

## **REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE**

### **Meeting Held on 16 February and 16 March 2009.**

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#### **Membership:**

Councillors: PJ Edwards (Chairman), PA Andrews, WU Attfield, WLS Bowen, KG Grumbley, T.M. James, RI Matthews, AT Oliver, PM Morgan, SJ Robertson, and K Swinburne.

#### **INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

1. The Committee has considered performance for the period April to December 2008 against the Corporate Plan 2008-11, the Local Area Agreement and the Herefordshire Community Strategy, and other key indicators taking account of the separate but complementary financial performance report, and progress against the action plans produced following the Crookall review of the Council's ICT financial and contractual governance arrangements.
2. The Committee made a number of observations to Cabinet about failure to meet a number of targets in the areas of children and young people and adult social care. It also expressed concern about the cleanliness of streets and other public places. The Committee also discussed what was being done to provide more affordable housing.
3. It noted that satisfactory progress continued to be made against the action plan prepared in response to the Crookall review and that this had been commented upon favourably by the Audit Commission. It has also noted that remaining actions will be taken forward as part of service planning and associated performance monitoring.

#### **ELECTORAL MATTERS**

4. The Committee has received an update on the improved processes and procedures implemented in accordance with the action plan developed for the Electoral Registration Service following the May 2007 elections.
5. The Committee has also received a presentation from the Electoral Commission on its work. The Commission confirmed that many of the concerns expressed locally about the May 2007 elections in Herefordshire had been shared regionally and nationally. The 2007 elections had been very difficult because of the introduction of new legislation shortly beforehand. Key findings where local elections had been held in 2008 were that they had generally run smoothly.

#### **DRAFT FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2009-12/DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10/ DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2009/10**

6. The Committee's observations on these issues were submitted to the Executive prior to reports to Council on 6 March 2009.

#### **ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

7. The work of the Committees is analysed below in accordance with the following two roles for scrutiny based on a University of Birmingham categorisation. Each Committee has also considered and rolled forward its work programme.

<b>Holding the Executive to Account</b>	<b>Developing Policy</b>
Questioning members of the Executive	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – commenting on decisions about to be made
Call-ins – Scrutinising decisions before they take effect	Policy Reviews and Development
Scrutinising decisions after they are made	External Scrutiny
Management of Performance	Health Scrutiny
Ensuring Corporate Priorities are Met	
Budget Scrutiny	
Community and Area Scrutiny	

	Holding the Executive to Account	Developing Policy
<b>Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing</b> <b>25 March 2009</b>	Performance Monitoring Rent Deposit Scheme Establishment of the Integrated Commissioning Directorate Response to the Review of Modernisation of Day Care Opportunities	
<b>Children’s Services</b> <b>30 March 2009</b>	OFSTED Annual Performance Assessment 2008 Safeguarding Action Plan Comprehensive Area Assessment and Performance Digest Revenue and Capital Budgets Establishing link roles to support Every Child Matters.	
<b>Community Services</b> <b>11 March 2009</b> <b>6 April 2009</b>	Call-in - Relocation of Hereford Open Retail Market Performance Monitoring Budget Monitoring Progress against action plan – Scrutiny Review of Edgar Street Grid	

<p><b>Environment</b></p> <p><b>2 March 2009</b></p> <p><b>23 March 2009</b></p> <p><b>20 April 2009</b></p>	<p>Carbon Management Performance</p> <p>Transportation Matters</p> <p>Asset Management and its Potential Contribution To Carbon Reduction Targets</p> <p>Setting Local Speed Limits</p> <p>Flooding of Roads and Properties in Herefordshire</p> <p>Planning Services</p> <p>Expenditure on Legal and Consultancy Costs</p> <p>Capital and Revenue Budget Monitoring</p> <p>Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Service Delivery Review</p> <p>Waste Disposal Contract</p> <p>Street Cleaning</p>	<p>Waste Management Contract</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of the Planning Service</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of On-Street parking</p>
<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>25 February 2009</b></p> <p><b>27 March 2009</b></p>	<p>GP- Led Walk-in Health Centre</p> <p>Presentation by Primecare</p> <p>Updates from the Health Trusts</p> <p>Response to the Scrutiny Review of the West Midlands Ambulance Service in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Annual Report of the Director of Public Health</p>	<p>Scrutiny Review of the West Midlands Ambulance Service in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Integrated Falls prevention and Management Strategy</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of General Practitioner Services</p>
<p><b>Strategic Monitoring Committee</b></p> <p><b>16 February 2009</b></p> <p><b>16 March 2009</b></p>	<p>Integrated Corporate Performance Report</p> <p>Budget Monitoring</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of Information Communication and Technology Services – Cabinet’s Response</p> <p>Electoral Registration Services</p> <p>Presentation by the Electoral Commission</p>	<p>Draft Financial Strategy 2009-12</p> <p>Draft Capital Programme 2009/10</p> <p>2009/10 Draft Treasury Management Strategy</p>

8. Issues of particular note include are highlighted below.
  - **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
9. The Committee called-in Cabinet's decision to move Hereford's traditional open retail market from its current site adjacent to the cattle market, which forms part of the Edgar Street Grid redevelopment, into Commercial Street in the central High Town.
10. Cabinet has considered the Committee's recommendations and has decided that the relocation will be for an initial one year trial; the strategy for new stalls including their location, will be revisited and adjusted where necessary (in consultation with Hereford City Partnership); a software package, Experion (measuring footfall), will be procured to assess the potential impact of the relocation of the Open Retail Market on the Butter Market; a detailed review of stall allocation will be carried out in conjunction with Hereford City Partnership; and a retail impact study will be conducted as soon as practicable.
  - **Environment Scrutiny Committee**
11. **Scrutiny Review of the Planning Service** – The Committee has completed a review of the Planning Service, having been invited to do so by the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing)
12. The Review made a number of recommendations including, in summary:
  - The need for greater Member involvement in various aspects of planning together with improved training and development opportunities for Members.
  - That a consultation plan be developed showing how and when the public of Herefordshire will be involved in the choices facing the County in relation to housing growth.
  - There should be greater opportunities for all Members to discuss the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) at its formative stages; and the future purpose and contribution of parish planning to the LDF process needs to be discussed and agreed with Town and Parish councils so that they too can understand the choices ahead and the differences between them. It is also recommended that the Council develop a training programme that it can offer to Town and Parish Councils.
  - Consideration should be given to establishing an all-authority infrastructure group to ensure that all future infrastructure requirements throughout the County are identified and quantified in a structured way.
  - Preparation and roll-out of a comprehensive programme to explain development management to members, developers, agents, town and parish councils and the public.
  - A number of management related matters including, for example, performance targets and resourcing.
13. Cabinet is due to respond to the recommendations by June 2009. The Audit Commission also undertook a review of certain aspects of Planning Services which may complement the findings of the scrutiny review. The Committee has requested that the Executive's response to the scrutiny review also include any recommendations and action plan resulting from the Commission's review.
14. **Scrutiny Review of On-Street Parking** – The Committee has completed a review of the way in which the Council manages on-street parking and how this fits with the

aspirations of the Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11 (LTP) of developing “a sustainable and integrated transport system”.

15. The Review made a number of recommendations including, in summary:
  - The need to commission detailed research into the use of car parks within Hereford City and development of a parking strategy in the Hereford Area Plan.
  - The introduction of a new residents’ parking scheme accompanied by promotional material explaining why the changes are necessary and emphasising that residents do not have a “right” to park outside their house.
  - The introduction of on-street parking charges should not proceed at this current time. Future introduction of on-street parking charges should be detailed in the parking strategy to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.
  - That should community-led plans be developed for individual streets within the city centre, then consideration should be given to funding these up front and then recouping the costs by the introduction of charges within the streets that have benefitted.
  - That all future income from parking of any sort be ring-fenced to provide a regular investment budget for strategic environmental improvements that promote sustainable travel options within the geographical location that the income is earned.
  - Charges as an on-street parking control should only be introduced when viable sustainable alternative options for city boundary parking are already in place.
  - A targeted campaign of school travel plan implementation and monitoring be carried out within areas considered to be experiencing high levels of congestion, notably Hereford City.
  - The development and implementation of a mobile phone cashless payment system for all of the county’s car parks should be investigated.
  - The current moratorium on new cycle parking facilities in High Town, Hereford, be lifted and further sites for additional parking be investigated and introduced.
16. The Committee has agreed that Hereford City Council should be invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to Cabinet. Cabinet will then have two months to respond to the report.
  - **Health Scrutiny Committee**
17. **GP Led Walk-in Health Centre** - Council was informed in July that as part of the NHS Next Stage Review being led by Lord Darzi, each Primary Care Trust in England was tasked with developing a GP-led health centre which will be open from 8am until 8pm, seven days a week, which can provide booked appointments and walk-in services to registered and non-registered patients.
18. The Committee has been keen to seek assurance that any new development should not be to the detriment of the existing primary care service but should lead to improvement. It has sought and received assurances to this effect.
19. The Committee has observed that the provision of a walk-in centre in Hereford City contrasts favourably with provision in the Market Towns and rural areas where opening hours and the range of services offered by GP practices vary. It has commissioned a scrutiny review of the services offered by GP practices within the County.

20. **Scrutiny Review of the West Midlands Ambulance Service in Herefordshire -**  
The Committee has completed a review commenced because of public concerns about the level of service provided by the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) in Herefordshire and particularly in the Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye Areas, where the target for responding to Category A calls within 8 minutes was consistently not being met. In summary, the review found that the Herefordshire ambulance service is of high quality, but there were grounds for the public concerns that had been expressed.
21. The review made a number of recommendations aiming at securing an improved service including:
- Resource needs should be regularly assessed with at least one additional ambulance required to be allocated to Herefordshire, which should be based in Ledbury.
  - That effective means are implemented to ensure all arrivals by ambulance at Hereford Hospital are accommodated safely and that all other measures are taken to reduce inappropriate use of emergency services and to release beds safely.
  - That enough funding and other resources be found for Community First Responders (CFRs), who are volunteers and currently have to raise funding for themselves, and the deployment of CFRs should be more effective.
  - That data collection and dissemination, particularly of outcome-based indicators, be improved.
  - That regular detailed progress reports following the Emergency Operation Centre reconfiguration be supplied for scrutiny especially regarding resource drift and response performance.
22. The Committee has been assured that the findings and recommendations are being given serious consideration.
23. The Committee noted that subsequent to the Committee having commenced its review the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) as commissioners of the ambulance service had proposed their own independent review of the service. The Committee was also informed that WMAS was also undertaking its own review of provision in the County.
24. The Committee has agreed that on conclusion of the two separate reviews of the ambulance service led by WMAS and the PCTs respectively their findings will be reported to the Committee, together with a progress report on the recommendations in the scrutiny review.

#### **EXTERNAL HEALTHCHECK OF THE SCRUTINY FUNCTION**

25. Council was informed in February that an external healthcheck of the scrutiny function had been undertaken in November 2008 by the Leadership Centre, which is also looking at the Council's governance arrangements as a whole and Member Development. Members of the Strategic Monitoring Committee have met informally to discuss the report. Work is ongoing on the response to the findings.

#### **SCRUTINY COMMITTEES REPORT 2007-09**

26. A report covering the activity of the Council's scrutiny committees for the period 1 May 2007 to 30 April 2009 is in preparation and will be circulated to all Members of the Council and made available on the Council's website.

**PJ EDWARDS  
CHAIRMAN  
STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Agenda Papers for the meetings of the Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 16 February and 16 March 2009