts record average spending of £68,000 per council. A Local Government Association survey in 2009 found broadly the same figure.
24. The Government has stated that it will amend the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity to stop unfair competition by local authority newspapers. This was in response to concerns that “too many of these papers are branching into non-council content such as TV listings and sports reviews; that the councils dress up their literature as 'independent' publications; and the frequency of the free, delivered newspapers undermines commercial local newspapers”. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government said:

"The previous Government's weakening of the rules on town hall publicity not only wasted taxpayers' money and added to the wave of junk mail, but has undermined a free press.

"Councils should spend less time and money on weekly town hall Pravdas that end up in the bin, and focus more on frontline services like providing regular rubbish collections.

"In an internet age, commercial newspapers should expect over time less state advertising as more information is syndicated online for free. The flipside is our free press should not face state competition from propaganda on the rates dressed up as local reporting."

Initial indications are that Herefordshire Matters is not the type of publication that the Government is therefore seeking to curb.

25. The evidence presented to the Review Group cast some doubt on whether HM is providing information the public wants and is fulfilling its stated purpose of promoting public services and how to access and engage in shaping them. The cost could be considered high, if HM is not seen to be an effective means of letting the community know about local services.
26. It was suggested to the Group that because of the infrequency of publication the material in HM often appears outdated. One option put forward as an alternative was a more regular segment in the local newspapers containing targeted, sharp and newsworthy material. There was a view that this was more likely to be read than a separate Council publication, which as a self-standing document could be more readily discarded because people have not chosen to buy it. However, this should be balanced against the fact that readership of, for example, the Hereford Times (at approximately 36,000) is lower than current distribution of HM which goes to all households.
27. The Review Group concedes this is not an easy judgment but feels that the information gathered suggests that there is merit in further reviewing the value to the public and cost effectiveness of HM.

28. The Review Group's considerations, not just in the context of Herefordshire Matters, highlighted the importance of producing well-written targeted information with the reader firmly in mind. The impression given to the Group was that considerable effort was being expended on producing a number of pieces of information rather than taking a more selective approach. The Review Group considers that the following performance target in the Communications Strategy encourages such an approach: "Maintain press release production at 1,000 per year and maintain increased level of positive press coverage for Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire to 4,000 per year through the 2010 to 2014 period". This gives a focus to the quantity of releases and could be counter-productive and is not on its own a measure of effectiveness or value for money.
29. The Public Audit Forum has recently produced some value for money indicators for central communications functions and the production of press releases is not contained in this list.
30. If the production of HM continues, the Review Group has concerns about its predominant tone of positivity, to the extent that it may give the appearance to some of being propaganda. It considers this can have a negative impact on the Council's reputation. In particular, it urges that action should be taken to ensure that reporting is straightforward, admitting to mistakes where these have occurred and setting out the steps being taken to put things right. Reporting should be realistic and should not oversell what is expected to be achieved, thereby ensuring public expectation is not falsely raised or that scepticism continues.
31. The Review Group highlighted two specific examples in this regard. The headline in the April-June 2010 edition read, "£10 million to fix county highways". The Review Group considers this is an example of raising expectations unrealistically. The money will generate improvement but will not "fix" all the County's roads. The public perception, based on their driving experiences, is likely to be that the Council has failed to deliver on its promise despite the fact that the intention is not to fix all roads across the County in this timeframe. The effect of this is to potentially jeopardise the reputation of the Council.
32. A further example of where the Review Group thought the tone of HM had been overly positive was in connection with the change to the waste management arrangements. The impression given in HM was that everything had worked well. In fact there were a number of difficulties with the delivery of bins and the ability to meet the requests from individuals as a result of an inconsistent approach to communicating the changes in service which resulted in a large volume of complaints. The experience on the ground (confirmed by feedback received from Customer Services) was at odds with what the Council was communicating to residents. The Review Group suggested it would have been better to say that there had been some problems, which was only to be expected, and the Council had done its best to solve them.
33. The Review Group considered research into residents confidence in media sources and was somewhat sceptical of the statistics quoted for Herefordshire Matters because they are solely based on surveys conducted using the Herefordshire Voice (see below).

Confidence in media sources					
	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not confident	Base	Confident = Very + Fairly
Herefordshire Matters	33%	59%	8%	559	92%
Hereford Times	22%	70%	7%	575	93%
The Journal (Hereford, Ross or Leominster editions)	16%	73%	11%	427	89%
Ross Gazette	16%	70%	14%	90	86%
Ledbury Reporter	15%	75%	10%	81	90%
Mid Wales Journal	10%	79%	10%	29	90%
Western Daily Press	9%	84%	7%	58	93%
Worcester News	2%	83%	14%	42	86%
Birmingham Post	11%	71%	17%	35	83%
BBC Hereford & Worcester	29%	67%	4%	449	96%
Wyvern FM	17%	75%	8%	229	92%
Sunshine Radio	19%	69%	12%	90	88%

34. Herefordshire Voice is the citizens' panel for Herefordshire. It is a group of approximately 1,100 local residents who have agreed to participate regularly in consultations on a variety of topics. In order to give a reliable cross-section of local views, the panel aims to reflect the gender, age and ethnic makeup of Herefordshire as a whole, with panellists from all over the county. Herefordshire Voice is maintained to provide a basis for survey research and is generally cheaper, more convenient and more reliable than surveys sent to a random selection of residents.
35. The Review Group asked for further analysis from the Council's Research section about these findings. This concluded that whilst the composition of Herefordshire Voice does not perfectly match the profile of the county's residents, further analysis suggests:
- The statement that 92% of readers have confidence in the accuracy of the information given in Herefordshire Matters is reasonable.
 - Taking into account the age profile of the panel, the statement that 73% of residents read most or all of Herefordshire Matters is likely to be a few percentage points too high.
 - The statement that over 90% find articles interesting, useful and cover important issues is reasonable.
36. However, it is perhaps worth noting that in relation to the statement above that 92% of readers have confidence in the accuracy of the information given in Herefordshire Matters 33% were very confident and 59% fairly confident.
37. Regarding the numbers reading most or all of Herefordshire Matters, 80% of respondents to the Herefordshire Voice Survey said they normally received a copy of Herefordshire Matters. Of that group 73% said they normally read most or all of it. (In effect, taking account of those who say they do not receive the document at all, this means that 58% of respondents to the survey as a whole read most or all of Herefordshire Matters).
38. Of those who said they did receive a copy of Herefordshire Matters 35% said they read all of it, 38% said they read most of it and 24% read a few articles, with 2% not reading any of it.

39. In relation to the statement that over 90% find articles interesting, useful and cover important issues the statistics were as follows:

Views on aspects of the Herefordshire Matters magazine					
	Yes	To some extent	No	Base	Yes + to some extent
Do you find the articles interesting?	44%	51%	4%	708	96%
Is the information useful to you?	33%	60%	7%	706	93%
Are the articles easy to read?	85%	14%	2%	705	98%
Is the design clear and uncluttered?	76%	19%	5%	700	95%
Does the magazine cover important issues?	38%	55%	7%	693	93%

40. The Research Section noted that although, as mentioned above, efforts are made to ensure the panel represents a reliable cross-section of local views the Panel cannot at present claim to be perfectly representative of all residents in the County, partly because, by the very fact of agreeing to join the panel, the members are to some extent atypical, though the effect this may have cannot be determined. Based on day to day experience within the community, the Review Group remains somewhat sceptical about the survey findings. It suggests Customer Services might usefully get some direct feedback about HM through its Customer Service Centres.
41. Research conducted by MORI for the Local Government Association in 2006 found that the majority of residents (55 per cent) value a local 'A-Z of services' as the most useful form of council publicity. This is followed by the council website (40 per cent) and council tax leaflets (38 per cent). Newspapers are valued by just one in three residents (36 per cent)
42. The Review Group has considered the use of one edition of Herefordshire Matters as a resident's guide to public services replacing a more traditional A-Z of services. This was produced in September 2009 as a joint 48-page publication and delivered to every household in the county. It promoted the comprehensive range of public services, principally those provided by NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council, and how to access them. Believed to be the first publication of its type in the UK, the guide structured information about services around the needs of individual patients and service users, who require support, care or advice at key stages in their lives.
43. The Group considered the difficulty with this publication was that it did carry with it the risk of becoming outdated and consideration might be usefully given to producing the document in a way that made it possible for updates to be issued without the need to necessarily to replace the whole document.
44. Since the national evidence is that the public value an A-Z it is proposed that the recommended survey by Customer Services seeks local opinion on the value of this and other media, and the format in which the public would like to receive this information.

Recommendations

- (a) That the production of Herefordshire Matters should be reviewed to assess whether there is a more effective means of communication about public services.
- (b) That, if retained, the tone of Herefordshire Matters should be reconsidered, to ensure that reporting is straightforward, admitting to mistakes where these have occurred and setting out the steps being taken to put things right.
- (c) That, if retained, reports in Herefordshire Matters should not oversell what the Council is realistically expecting to achieve, thereby ensuring public expectation is not raised to the potential detriment of organisational reputations.
- (d) That Customer Services should be requested to conduct a survey on the value of HM and what information the public would like to receive from the Council and NHS Herefordshire through its Customer Service Centres and that this should include asking about an A-Z of services.

LEAFLETS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 45. The Communications Strategy states that Service leaflets and publications are published as required for patients, service users and residents on public services and how to access them. Around 300 separate publications, reports, booklets, leaflets and flyers are produced each year by the communications unit in line with corporate identity guidelines and house style and are offered for translation and interpretation as required.
- 46. However, services themselves also produce a vast array of leaflets with the intention of informing the public about services and how they can access them. The Review Group was concerned that this did not represent a good use of resources and was not the most cost effective way of informing the public about services. The language of some of the material seen by the Group was impenetrable, appearing to have been written by officers for officers with no real thought given to the needs of the members of the public who would have to read it.
- 47. Visits to a range of Council offices, libraries and Customer Service Centres found a proliferation of leaflets, with no evidence of a consistent approach to version control and some leaflets with handwritten amendments on them. This did not provide confidence that the information was up to date and accurate nor a professional view of the Council and NHS Herefordshire.
- 48. The amount of material was overwhelming and confusing. It was considered unlikely that this would be helpful if a person was uncertain of what information they required. The Group understands that when someone is seeking information it is more than likely that their first step on entering a Customer Service Centre or other Council office would be to ask where they could obtain a specific piece of information and advice.
- 49. It was also of concern that there was no control over leaflets being placed on display, other than by routine monitoring in the customer service centres which was itself complicated by the sheer number of leaflets involved.

50. There was an apparent complete absence of control of the display of documentation at the Shirehall, Hereford. It is recommended that the display of leaflets and publications in this building is specifically prohibited and any visitors seeking information on services are referred to Garrick House.
51. The Review Group considers that there is scope for a huge reduction in the number of leaflets and similar publications.
52. One example of the potential for waste is the reported production of 7,000 leaflets for one particular purpose, a leaflet that was not produced by the corporate design team and was incorrectly branded, of which an estimated 4,200 were issued.
53. During the scrutiny review of GP Services in the County, a comment was made by GPs on the vast quantities of leaflets being sent out for distribution to patients.
54. The Review Group welcomed the stated intention of the Head of Customer Services to review the quantity of leaflets and posters in Customer Service Centres.
55. To ensure that accurate, up to date information on services is provided to the public, the Review Group advocates a focus instead on storing up to date material electronically and making a hard copy available on request.
56. It is accepted that it would be practical for a limited number of leaflets on key services that are commonly requested in significant numbers to continue to be produced. However it is important that policies are in place to control production and to review and ensure the currency of the information they contain.
57. Following the Group's findings on its visits to libraries that hard copies of agenda papers were rarely requested these are no longer distributed to libraries and Info Centres. An e-mail notification is sent of their publication and a hard copy of individual reports can be made available on request.
58. The use of rolling display screens at Customer Service Centres and reception areas to provide information was also something the Group considered merited further investigation.

Recommendations

- (e) That action is taken to achieve a significant reduction in the production of leaflets and other publications and to ensure that the material that is produced complies with corporate policies. Consideration should be given to this through the Rising to the Challenge processes recently established so there is an identified lead to action this.**
- (f) That display of leaflets and publications at the Shirehall, Hereford is specifically prohibited and any visitors seeking information on services are referred to Garrick House.**

PUBLIC ACCESS TO COMPUTERS IN LIBRARIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES

59. Libraries and Customer Service Centres have a number of computers available for public use (85 in libraries and 11 in the Customer Service Centres). The information provided to the Review Group suggested that provision of this facility and its management seemed to have been developed piecemeal over time.
60. In the Customer Service Centres the perception was that there were a number of regular users rather than a range of people. The facility does not therefore generally serve in the Centres as a means of access to public services.
61. The Review Group suggests that whilst a case can be made for public access to computers for general usage in libraries their availability and use in Customer Service Centres is more questionable. It considers provision in both service outlets should be reviewed.

Recommendation

(g) That the provision of PCs in libraries and Customer Services Centres should be reviewed and a coherent policy developed for their use.

STATUTORY NOTICES

62. Although not within the scope of the review, the publication of statutory notices arose during discussions.
63. Statutory Notices have to be placed in a local newspaper on a range of subjects including planning applications, licensing and public rights of way.
64. The Review Group has noted the view of the Head of Communications that the language of the statutory notices is legalistic and often does not explain what is being proposed, and the implications, in a clear, user friendly way. This can create reputational issues for the Council at a later date when the public could sometimes maintain that they have not been informed of a proposal, despite statutory notice having been given. Whilst the Council can demonstrate that it has provided statutory notice this will not entirely defuse public resentment.
65. The Head of Communications considers that articles/press releases would be a simpler, easier, and more effective method of communicating the information contained in such notices. He also considers that there is the potential for cost savings.
66. The decision on which notices should be published is taken by service areas. It is suggested that the approach to producing and publishing these notices should be reviewed in consultation with the Head of Communications. The Group considers the opportunity should also be taken to confirm whether or not there is indeed a requirement to publish in the print media several of the types of notice that are currently published as statutory notices.

Recommendation

(h) That Directors be asked to review the notices published as statutory notices in the print media, clarify whether they are statutorily required, and seek the advice of the Head of Communications as to whether some form of communication other than a notice would be more effective and feasible.

WHAT INFORMATION CUSTOMERS WISH TO RECEIVE

67. The Review Group was not able to identify any specific information, aside from Herefordshire Voice Surveys containing information relating to Herefordshire Matters, on what information customers wish to receive about services and their view on what is already being provided.
68. In the absence of such information it is felt that services can only be operating on the basis of assumptions. This does not embrace the corporate approach described in the Customer Strategy of putting the customer first in all that we do.
69. The Communication Strategy details a number of communication channels for patients and service users and identifies a range of specific stakeholder groupings. There is, however, no guidance or suggestion as to what form of communication works best for different audiences. The Strategy would benefit by including such guidance and also reflecting on the number of communication channels used and their effectiveness.

Recommendation

- (i) **That the Communications Strategy provides evidenced guidance on the most effective communication channels for individual stakeholder groupings.**
- (j) **That a survey be undertaken to establish what information the public wish to receive about council and NHS Herefordshire services, the effectiveness of current communications in meeting these needs and the preferred format and channel for this information.**

A Corporate Approach to Communication

70. The Review Group found that the role of the Communications Unit and Customer Services was clear in theory, as outlined in the Communications Strategy and the Customer Strategy. However, there was less certainty as to the authority and influence these Services commanded in practice.
71. The Communications Strategy states:

“The corporate identity guidelines require all service areas to secure the maximum corporate recognition and economies of scale. Therefore, individual service areas are no longer able to use sub-brands or alternative logos. Responsibility lies with the unified communications unit to promote and regulate the use of the brand and visual identity, with support where necessary from the joint management team.

The refreshed identity unites council and primary care trust services and presents a consistent face to our customers and partners, and it makes our services more accountable and recognisable by clearly identifying the work in which the council and the PCT is engaged.”

72. There was evidence that adherence to the corporate branding guidelines across the Council, including policies relating to translation, interpretation and alternative formats, remains patchy. Services sometimes commission external design work, contrary to corporate guidelines or carry out such work in-house. The view of the

Head of Communications was that in-house work took individuals longer than the in-house design team would take and was therefore inefficient. It was also possible that the chosen means of communication would not be the most effective.

73. The role of Customer Services in front line service delivery is also not consistently recognised across the Council. An example was given of a leaflet issued by Revenues and Benefits and delivered to Customer Service Centres (CSC) for display that incorrectly stated cash offices were closed.
74. The Customer Strategy identifies the need to improve the extent to which the Council listens to the public and use that feedback to design and commission services. The Head of Customer Services has fed back, in the context of communication pressures that arose during the severe winter weather, that it became clear that the publication of information on the Council website was not meeting customer demands or expectations. Alternative and more responsive options are available if service areas liaise with and act on the advice of Customer Services managers.
75. The dilemma for the Council is that the complete control of communications by the Central Communications Unit would appear to be unmanageable given the number of Council communications and the current size of the Communications Team.
76. The Communications Unit itself is outside the scope of this scrutiny review. The Shared Services project includes Communications and it is noted that project consultants have been commissioned to examine the service including looking at the existing team's structure, remit, skills and capacity to identify any gaps or areas for improvement for the new integrated service. This will form the basis of a separate report.
77. The Review Group concluded that compliance with corporate requirements including procurement requirements in relation to print and design clearly remained an issue to which the Council needed to give further consideration.
78. The Review Group notes that the Communications Strategy is quite lengthy. Although acknowledging that the Strategy was required to meet specific requirements for World Class Commissioning, the Review Group considers a clearer simpler message might assist in encouraging a more corporate approach.
79. Similarly the pressures on Customer Services were acknowledged in the annual report of the Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer services) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 2 July.
80. The report noted that overall performance for customer services centres against the one stop shop bench-marking group was relatively high. However, the service does less well in relation to convenience and accessibility, how enquiries are dealt with, length of waiting time and professionalism of staff.
81. The Review Group noted that there is to be a review of Customer Services to include: Info by Phone capacity and service improvements, further front office integration at Customer Service Centres, avoidable contact levels, satisfaction levels with service quality, convenience and choice and value for money across all front office service areas.
82. A report was also made to the OSC in July on the Customer Insight Unit (CIU). The Unit was set up in January 2010 to establish a single point of contact for

Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire for all customer-instigated feedback, including complaints, comments and compliments.

83. Before January 2010 complaints and feedback were managed locally by services across Herefordshire Council. This resulted in differences in the way complaints were managed and inconsistent quality of processing. Because there was no unified, standardised system for dealing with complaints, it was impossible to acquire an overview across the Council. A major advantage of the CIU and the adoption of a standard process means there is a single administrative system used to manage the feedback coming into the Council and NHS Herefordshire. This enables the Council to develop a picture of overall levels of feedback and identify trends. The Committee noted the plans to develop the Unit's role and supported its continued development.

Recommendation

- (k) That the Director of Resources be requested to review the procurement of design and printing services by Directorates and conduct a spot check on the use of cost codes.**
- (l) That consideration is given to how a more corporate approach to communication can be effectively implemented.**

AREAS OF BEST PRACTICE/POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

WEBSITE

84. SOCITM has data that 70% of all interactions with Councils are via the web.
85. The Review Group was informed that a web strategy was shortly to be submitted to the Joint Management Team. It is understood that this has yet to be considered. However, several web projects in support of the Customer Strategy and draft web strategy have been included in the ICT Strategy programme of work for 2009/10. The Group was informed of a number of developments supporting community engagement. These are summarised in appendix 4.
86. The overall classification of the Council's website in Better Connected 2010 (a review of 433 local authority sites conducted by SOCITM during November and December 2009 and published in March 2010) is 3 stars (out of a possible 4 stars). This placed the Council in the top quartile for English Unitary Councils.
87. Independent performance data provided by Sitemorse rates all local authority websites monthly against a range of criteria. The Council has been cited for best practice for this year (Better Connected 2010) and the last two years.
88. The Review Group noted in particular that 36% of visitors to the website were not satisfied with value of information they found. This figure is comparable with benchmark group of over 120 local authorities.
89. In addition information from the SOCITM survey asks an "alternative service channels question". This is designed to allow Councils to estimate the cost of not being able to satisfy an enquiry through the web service channel. It shows that if a question can't be answered via the website the next preferred choices are

telephone, then email, then post. But there is a worryingly large portion who if they can't get an answer via the website say they will access information in 'no other way', or say they 'Don't know' how they would do so. This gap in knowledge is particularly marked in particular age groups. The following sample is taken from January-March 2009.

% by Age range	17 and under	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65-79	80 and over
By telephone	17	29	57	47	53	44	44	39
By post	4	2	3	1	1	1	5	15
In person	12	13	10	9	7	21	8	8
By email	21	28	23	24	19	19	21	23
In no other way	21	12	2	10	12	13	15	0
Other	4	2	1	2	4	1	1	0
Don't know	21	14	4	6	3	1	5	15
Not answered question	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0

90. The cost differential between the three main channels of communication is huge, as illustrated by the latest figures from the *Channel value benchmarking service*.

- Face to face **£8.23** per visit
- Phone **£3.21** per call
- Web **£0.39** per visitor

Source: Socitm *Insight* (December 2009)

Socitm states "For fractions of a pound, a typical website visit is much, much cheaper than a typical phone call, which in turn is much cheaper than a typical face to-face transaction. Sometimes overlooked when these figures have been presented before is the point that the higher the volume of web visits, the lower the unit cost is likely to be. With good back office processes, the website can handle major increases in traffic without incurring extra costs, whereas the phone or face to face will incur extra costs, unlike the other main channels. "

91. The Review Group noted in particular the intention to build up user based research to make the use of the website more customer friendly. The view was expressed that the website structure did not necessarily reflect how users accessed the website. There was a distinction between a function based approach and the way professionals might structure information. It was noted some Councils had moved to a blank homepage like the Google front page with just a search facility. There could be an option to couple this with a "classic" homepage view which the user could opt to use. Lancashire County Council is an example of this approach.

92. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has commented several times on the importance of keeping information up to date and removing out of date material and reiterated this point in its Scrutiny Review of the Winter Weather December 2009-10 and the response to it. That review also highlighted a number of issues in relation to updating Council web pages and how information was structured, in particular the need to distinguish between news and other important information.

93. One issue brought to the Group's attention was that Council news was often but not always published immediately to the website. Reasons for this included a concern that it would undermine the local press, the local media being part of the fabric of

local society, and that if, having been on the Council's website the news was considered old news it would not be printed. A judgment was made on a case by case basis by the Communications Unit. The Review Group considers that news items should be placed on the Council website to ensure currency and not held back to fit in with print media publication dates.

94. An example of how the Council could improve the currency of information is by developing the existing provision by the web team of a Twitter feed of news (from the articles published by the Communications Unit on the website) which is followed by 96 local businesses, members of the public and other interested parties such as Sunshine Radio, the Herefordshire Times and CommunityFirst. So for example if news articles are posted on the website the Hereford Times will pick it up from Twitter: <http://twitter.com/myherefordshire/>

Recommendation

(m) The Review Group considers that news items should be placed on the Council website to ensure currency and not held back to fit in with print media publication dates.

(n) Service areas should again be reminded of the need to ensure their information on the web site is updated on a regular basis.

SOCIAL MEDIA

95. The Review Group considered user engagement and the use of social media. The Group was advised that failure to engage through these means was potentially damaging to the Council's reputation. The Council could be seen to be imposing its own preferred way of consultation on users and not engaging with the way in which they wanted to be consulted, for example through online discussions. There appears to be a public expectation that these facilities would be available.
96. The Review Group recognises that younger people are less inclined to rely on print media for information and communication. It encourages exploring the use of social media for communicating about Council business and services, in particular to this audience.

Recommendation

(o) That investigations into developing the use of social media for communicating about Council business and services should be explored as soon as possible, as a key mechanism for reaching younger people in particular.

WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

97. The Review Group has viewed a number of Council websites broadcasting Council meetings. Whilst viewing figures ranged from 0, to almost 7,000 for the planning permission for a new stadium for Bristol City FC, it was noticeable that the general pattern was that significantly more people viewed the archive of the meeting rather than viewing it live. (The webcast of the planning application referred to above was an exception to this with 80% viewing that particular webcast live.

98. The benefits of webcasting set out in a report by the Improvement and Development Agency based on a survey of local authorities included:
- Makes authorities more accessible,
 - PR value
 - Councillors can see themselves,
 - Reduces the impact of distance,
 - Meets the expectations from the public (esp. younger generation),
 - Drives use of broadband,
 - Improves communications,
 - Reduces costs
 - Interactivity/public participation,
 - Consistency of delivery,
 - Social inclusion.
99. The Review Group considers that in a rural County where the Council holds meetings during normal working hours, webcasting does offer a means of improving access to the Council's decision making structures that merits further exploration. It considers that a trial webcast of a Planning Committee meeting would be particularly appropriate, given the pressures that have been experienced on occasion in accommodating all those wishing to attend certain meetings and the associated transport implications.
100. The Group understands that a firm might be prepared to webcast one meeting as a pilot. It recognises that given the financial pressures the cost of a trial needs to be assessed before deciding whether to proceed.
101. In any event the Committee considers a report should be submitted to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out an analysis of the pros and cons of webcasting Council meetings and its feasibility

Recommendation

- (p) That a trial webcast of a Planning Committee meeting should be undertaken, subject to the costs being reasonable.**
- (q) A report be submitted to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out an analysis of the pros and cons of webcasting Council meetings and its financial feasibility.**

EXPENDITURE ON COMMUNICATIONS

102. The Review Group sought to clarify the Council's expenditure on external communication informing the public about council services.
103. The annual accounts published by all Council were required to contain a figure on publicity expenditure (until 2009/10). (Publicity is defined as "any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public"). The figure included in the Council's 2008-09 accounts was £502,000. Although not necessarily comparable, the following are recorded for different local authorities - West Berkshire £378,000, Bath and North East Somerset £878,000, East Riding £1.928 m

104. An analysis of expenditure on promotion and advertising activity over all directorates covering the aspects in the scoping statement for the review produced the broadly similar figure of £484,000 (once the cost of the website including the web team and all operational costs is excluded) compared to 2008/09
105. The Review Group subsequently requested further information on expenditure on consultation and other promotional events. This showed expenditure on public consultation in 2008-09 of £589,900 and on general promotion of £482,700. This is in addition to the figure of £484,000 above.
106. The Review Group also noted the following costs:
- Website including the web team and all operational costs £449,101. (This cost covers the intranet and web-based applications/services support (internal and external) e.g. Academy plus additional websites hosted and/or managed by Herefordshire Council or content feeds connections provided e.g. WM jobs, Local Directgov, English Heritage Gateway.
 - Communications Team (including Herefordshire Matters) £597,309 (nb this includes staff costs, advertising and publicity, office expenses related directly to the team and central recharges).
 - INFO Service £1,580,927.
107. The Review Group noted that the breakdown of information on costs was not easy to produce and that the knowledge of costs incurred on external communication was limited and incomplete. As mentioned earlier, the integrity of this information is dependent on accurate and consistent coding and this has given some cause for concern, particularly when allied with information provided to the Group about expenditure on the procurement of print and design.
108. It is noted that this is not the first occasion on which it has proved difficult for the financial systems to deliver the financial information sought for a scrutiny review. It is acknowledged that this might in part be because in a cross service review anomalies may more readily arise but the Group does consider that in reviewing the systems for recording expenditure on external communication, as recommended below, this wider concern should be borne in mind.
109. The Director of Resources has commented that the Executive's response to the views expressed by the Review Group can be taken into account in the design and implementation of the new financial system.

Recommendation

(r) That the systems for recording expenditure on external communication should be reviewed.

Next Steps

110. Subject to approval by the Committee this report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.
111. The Committee expects that within two months of receipt of the report Cabinet will consider the report and recommendations and respond to the Committee indicating what action Cabinet proposes to take, together with an action plan.

Summary of Recommendations

- (a) That the production of Herefordshire Matters should be reviewed to assess whether there is a more effective means of communication about public services.
- (b) That, if retained, the tone of Herefordshire Matters should be reconsidered, to ensure that reporting is straightforward, admitting to mistakes where these have occurred and setting out the steps being taken to put things right.
- (c) that, if retained, reports in Herefordshire Matters should not oversell what the Council is realistically expecting to achieve, thereby ensuring public expectation is not raised to the potential detriment of organisational reputations.
- (d) That Customer Services should be requested to conduct a survey on the value of HM and what information the public would like to receive from the Council and NHS Herefordshire through its Customer Service Centres and that this should include asking about an A-Z of services.
- (e) That action be taken to achieve a significant reduction in the production of leaflets and other publications and to ensure that the material that is produced complies with corporate policies.
- (f) That display of leaflets and publications at the Shirehall, Hereford is specifically prohibited and any visitors seeking information on services are referred to Garrick House.
- (g) That the provision of PCs in libraries and Customer Services Centres should be reviewed and a coherent policy developed for their use.
- (h) That Directors be asked to review the notices published as statutory notices in the print media, clarify whether they are statutorily required, and seek the advice of the Head of Communications as to whether some form of communication other than a notice would be more effective and feasible.
- (i) That the Communications Strategy provides evidenced guidance on the most effective communication channels for individual stakeholder groupings.
- (j) That a survey be undertaken to establish what information the public wish to receive about council and NHS Herefordshire services, the effectiveness of current communications in meeting these needs and the preferred format and channel for this information.
- (k) That the Director of Resources be requested to review the procurement of design and printing services by Directorates and conduct a spot check on the use of cost codes.
- (l) That consideration is given to how a more corporate approach to communication can be effectively implemented.
- (m) The Review Group considers that news items should be placed on the Council website to ensure currency and not held back to fit in with print media publication dates.

- (n) Service areas should again be reminded of the need to ensure their information on the web site is updated on a regular basis.**
- (o) That investigations into developing the use of social media for communicating about Council business and services should be explored as soon as possible, as a key mechanism for reaching younger people in particular.**
- (p) That a trial webcast of a Planning Committee meeting should be undertaken, subject to the costs being reasonable.**
- (q) A report be submitted to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out an analysis of the pros and cons of webcasting Council meetings and its financial feasibility.**
- (r) That the systems for recording expenditure on external communication should be reviewed.**

APPENDIX 1
Scoping Statement

TITLE OF REVIEW:	A review of the effectiveness of communication by the Council and NHS Herefordshire with the public about services and access to those services.
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SCOPING

Reason for Enquiry
Members considered, in the context of developing an external focus to the work programme, that improvements to various aspects of Communication could be made. External communications have a bearing on the reputation of the Council and how the Council is perceived by the public, as well as having a direct impact on the ease with which customers are able to access services within the County.

Links to the Community Strategy
The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire Community Strategy, including the Council’s Corporate Plan and other key plans or strategies: Organisational improvement and greater efficiency including better value for money by working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and other local organisations

Summary of Review and Terms of Reference
Summary
This review is to consider the effectiveness of communication by the Council and NHS Herefordshire with the public about services and access to those services.
Terms of Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify what external communication by the Council and NHS Herefordshire currently takes place to inform the public about services. • To establish what is already known from customers about what information they wish to receive and the effectiveness of current communications in meeting those needs. To consider what further information might need to be obtained from customers on this respect and to ask that it be obtained to inform this review • To identify any areas of duplication both within each organisation and between organisations, as well as any potential savings. • To identify any areas of best practice • To make recommendations that will improve public awareness of services and how to access them.

What will NOT be included	
Agendas and Minutes Press Releases Individual services such as the Communications Unit, Info Service, Tourist Information Centres or the Library Service. Consultation documents General Correspondence	Job Advertisements Internal Communication Statutory Notices Tourist Information

Potential outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved public awareness of services and how to access them • Efficiency savings • A consistent approach to communication with the public • Improved quality of communication to seek to ensure equality of access

Cabinet Member (s)
Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) A PCT Board Member

Key Stakeholders/Consultees
Directorates PCT Readers Panel Service User Groups Public Voluntary Sector Assembly Chamber of Commerce Schools Local Medical Council

Potential Witnesses

Deputy Chief Executive (To set the policy context)
Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources)
PCT Board Member
Head of Communications
PCT Board Secretary
Heads of Service (as appropriate depending on review of publications issued).
Joint Director of ICT
Diversity Officer
Info in Herefordshire Manager
(Officer from another authority to provide peer review)
Head of Customer Services
Young Peoples Groups

Research Required

Compilation of publications over past 12 Months
Comparative information
Herefordshire Voice
Survey Information (eg SOCITM)
Potential to commission Focus Groups (eg older people/younger people and also test ease of use of website)
MORI
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
Local Government Association (including Improvement and Development Agency)
Office of Public Management
Costs

Potential Visits

(Checklist for visits to be prepared)
Info in Herefordshire Offices
Main Council Offices
PCT Reception
GP Surgeries
Libraries

Publicity Requirements

Launch of Review

During Review

Publication of the Review and its recommendations

Herefordshire Matters

Timetable

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Confirm approach, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates (and proposed topic)	First meeting of the Review Group. December 2009
Collect current available data	Mid January 2010
Collect outstanding data	End January 2010
Analysis of data	1 st week Feb
Final confirmation of interviews of witnesses	1 st week Feb
Carry out programme of interviews	March
Agree programme of site visits	1 st week Feb
Undertake site visits as appropriate	February
Present interim report to relevant scrutiny Committee, if appropriate.	tbc
Final analysis of data and witness evidence	
Prepare options/recommendations	End April 2009
Present Final report to Relevant Scrutiny Committee	Mid June 2010
Present options/recommendations to Cabinet (or Cabinet member (s))	June 2010
Cabinet/Cabinet Member (s) response	September 2010
Implementation of agreed recommendations	TBC

Members	Support Officers
Councillors: Councillor PA Andrews (Chairman of Review Group) Additional members of the Review Group Councillors PGH Cutter, PJ Edwards, TM James and PJ Watts	Lead Support Officer, J Gethin – Head of Partnership Support Democratic Services Representative, T Brown

APPENDIX 2

List of Interviewees	
Richard Beavan-Pearson	Head of Customer Services
Graham Biggs	President of Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce
Robert Blower	Head of Communications
Greg Evans	Management Accounting Manager
Zack Pandor	Joint Director of ICT
Ellen Pawley	Knowledge and Web Services Manager
Fiona Phillips	Editor of the Hereford Times

EXTRACT FROM COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

9 Communication Channels

- 9.1 Across the partnership there are a large number of established communication channels reaching a variety of audiences and stakeholders. Many of these channels are formal, monitored and evaluated (most of our publications for example) while others might be informal and unstructured (such as word of mouth (usually positive) or rumour or gossip (usually less so)).
- 9.2 Identifying the various channels, which audiences they reach, to what frequency and to what reason or benefit, helps us to determine how effectively we reach our key stakeholders. Having identified key stakeholders, it was clear that investment was needed in strengthening existing channels or developing new ones to help us become more effective in delivering key messages to stakeholder groups.

Patients and Service Users

- 9.3 Herefordshire Matters – a bi-monthly magazine for patients, service users and residents is delivered to every household in the county, and outlets like libraries, info centres, reception areas, GP surgeries, youth centres, residential homes and day care centres. Its aim is to promote public services and how to access and engage in shaping them.
- 92 per cent of readers have confidence in the accuracy of the information given
 - 73 per cent of residents read all or most of it, 24 per cent read a few articles and 2 per cent do not read any at all
 - Over 90 per cent find articles interesting, useful and covering important issues
 - Readership levels are high for a public services publication and exceed those of mainstream local press
 - Pagination has increased from 16 to 24 pages in 2009
 - A regular public health column, written by the director for public health addresses the key health issues, promotes behaviour change and signposts readers to other local services
 - More emphasis has been placed on human interest stories but linked to hard-hitting statistics or social marketing messages
 - Further emphasis on reducing costs and improving distribution will be made during 2010
- 9.4 Press releases - are produced by the integrated communications unit for local, regional, national and professional media as appropriate.
- Around 1000 press releases on public services are researched, packaged and placed each year
 - Over 95 per cent of all press releases are used by the media
 - Around 4,000 press items are recorded each year and made available to all employees
 - Over 90 per cent of press coverage is positive or neutral
 - In 2010, press release production and evaluation will be refreshed to demonstrate support for key messages, resident priorities and social marketing campaigns
 - Local media support is negotiated for campaigns to improve quality of life and inequalities – such as public health priorities, environmental improvement and recycling, regeneration or road safety

- 9.5 Service leaflets and publications - are published as required for patients, service users and residents on public services and how to access them.
- Around 300 separate publications, reports, booklets, leaflets and flyers and produced each year by the communications unit in line with corporate identity guidelines and house style and are offered for translation and interpretation as required.
 - The council tax leaflet is produced annually each spring and mailed to every household, providing a report on how revenue and capital is spent and an overview of public services available
 - The primary care trust pocket guide to services is produced annually and mailed to every household, although most recently this has been expanded and presented in the new 'life events' structure in an integrated way with council and other partner services and delivered to every household as part of a comprehensive residents guide.
- 9.6 Guide to Public Services – was produced in September 2009 as a joint 48-page publication and delivered to every household in the county. It promoted the comprehensive range of public services, principally those provided by NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council, and how to access them. Believed to be the first publication of its type in the UK, the guide structured information about services around the needs of individual patients and service users, who require support, care or advice at key stages in their lives.
- The 'life events' structure enabled the primary care trust and the council to demonstrate more effectively the benefits of integration
 - The structure will be replicated on the new joint web site under development by ICT, providing an alternative but complimentary means of accessing information
 - The structure will also inform the presentation of advice, information and publications in public-facing services, such as the info shops located in every major settlement in the county
- 9.7 Annual review and report – two separate statutory reports are required and produced for NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council in order to inform stakeholders on the respective financial performance for each organisation. However, the publications are written and designed to be used as companion documents and promote jointly the progress on the shared vision, values and priorities for the enhanced partnership.
- A combined annual summary will be produced in 2010 to promote the public services partnership and its benefits for patients, service users and residents (this may be further integrated with the guide to public services and how to access them.
- 9.8 NHS Herefordshire Service Leaflet – is produced annually as a guide to local healthcare services for patients and is circulated to every household with the residents' publication Herefordshire Matters, although there is an opportunity in 2010 to integrate the contents of the leaflet within the Residents' Guide to public services and how to access them.
- 9.9 Council tax leaflet – is a statutory leaflet produced annually and communicates the council tax rate set and agreed by the council and provides a summary of performance and how the council tax is spent. The mail out to every household reports on the partnership working with the primary care trust and provides a further opportunity to cost-effectively distribute health or social care related information to residents.
- 9.10 Web sites – the NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council web sites are regularly updated with news releases and other information by the communications unit, although

unusually the development of the design, structure and content of the web site is undertaken by a separate knowledge management team within ICT.

- Around 600 press releases are posted on the NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council web sites
- The communications unit is working with the knowledge management team to combine 'landing pages' to promote a single internet entry point for NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council services
- The communications unit has developed a comprehensive and integrated 'life events' structure for public services and how to access them for Herefordshire and this is forming the basis for online information that is arranged around what makes sense for patients and customers, rather than in terms of organisational structure

- 9.11 AGM and Exhibition – the NHS Herefordshire AGM is an opportunity to engage the public and other partners in sharing information on strategy and progress and this also entails a major display and exhibition, bringing together service areas on a key theme. During 2009, the theme was prevention and treatment of stroke and a new theme will be agreed for the 2010 event.
- 9.12 Annual Public Health Conference – was established in 2009 to focus on public health issues and engage patients, service users and employees in discussing the public health challenges for Herefordshire and performance of the public services partnership. This event also provides a strategic opportunity to feed back the results of key engagement programmes and publicise them.
- 9.13 Consultation – a large number of consultation programmes are initiated each year and are designed to engage stakeholders in shaping place, services or change. Each is supported by communication plans in line with the agreed principles for the council and the primary care trust.
- 9.14 Community forums - or partners and community together (PACT) meetings, are undertaken quarterly, with partner representatives, across several rural areas and are designed to engage communities on issues of local relevance and are regularly used as part of consultation programmes
- 9.15 Community events – a wide range of community events, consultations and displays are organised and promoted to create opportunities to present campaigns and engage in dialogue
- 9.16 Reception areas - new professional display units have been installed and populated with information to keep staff and visitors informed on progress across the primary care trust and council partnership
- 9.17 Photo library - the communications unit has built up an extensive photo and image library for use by the primary care trust, the council and potentially other agencies in the county. This is managed within the small design unit
- 9.18 Freedom of information - the communications unit works closely with the Freedom of Information teams within the council and the primary care trust to help ensure effective media management of issues.

ICT MEASURES SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- We have a Twitter feed reposting council news articles - <http://twitter.com/myherefordshire>
- We have a Facebook account, MySpace pages, YouTube channel, Flickr presence but these are not really used or pushed as much as they should be (see the Better Connected 2010 Severe Weather survey comments for Herefordshire - Appendix).
- We have begun a 12 month pilot using iNovem Collaborate (collaborative working software) running under <http://communities.herefordshire.gov.uk/connect.ti> which allows us to work more closely with the public and interested partners, incorporating blogs, polls, forums etc..
- We have iNovem e-Consult running under <http://consult.herefordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti> which allows members of the public to respond to online consultations.
- We are shortly implementing GovDelivery (<http://www.govdelivery.com/>) which will then facilitate all our online external communication channels (RSS, email subscribing). We will need to provide 25 information channels available for syndication such as focused news, events and updates but will also provide national feeds such as the severe weather alerts.
- e-Petitions have to be live on our websites by Dec 2010 and we are currently looking at options - the modern.gov e-petitions is looking promising as it is free but we have also considered options such as Citizenscape.
- You can see a list and links to all the subsites we manage here: http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council_gov_democracy/council/42045.asp
- We will be replacing our current Content Management System – this is planned in this financial year. A key requirement is to provide closer integration with social media networks and allow us to push more content through those channels. It must also support the management of user-generated content which will support 'hyperlocal sites' – community owned and issue or geographic focused local sites. We are actively seeking to implement an open source solution if fit-for-purpose.
- We will develop both iPhone apps, similar to the ones already in place by Warwickshire, Bristol/Avon and Brighton, taking services such as news, events, what's in my area, emergency broadcasts etc. to the users and widgets to help make it easy to consume open data sets (in line with the Government strategy regarding re-use of Public Sector information). Establishing a robust GIS public platform will add considerable value to these.
- The web strategy will aim to expand the number of digital service channels to include DigitalTV and mobile channels where a business case can show benefits for delivering business objectives outlined in the Customer Strategy for example. . It is very closely tied with the Customer Strategy and supporting web projects have been included in the 2009/2010 ICT Strategy programme of work.
- We will be including syndicated content branded as our own e.g. from NHS Choices. We have already done this for Trading Standards data.
- The SMS working group is developing a business case for a corporate SMS solution.

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE WINTER WEATHER AND THE RESPONSE TO IT - EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider Cabinet's response to the recommendations made to it in the Scrutiny Review of the impact of the winter weather and the response to it.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **Cabinet's response to the findings of the review of the impact of the winter weather and the response to it be noted, subject to any comments which the Committee wishes to make;**

and

- (b) **a further report on progress in response to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

Alternative Options

- 1 The Committee can accept the Executive's response or submit comments to the Executive as it sees fit.

Introduction and Background

2. In July 2010 this Committee approved the findings of the Scrutiny Review of the impact of the winter weather and the response to it.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Paul Nicholas, Assistant Director Public Health on (01432) 260543

3. The Committee agreed that the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had approved its response.
4. Cabinet considered its response to the findings on 16 September 2010. The report to Cabinet setting out the response to the Review is appended. Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report with the additional recommendation that the Government be lobbied to provide clarity and legislation on the responsibility for snow and ice clearance for individuals and businesses. An action plan is appended.
5. Members will be aware that the Winter Service Plan needs to be approved in sufficient time to enable appropriate preparations to be made. This meant that approval by the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) is expected to take place in advance of this meeting. The approved Winter Service Plan will be circulated separately to Members of the Committee for reference and will be available to the public on the Council's website or on request.
6. In view of the tight timescale for finalising and approving the Plan, to accommodate this Committee's recommendation (recommendation L of the review) that the proposed Winter Service Plan for 2010/11 should be the subject of pre-decision scrutiny, Councillors Bowen, Edwards and Watts, who had originally been authorised by the Committee to finalise the Committee's review report, met informally with the Highways Network Manager.
7. Members were particularly keen to clarify with the Highways Network Manager the extent to which the Plan addressed the concern set out in recommendation L and whether the Priority Routes had been amended to take account of Committee's view that there was scope to extend at least some priority routes to some schools and sheltered housing facilities and urban estate roads.
8. The Highways Network Manager advised that whilst minor amendments only had been made to the priority routes, he considered that the Plan did address the Committee's concerns. He explained that this has been achieved through a number of detailed revisions to the Winter Service Plan, clarifying the extent of treatment beyond the priority routes in more severe or prolonged periods of winter weather; developing opportunities for self help in the community; and through setting out clear levels of service to which the highway service can deliver given the forecast conditions and the availability of resources.
9. Members also emphasised the following points to the Highways Network Manager:
 - the need for assurance that the Communications Strategy was being revised to take account of concerns highlighted during the Scrutiny Review.
 - the potential damage to the Council's reputation that outdated material on the website presented, recognising the importance of ensuring that out of date material on the website is removed as soon as possible and no later than several days before the first of a series of planned Winter Service Awareness Events.
 - support for recommendation q of the review relating to the plan to explore the possibility of partners making a financial contribution to gritting of hospital entrances and the frontages of key emergency service premises and the gritting of pavements with a view to reducing demand on acute care in severe events as a direct result of increased levels of preventative treatment of footways in busier urban areas.
 - the planned measures to encourage self-help in the community were welcome.

10. Members also sought and received clarification on a range of other issues including:
- that the treatment of the bus stops located at Tesco's Hereford City Centre store will be subject to the available resources and the prevailing conditions and sustained treatment will inevitably be compromised without the cooperation and financial support of the store.
 - the scope for Hereford Hospital to be far more proactive in clearing its surroundings, noting that the WSP provided for gritting of access to the County Hospital, including off-highway vehicular access to and from the accident and emergency department; and
 - that whilst there is a cross border working arrangement with each neighbouring county, it was intended to seek to confirm the commitment to treat each others' routes in formal agreements.

Appendices

Report to Cabinet on 16 September – Winter Weather December 2009 – February 2010 The response to it

Background Papers

- None identified.

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	16 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	WINTER WEATHER DECEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2010 AND THE RESPONSE TO IT
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ENVIRONMENT & STRATEGIC HOUSING

CLASSIFICATION: Open.

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To respond to the 'Scrutiny Review of the Impact of Winter Weather December 2009 – February 2010 and the Response to it'.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **The Committee be thanked for undertaking a comprehensive review and producing an excellent report;**
- (b) **The Executive joins with the Committee in recognising and commending the considerable efforts made in response to the winter problems;**
- (c) **All thirty recommendations be agreed and implemented within existing budgetary provision.**

Key Points Summary

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered that there are some local considerations that it could bring to the Executive's attention and invite them to consider. It believes that these may well supplement or complement the findings of a national review. These are reproduced in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Paul Nicholas
Assistant Director Public Health on Tel: (01432) 260543

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options. However, Cabinet may wish to amend the proposals or agree additional actions for our Winter Weather Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure that lessons learned, which should improve service provision during any future episode of disruption, are acted upon.

Introduction and Background

- 3 Prolonged, severe weather disrupted service delivery and impacted upon communities across the County. The Executive requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee conduct a review of the impact of the severe winter weather on communities in the County and across the public services and the response of those services to the situation to identify good practice and support future improvement.

Key Considerations

- 4 The Committee met on 21 May 2010 and considered written and verbal contributions.

Prior to the meeting, the Committee had sought written information on what went well, what did not go well, what improvements respondents thought could be made, what relevant policies are in place, and, whether any reviews had already been undertaken at service level of policies or service delivery arrangements or were proposed and whether any action plans have already been put in place to generate improvement. Any other observations were invited that the Committee needed to take into account.

Although the principal and initial focus of the review related to the transport network (gritting, road maintenance etc) the Committee invited information on the financial implications, legal implications, school closures, public transport and waste collection and any impact on health and social care provision.

Details of the scope of the review are contained within the Report at Appendix 1. There are many areas of activity that occurred across the range of services that Herefordshire Public Services provide, and provided during the period in question, that have not been highlighted in the report. There were many areas of success involving provision of service in some very difficult conditions and by working in partnership that have not necessarily been captured but nevertheless should be commended. This is particularly the case with respect to the delivery of health and social care services.

Subsequent to the Executive's request to the Committee to undertake this review, a national review was being undertaken of the transport industry's response to the winter weather. The aim was to identify practical measures to improve the response of the transport sector – road, rail and air, to severe winter weather. That review is to report in two phases: by July 2010, identifying and reporting on measures that can be implemented relatively quickly in preparation for winter 2010/11, and reporting in Autumn 2010 with a longer term view of preparedness for severe winter weather in future years and measures that can improve future resilience. The Phase One report has been published and relevant recommendations incorporated into the Winter Service Plan 2010/11.

A key element of the Executive's view on the subject of planning for and responding to adverse weather is how the organisation identifies and looks after vulnerable members of the community. This is particularly relevant to those who, ordinarily, are not in a vulnerable situation but become vulnerable because of the effects of severe weather. Encouragement to communities to organise and help themselves plus negotiating a way through perceived or actual red tape, are key strands of activity.

Thirty recommendations were made by OSC many of which either had already been actioned or were in the process of being considered. Lead Officers have confirmed that these actions can be implemented within existing resources. There are many other activities, not highlighted in the review, that the organisation is already undertaking (see Appendix 2). Any useful suggestion will, of course, be considered for its reasonableness, impact and value.

Community Impact

- 5 Implementation of the recommendations will make a positive contribution to the way communities are dealt with and deal with disruptions caused by severe weather such as snow and ice.

Financial Implications

- 6 Actions associated with the recommendations will be resourced with available resources from existing organisational budgets.

Legal Implications

- 7 None.

Risk Management

- 8 Whilst the response last Winter was regarded as good, failure to learn lessons would place the organisation in a position where reputationally, at least, it would be at risk.

Consultees

- 9 None.

Appendices

- 10 Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Report
Appendix 2 - Action plan

Background Papers

- Scrutiny Review of the Impact of Winter Weather December 2009 – February 2010 and the Response to it' – Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 May 2010, Published 2 July 2010.
- Winter Service Plan 2010/11.

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Recommendations – Action Plan v1.4^a

Key:

Directorate	Key to Owners	Abbreviation	Recommendations
Deputy Chief Executive	Head of Communications	HoComm	(a), (d)
Deputy Chief Executive	Head of Customer Services	HCS	(b)
Deputy Chief Executive	Joint Director of ICT	JDICT	(c), (e), (g), (z)
Children and Young People	Assistant Director, Planning, Performance & Development	ADPPD	(f), (r), (s), (t), (u)
Public Health	Assistant Director, Public Health	ADPH	(h), (a1), (c1), (d1)
Sustainable Communities	Assistant Director, highway, transport & community services	ADHTCS	(i), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), (b1)
Sustainable Communities	Head of Special Projects	HPS	(v)
	All HoS/ADs who are responsible for Providers	ALL	(w), (x)
Deputy Chief Executive	Interim Head of Workforce & Organisational Development	HWOD	(y)

^a 1.2 - [Addition to (z)]

1.3 – [update of (h), (w), (x), (y), (b1) and (c1)]

1.4 – [update of (c), (e), (g) and (z)]

Recommendation No. (a)	That the Communication Strategy be revisited to try to ensure that communities really understand the financial and practical constraints on the Council and are provided with practical information to enable them to help themselves in dealing with the difficulties posed by severe weather conditions, such information should include clear legal advice on the ability of people to help themselves by clearing pavements and on effective, safe methods of snow clearance.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Review the Communication Strategy	HoComm	30/11/10	Community understanding of the service they can expect and how communities can work together to support each other	Programme to produce community guide to severe weather (leaflets, press releases, website and Herefordshire Matters) by Nov 10	
Recommendation No. (b)	That the arrangement for all calls to be handled by the Customer Services Contact Centre and no separate emergency line operated should be monitored to ensure that it is resilient and robust.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
The Head of Customer Services (HCS) and the Emergency Planning Manager (EPM) have agreed arrangements for Customer Services to be responsible for call handling. Monitoring of effectiveness will take place during and after an incident.	HCS	On-going	All calls are handled by CS Contact centre. Activity to be reviewed as part of the monthly SLA review meetings with ADPH.	HCS and EPM are meeting on 8 th September to progress this matter.	
Recommendation No. (c)	That action be taken to improve the website so that winter information can more readily be accessed than it is under the current system of placing information in the news section.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
'Winter information' will be given prominence on the home page of the council website, maybe with the main story/image and in addition, an emergency alerts box will be implemented.	JDICT	30/11/10	The website has a prominent section relating to winter information; sufficient access rights are in place to enable appropriate officers to populate website.	EPM has produced a paper that contains options for improvement. EPM is scheduling a meeting with Knowledge and Web Services Manager to agree which improvements can be implemented, along with a timetable. Web Team have organised a meeting for key stakeholders on 16 September 2010	
Recommendation No. (d)	That the Communication Strategy seeks to ensure that in such situations there is clarity about what the Council's plans are for the next day.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
A statement needs to be put into the Strategy and necessary activity implemented	HoComm	30/11/10	Agreement from all relevant service teams to decide level of service to	Communications and emergency planning to promote requirement to	

				be provided for next day (as part of daily emergency planning)	relevant service managers
Recommendation No. (e)	That Services be reminded again of the importance of keeping material on the Council website up to date and of removing out of date material and ICT services consider what prompts could usefully be implemented to facilitate this process.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
A variety of communiqués be sent to Key Managers etc There is a function within our current Content Management System (RedDot) to remove pages after a set expiry period but this has proven unreliable in the past. As part of the ICT strategy web projects a review of the current CMS is in progress with a view to procuring a replacement for the end of December. This requirement is one of the areas of functionality that will be addressed through that process. In line with recommended good practice service information updates should be managed on key service content pages which are constantly updated rather than through press releases which are archived. Agreement required on most effective method to maintain currency of information on winter service pages with links made to the winter service pages for the detail from news articles so always most current info. Authors for the winter service pages need to be agreed and suitable means to maintain content in timely way enabled.	JDICT	31/10/10	See (c) above	Action contained within report referred to in (c) above.	
Recommendation No. (f)	That progress in implementing the automated system for school closures should be closely monitored, to ensure that it is operational before Winter 2010, noting also ICT's view that a corporate solution would be desirable.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Confirmation obtained that the automated system for school closures has been implemented.	ADPPD	Dec 2010	Countywide system in place and used by all schools	CYPD, ICT have carried out development work with third party supplier. Trial of system to take place Sept 2010; full implementation Dec 2010.	
Recommendation No. (g)	That the specific recommendations put forward by ICT Services in relation to the need to review information flows across all communication channels, the development of a corporate SMS system and the use of social networking sites should be explored.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

SMS See section (f) Social networking We do have facebook/twitter/myspace/youtube presences for the myherefordshire portal, which could be further developed to support Council objectives as under utilised. With some work and investigation, these could be possibly repurposed for use in emergency situations for example use twitter feeds to populate current data in the Councils winter service pages. However this would have to be done in conjunction with the relevant service managers, web team and communications team,.	JDICT	30/11/10	Utilisation of social networking tools to improve currency of information available to the public	SMS See actions in section (f) a paper was put together for a corporate SMS solution and that is now with JDICT. Social Networking All council news stories are already auto-republished onto a twitterfeed - http://twitter.com/myherefordshire This area will also be discussed in the meeting on the 17 September 2010.
Recommendation No. (h)	That the implementation of the policy prepared by the Joint Emergency Planning Unit to ensure business continuity planning is embedded should be monitored to ensure appropriate arrangements are put in place, and it should also be ensured that the work of the Severe Weather Group to updated emergency plans relating to weather is completed before Winter 2010.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
HPS will prepare a joint policy, in accordance with guidance provided by the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004. The Policy will ensure that business continuity is embedded throughout HPS and aim to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of: the policy and procedures (including responsibilities at all levels); and, who provides appropriate expertise and facilitates support in order to maintain delivery of key services with the minimum of disruption in the event of a 'disruptive event'. Monitoring of business continuity activity will be captured monthly on the Performance + system. Severe Weather group has met once this year and will meet again before the end of October. Part of that group's activity relates to the signing off of the Flood Plan and progression of the 'cold' weather plan.	ADPH	31/10/10 31/10/10 and on-going	Signed-off Flood plan Signed-off Cold weather plan Exercising of plans Validation of plans.	Done - 15 June 2010 – JMT approved the joint business continuity policy ¹ .
Recommendation No. (i)	That the Winter Service Plan should provide that salt stocks at the start of the winter season should be no less than 6,500 tonnes.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 4.9

Recommendation No. (j)	That the gritting of school bus routes and accesses to schools would repay investigation as part of the review of the Winter Service Plan, given the community impact of school closures.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.9
Recommendation No. (k)	That noting the extent of what footway treatment can be delivered is to be reviewed as part of the annual review of the Winter Service Plan, the Committee requests that this will include consideration of pavement clearing machinery in addition to gritting, and the prioritisation of footways for gritting.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and Table 1
Recommendation No. (l)	That the proposed Winter Service Plan for 2010/11 should be the subject of Pre-decision scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the report to the Committee setting out the draft plan, including information on how prioritisation of routes has been arrived at, options considered and the costs of those options, mindful of the Committee's view that there is scope to extend at least some priority routes to some schools and sheltered housing facilities and urban estate roads.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 1.4
Recommendation No. (m)	That the initiative for Parish Councils to organise their own gritting operations on minor roads be supported and encouraged.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.17, 2.25
Recommendation No. (n)	That consideration be given to extending and strengthening the arrangements to use contractors and farmers to assist with snow clearance in isolated areas during severe winter weather conditions.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.24
Recommendation No. (o)	That action be taken to ensure that the acknowledged safety benefits of improvements to the drainage of the highway and maintenance of effective land drainage are realised.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service

					Plan 2010/11 Section 2.19
Recommendation No. (p)	That any bureaucratic barriers regarding the treatment of Council owned car parks and interchanges such as the County bus station should be removed, with consideration also being given to the gritting arrangements for the city bus station.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.8 and 2.14	
Recommendation No. (q)	That consideration be given to formally inviting Partners to make a financial contribution to gritting of hospital entrances and the frontages of key emergency service premises and that the gritting of pavements or other means of clearing snow and ice from pavements and possible redirection of funding for this purpose also merits further investigation and consideration.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Reference in the Winter Service Plan	ADHTCS	30/09/10		Done - Contained in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 1.3 and 4.45	
Recommendation No. (r)	That given the considerable pressures that disruption placed on parents and employers there should be an even greater emphasis placed on schools to try to open, perhaps with clear reasons for closure having to be given, and that further consideration needs to be given to what the Council can do to facilitate schools being kept open and to encourage local resilience.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Assessed as part of the Winter Service Plan, and schools own business continuity arrangements.	ADPPD	30/09/2010	Schools close only when there is no alternative.	Contained in Winter Service Plan, including local resilience. Autumn school bulletin will re-emphasise the need for clear reasons and appropriate planning.	
Recommendation No. (s)	That given the apparent remaining uncertainty over the potential for there to be criticism from Ofsted if schools open but there is limited attendance because of the weather, it is recommended that further guidance is issued clarifying this matter.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Guidance issued to schools to clarify attendance recording. Schools able to legitimately mark absence due to severe weather	ADPPD	Done at the time and will reissue in advance of severe weather	Reissue guidance in advance of severe weather. Inform school improvement, admissions and transport colleagues.	Done at the time and will be carried out in future	
Recommendation No. (t)	That guidance be issued to schools on what practical steps they could take to stay open or for more help to be provided to them to enable them to do so including information on the most efficient way to keep playgrounds safe and usable.				
Executive Response	Agreed				

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Schools able to discuss steps with property services and local contractors. Reinforce messages to be done in advance of winter.	ADPPD	Nov 2010	Schools able to plan locally to enable them to be open where possible	Contacts and update school bulletin to be issued Nov 2010
Recommendation No. (u)	That consideration be given to how the decision to close schools can be co-ordinated with, or better informed by, the highway service.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Coordinated via links in with the Winter Service Plan arrangements	ADPPD	As occurs	Decisions to close schools are informed by the most up to date environmental conditions, including the state of the infrastructure.	Practicalities of Winter Service Plan to be reviewed in relation to schools, with assistance from Emergency Planning (Oct 2010)
Recommendation No. (v)	That consideration be given to methods of ensuring that household waste sites remain operational.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
This is already in place as the safe operational status of the site is already a contractual requirement. During the recent winter difficulties sites were gritted using on site salt stores without recourse to the Council's own resources. The Waste Services Manager was in daily contact with the contractors and only on very few occasions were the sites closed. This information was relayed to the Communications Team for broadcast on a daily basis. Household Waste Sites are closed as a last resort and only if they can't be cleared of snow and ice. The main issue relating to keeping the sites open is keeping safe road access open for resident's vehicles and for the contractor's vehicles to remove waste and recycling offsite. Consequently, it is the passability of the roads which is again the main issue rather than the sites themselves.	HPS	N/A	Sites open as normal	DONE
Recommendation No. (w)	That contracts with providers should be reviewed and if necessary revised to require providers to ensure they communicate any inability on their part to deliver the contracted service so that alternative arrangements can be made.			
Executive Response	Agreed			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Review contracts; revise if necessary	ALL	31/10/10		
	HSP			DONE - This is already in place and in the case of Waste Management was the subject of daily communication and

					reporting during the winter conditions of early 2010.
		ADHTCS			Facilitated in Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 3.3
Recommendation No. (x)	That providers be required to confirm that they have business continuity plans in place to deal with winter weather and arrangements for reviewing and updating those plans regularly.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Obtain confirmation from providers	ALL	31/10/10		There is a pre qualification questionnaire PQQ, the purpose of which is to enable the Council to assess Potential Providers in accordance with its minimum requirements so that only those Potential Providers, that meet or exceed those minimum requirements, are taken forward to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage of the process. The PQQ is designed to elicit from Potential Providers sufficient information that will allow the Council to make such an assessment in the provision of services. The latest PQQ asks for Business Continuity Plans to be in place.	
	HSP	30/10/10		Business Continuity Plans are being discussed with the Emergency Planning Officer, the waste collection contractors, Focsa, the waste disposal contractor, SWS, and the council's Waste Services Manager. In the main, this will be formalising what is already the standard practice and documenting the approach which served us well earlier in 2010. Due for completion in October 2010.	
Recommendation No. (y)	That clear guidance be issued to managers and employees about their responsibilities in bad weather and a more robust approach to redeployment be implemented supported by an appropriate policy document.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
HR to work closely with JEPU (and others) to put into place a process	HWOD	31/10/10	Guidance document prepared and ready for despatch at the appropriate time. Redeployment guidance document Signed off and despatched.	HR have produced a draft overarching policy covering, for example, impact on staffing levels and sources of staffing, managing absence from work, arrangements for re-imburement of	

					additional hours, etc. This would then be supplemented by additional plans and guidance provided by appropriate experts, eg guidance regarding a pandemic, business continuity etc. ²
Recommendation No. (z)	That action should be taken to increase the provision of mobile working opportunities and/or more local access points for workers to work closer to home.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Its part of the accommodation strategy, plus there are related projects as part of the ICT strategy	JDICT	Awaiting a date	Increase in the number of relevant officers being able to work remotely; Increase in the number of local access points	Inclusion of related projects in ICT Strategy work programme	
Recommendation No. (a1)	That, given concern that the Emergency Co-ordinator Scheme may not prove as robust as hoped, take up should be monitored and, if insufficient, alternative action considered.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Development of Emergency Coordinator Scheme	ADPH	Ongoing	Identification and nomination of Parish Emergency Coordinators. Development and issue of Community Emergency Plans.	The uptake of Parish Councils has been reasonably good and continues to attract new volunteers. A number of workshops have been held to provide an: understanding of how Multi-Agency Emergency Planning Identifies and mitigates the risks we face in Herefordshire; introduction to the voluntary sector response; introduction to a Template which Supports Emergency Preparedness at Parish Level and support mechanisms for development – 2 nd version of the 'Community Emergency Plan' template to be issued at next workshop on 21 Sep 2010 . Moreover, West Mercia Police and Hereford & Worcester Fire Service have asked to be actively involved in further plan development.	
Recommendation No. (b1)	That formal negotiations take place with the Highways Agency with a view to bringing their treatment regime within the County into line with that of the Council.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Reference in the Winter Service Plan		ADHTCS	30/09/10		Facilitated through the Winter Service Plan 2010/11 Section 2.21
Recommendation No. (c1)	That the Joint Emergency Planning Unit ensure that appropriate provision is made within Severe Weather Plans for 4x4 vehicle usage.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Plans incorporate details for 4x4 usage	ADPH	Ongoing	Plans detail 4x4 useage	Ongoing as plans are developed. Herefordshire 4x4 Response Group (a voluntary organisation) continues to be an active member of the County Voluntary Emergency Committee, the structure and terms of reference of which are being reviewed.	
Recommendation No. (d1)	That West Mercia Police be asked to review the resilience of its arrangements to secure an adequate supply of 4x4 vehicles and the trained staff to drive them.				
Executive Response	Agreed				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	
Contact WMP to understand its arrangements; discuss/review the resilience of arrangements	ADPH	30/11/10	The review completed; an 'adequate' supply of vehicles; an 'adequate' number of trained staff	None to date	

Footnotes

¹ Key points:

- A Business Continuity Steering Group (BCSG) has been formed to oversee implementation across HPS. The intent of the BCSG is to provide implementation progress reports to the JMT highlighting areas' strengths and weaknesses with BCM implementation. Accordingly, it will oversee the BCM Policy and the preparation and testing of associated Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), in addition to providing a forum for sharing best practice within HPS.
- Nomination of a Business Continuity Champion, to sit on the BCSG, has been requested from each Directorate.
- Nomination of a Business Continuity Plan Author has been requested from within each Service Area.
- Business Impact Analysis interviews are being conducted at Service level under the supervision of the BCSG.

² Pending the implementation of 'Agresso' (a new HR system) in Apr 2011, the JEPU and HR are investigating how and who uses this powerful tool to support the routine business continuity management across HPS and, should an emergency response be necessary: Criticality of staff and posts can be held. This will enable the identification of non-critical staff with the required skills to be made automatically and confirmation of availability. As with the current system once the person is selected the notification letters can be produced automatically. Agresso has the option for staff to enter information to provide a skills database; any courses attended and qualifications achieved through the council would automatically be entered and records would be available for review/update as required and could form part of the SRD process. Agresso can be used to maintain lists of external volunteers for rest centres etc, records of the training, contact details, CRBs etc and can be used to send SMS messages to activate them in an emergency. Agresso would replace the SARS absence reporting system and would allow for daily reporting of absence. This would include what ever category you wished such as pandemic flu, severe weather preventing travel and looking after sick children. The system can give trends and total reports either automatically or on demand. Although NHS staff will continue to be managed by ESR, providing the data is available on ESR, Agresso will be able to access it as the systems can communicate. The Team were not aware of what plans the NHS have when the period of Central Gov funded support for ESR finishes or when the impact of the NHS white paper is identified. The Agresso team are confident that whoever owns the staff redeployment process would not have a high work load maintaining the information as it is either done automatically or by individuals and managers providing the data and inputting it. The main problem would be the level of clearance for access to the data. Agresso is able to produce reports on the data easily such as the number absent with flu, the trend (it can also alert you if a trend reaches a trigger point) the number of critical staff absent, the number of staff redeployed.



MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 SEPTEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT BY:	COMMITTEE MANAGER (SCRUTINY)

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider the work programmes of the scrutiny committees.

Recommendation

THAT the current work programmes be approved as a basis for further development, subject to any comment the Committee wishes to make.

Introduction and Background

1. This Committee is responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and approving the work programmes of the scrutiny committees and approving its own annual work programme. It is also required to periodically review its and the scrutiny committees work programmes to ensure that overview and scrutiny is effective, that there is an efficient use of scrutiny resources and that potential duplication of effort by scrutiny members is minimised.
2. A report on the work programmes of all Scrutiny Committees' will be made to this Committee quarterly. A copy of this Committee's own work programme will be made to each of its scheduled meetings. Copies of the current work programmes are appended.
3. The Committee's programme may be modified by the Chairman following consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Directors in response to changing circumstances.
4. Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, the Chairman may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
5. Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact the Chairman or Democratic Services to log the issue so that it may be taken into consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

Progress in response to recommendations made and issues raised by the Committee

6. A note showing progress in response to recommendations made and issues raised by the Committee is also appended.

Background Papers

- None identified.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – work programme 2010/11

	18 October 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half yearly report by Leader of the Council • Update on ICT • Financial Control of Capital Schemes • Accommodation Strategy • Shared Services?
	29 November 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Budget Monitoring Report • Cabinet response to Scrutiny Review of External Communication
	14 January 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy
	21 February 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Budget Monitoring Report
	25 March 2011
<p>Other issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework • Herefordshire Public Services – possible consideration of effectiveness of working arrangements • Herefordshire Partnership 	

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11
PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2010**

13 December 2010	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring • Performance Monitoring • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment • Quality Care Commission Annual Performance Assessment • Safeguarding Board, Adult Social Care – Improvement Programme • Audit Commission Inspection Report • Action Plan Monitoring: the Scrutiny Review of the Support to Carers in Herefordshire, Review of Housing Allocation and the Joint Scrutiny Review Of The Transition From Leaving Care To Adult Life
24 January 2011	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring • Review of Cabinet's Response to the Scrutiny Review of Home Care Services • Performance Monitoring
21 March 2011	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring • Performance Monitoring • Action Plan Monitoring: the Scrutiny Review of the Support to Carers in Herefordshire, Joint Scrutiny Review Of The Transition From Leaving Care To Adult Life and the Scrutiny Review of Home Care Services, Scrutiny Review of Housing Allocation

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme - 2010/11
Following consideration by the Chairman 15 Sept.10

1 October 2010 at 10.00am	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues for scrutiny raised from the seminar on 5 July on Economic Wellbeing. • Travellers Children Team – update following the bringing 'in house' of the Service. • Government Initiatives in Children's Services • The Findings of the Scrutiny Review into Pupil Attainment in Swimming at Key Stage 2 • Capital Budget Monitoring. • Revenue Budget Monitoring • Committee Work Programme.
Scrutiny Reviews	--

Friday 22 October 2010 at <u>9.30am</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years and Primary School performance – Update. (pupil and school) • Herefordshire School Task Group – Further Update • Update on Directorate Reorganisation. • Performance Digest (including unvalidated exam results). • Issues for Scrutiny raised from the seminar on 17 May 'Children's Trust Be Healthy Outcome Group' • Mobile ICT Working – Update • Referral and Assessment Inspection – Outcome • Committee Work Programme.

10 December 2010 at 10.00am	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues for scrutiny raised from the seminar on 4 October. • Performance Digest. • Consider the draft revised Children and Young Peoples Plan • Update following Safeguarding Peer Review • Validated Examination Results – (a detailed report e.g. to cover school by school; girl /boy; looked after children; traveller, etc) • Capital Budget Monitoring. • Revenue Budget Monitoring • Committee Work Programme.
Scrutiny Reviews	--

Member Seminar

Note: All Councillors will be invited to a seminar based on one of the Every Child Matters themes on 7 February 2011 (afternoon)

Possible Theme: Making a positive Contribution	
11 March 2011 at 10.00am	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues for scrutiny raised from the seminar on 7 February and other associated key issues e.g. links to NEET (Not in Employment or Training). • Further update on Directorate Reorganisation. • Capital Budget Monitoring. • Revenue Budget Monitoring • Performance Digest • Committee Work Programme.
Scrutiny Reviews	--

June/July 2011 at 10.00am	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on KS 2 School Swimming Performance. • Capital Budget Monitoring. • Revenue Budget Monitoring • Performance Digest • Committee Work Programme.
Scrutiny Reviews	--

Possible future items on:

- *Policy developments from new government and how to respond to them as an LA and family of schools (see minutes June 2010)
- Be Healthy' issues (obesity / alcohol / lifestyle/housing/ CAMHS/ psychology service) also consider inviting members from Health Scrutiny. (see minutes June 2010)
- The 14 – 19 Strategy
- Foundation and Academy Schools
- Governance arrangements for the Children's Trust and partnerships.
- Delivery plans to be submitted to Committee for the Children and Young People Plan.

In consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman the Director of Children's Services is working up a programme of open seminars for Members based on defined themes.

Suggested themes or Issues identified by the Director for future agendas

Date	Subject
To be confirmed	Economic Well Being: 14-19 Strategy.
To be confirmed	Positive Contribution: Targeted / Integrated Youth Services
To be confirmed	Enjoy and Achieve: Attendance
	Herefordshire and its comparators

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON 8 OCTOBER 2009

7 December 2009	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Performance Monitoring • Edgar Street Grid – Update • Action Plan Monitoring: Scrutiny Review of Community and Safety Drugs Partnership. • PACT Meetings • Consider the Executive’s Response to the Scrutiny Review of Tourism • Open Retail Market – Update
Scrutiny Reviews	
	Other issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Volunteering • Review of Access to Services • Review of Festivals in Herefordshire
	12 April 2010
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Performance Monitoring • Edgar Street Grid – Update • Action Plan Monitoring: Scrutiny Review of Community and Safety Drugs Partnership. • Consider the Executive’s Response to the Scrutiny Review of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005- 25
Scrutiny Reviews	

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Following the Committee on 13 September 2010

9.30am 26 November 2010	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Transport Plan 3 - Consideration of the draft LTP3 • Good Environmental Management (GEM) – end of year performance report. • County Rail Facilities – update by Cabinet Member following discussions with rail providers. • Council Vehicle Fleet Review – Further Update • Review of the Travellers' Policy – Further Update. • Connect 2 Greenway scheme – Further Update. • Capital Budget Monitoring. • Revenue Budget Monitoring. • Report on Performance Indicators. • Committee Work Programme.

9.30am 28 February 2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Budget Monitoring • Revenue Budget Monitoring. • Report on Performance Indicators. • Committee Work Programme

June/July 2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Budget Monitoring • Revenue Budget Monitoring. • Report on Performance Indicators. • Committee Work Programme

September/October 2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Budget Monitoring • Revenue Budget Monitoring. • Report on Performance Indicators. • Committee Work Programme

Items for consideration as the programme is further developed:

- Road over Rail bridges – number and condition report. (added Sept 10)
- Actions being taken to encourage further recycling (added Sept 10)
- PROW Service – further update on performance (added Sept 10)
- The effect on Herefordshire of changes to the Single Farm Payments system (e.g. hedge cutting, drainage ditch clearance)
- Any specific issues arising from Council Strategies or Plans.

- Consideration of revised/reviewed Flood Defence Policy.
- Consider inviting the Environment Agency to discuss the environmental impact, of the Open Windrow Greenwaste composting facility at Morton-on-Lugg. (Minute 60 – Committee work programme and Minute 64)

Health Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2009/11

The agenda will be based on:

- Quarterly Updates – Service Development
- Statutory Business including consultations
- Quality Assurance and Public Engagement
- Population Health and Equalities

22 November	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Procurement Update (invite Adult Social care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Members) • Follow up points from previous meetings and “need to know” information from Health Trusts. • Population Health – Access to health services in a rural County (including dental health) • World Class Commissioning • Herefordshire Service Integration Programme • Updated Response from Director of Regeneration to Scrutiny Review of GP Services
21 January	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates by Chief Executives of Health Trusts • Population Health - health and wellbeing of older people • World Class Commissioning • Update on response to Scrutiny Review of GP Services • Herefordshire Service Integration Programme
18 March	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up points from previous meetings and “need to know” information from Health Trusts. • World Class Commissioning • Population Health – Issues relating to housing

Progress in response to recommendations made and issues raised by the Strategic Monitoring Committee in March 2010

March 10-Information Communication and Technology Services Update	
Recommendations	Response/Action
(b) a further progress report be made in 6 months time, noting in particular ongoing work on the interface between the Social Care Framework system with the Council's finance system and Civica software packages; and	In work programme for 18 October.
(c) Councillor WLS Bowen be deputed to discuss access to the intranet for Members to identify and seek to resolve the apparent problems.	Work being undertaken.
July 10 – Presentation by Cabinet Member Resources	
A briefing note on the asset value arising from the Local Education Pool (the LEA Pool) be provided to committee Members.	In preparation for circulation prior to meeting on 27 September.
July 10 – Shared Services Update	
Noting that Cabinet was due to receive a further report and make a decision on the terms of the Council's participation in the Joint Venture Company (JVCo) in September 2010 the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to ensure that the Committee had the opportunity to make further input in some form prior to Cabinet's consideration.	Report on agenda for meeting on 27 September.
July 10 – Annual Corporate Performance Report 2009/10	
the outcome of the Children's Services Committee's consideration of Key Stage 1 & 2 performance, scheduled for consideration 22 October, be reported to this Committee on 29 November	Report Scheduled.
1. the Committee recommends to Cabinet that in principle the LAA targets be retained, however: Cabinet should consider whether any of the targets can sensibly be amalgamated or joined up to those used by the PCT. Only those targets that can realistically be achieved should be retained.	Reported to Cabinet September 10. Cabinet noted the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the indicators in the Local Area Agreement, and agreed that the opportunity be taken to review the indicators and projects that are in the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13, using the forthcoming review of the Joint Corporate Plan 2010-13 to do this.

<p>The report resulting from the review being undertaken by Constitutional Review Working Group (CRWG) incorporating the wider organisational work stream on Regulatory Functions be circulated to Committee Members;</p>	<p>To be circulated when review complete.</p>
<p>A briefing note be issued to members of Overview & Scrutiny; Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees setting out how improvements were being made to address the underperformance against NI131 target 'delayed transfer of care from hospitals'.</p>	<p>Report made to Health Scrutiny Committee. Updated report being prepared for wider circulation.</p>
<p>FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2009/10</p>	
<p>A briefing note setting out the latest financial position regarding the Ross on Wye Flood Alleviation scheme</p>	<p>In preparation for circulation prior to meeting on 27 September.</p>