

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	4 MARCH 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010-2011
MEMBERSHIP	COUNCILLORS: PA ANDREWS, WLS BOWEN, ME COOPER, PJ EDWARDS, AE GRAY, KG GRUMBLEY, TM JAMES, RI MATTHEWS, PM MORGAN, AT OLIVER, PJ WATTS.

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Purpose

To inform Council of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny function from May 2010 to February 2011.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report summarises the work undertaken by the six Scrutiny Committees from May 2010 to February 2011. This summary will form the basis of a fuller Herefordshire Council Scrutiny Committees Annual Report 2010/11 which will be published and made available on the website.

SUMMARY OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE SCRUTINY FUNCTION IN 2010-11

2. **The following scrutiny reviews have been completed this year:**
 - A review of Volunteering in Herefordshire - the Executive's response to the review was accepted, noting that the Executive had agreed the review's recommendations
 - A review of Home Care in Herefordshire – the Executive's response is currently under consideration because of need to assess implications of Comprehensive Spending Review and changes within the health and social care system.
 - A review of the effects of the Winter Weather in late 2009 and early 2010 and the response to it. The Executive's response to the review was accepted, noting that the Executive had agreed the review's recommendations, with their implementation to be within existing resources.
 - A review of Communication with the Public about Services and Access to those Services – Executive's response to the review was accepted noting that the Executive had accepted the majority of the recommendations.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on (01432) 262039

- Review of Pupil Achievement in Swimming at Key Stage 2 – the Executive has accepted the recommendations.
- Review of the strategic direction of the Edgar Street Grid – submitted to the Executive for consideration and awaiting a response.

3 **The following scrutiny reviews were previously completed but have received a response, or update from the Executive this year:**

- Review of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005-25.
- Review of Community Engagement in the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership.
- Review of the support to Carers in Herefordshire
- Review of Transition from leaving care to adult life
- Review of on-street parking
- Review of GP Services.

4 **Scrutiny Reviews in Progress**

There are no reviews in progress at the moment recognising that the work to be undertaken by the scrutiny function will need to be given consideration following the Council elections.

Scrutiny Meetings

5. The scrutiny committees have considered a range of other matters at their meetings.

6. The **Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee** has

- Considered the work of the Adult Safeguarding Board. The Committee noted progress on adult safeguarding in Herefordshire and suggested consideration should be given to the inclusion of an Elected Member on the Adult Safeguarding Board; and recommended that safeguarding should be adequately and appropriately funded.
- Monitored the adult social care budget and highlighted that despite regular assurances that the suitable accounting mechanisms for the Frameworki package would be available, its implementation was still awaited. Given the extreme pressures on the Adult Social Care budget the Committee considered it was imperative that the Directorate should have this tool available so that immediate budgetary management was made possible. The Committee also welcomed the realignment of budgets, on the assumption that they would now be sufficient to cope with the number of clients with acute needs that the Service had to deal with.

The Committee also expressed concern about the pressures on the adult social care budget, noting the efforts being made by the Service to stay within budget, but considering that the basic budget for this demand led service remained inadequate and it was unlikely that the deficit would be reduced significantly by the end of the financial year.

Noted with disappointment the length of time that discussions over the contract with Shaw Healthcare had taken.

- Considered progress with the mental health procurement project.
- Considered progress against Putting People First – the Government’s agenda for transforming the Adult Social Care Service.
- Received a report on the 2010 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Reviewed the outcome of the Audit Commission’s inspection of Strategic Housing Services.
- Noted with concern the lack of suitable affordable housing in the County for vulnerable children and young adults.

7. The **Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee** has

- Invited Halo Leisure to explain how swimming tuition for schools had developed over the preceding 6 months. The Committee recommended that Halo continue to compile a database on pupil/ school swimming attainment; and continue to expand the training of teachers to assist in giving swimming lessons. The discussion with Halo informed a short scrutiny review of swimming provision at Key stage 2.
- Monitored the budget and in doing so recommended the Cabinet Member(s) take steps to ensure that all grant funding obtained is fully utilised and that it is done in an efficient, effective and timely way to ensure there is minimal repayment to the grant making body. The Committee also asked that the Cabinet Member(s) to give consideration to whether it would be more cost effective for additional provision to be made locally for looked after children and children with complex needs.
- Considered the capital budget and in doing so recommended that a full report on how major school building projects had been administered e.g. Riverside Primary School, be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that learning and good practice was being incorporated into future projects.
- Considered performance and recommended that Cabinet Member(s) consider an earlier implementation date for the 24/7 emergency telephone response required to meet National Indicator 51; and that closer working arrangements be brought about between the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and child psychology service.
- Considered the outcome of a seminar on activity to support and enable children and young people’s economic wellbeing in Herefordshire.
- Found good progress has been made since the establishment of the Herefordshire Traveller Achievement Service in September 2009. The Service was designed to establish effective integrated Children and Young People’s service provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children and families. The Committee requested a further report monitoring the sustained year-on-year impact of the Children and Young Peoples’ Plan in relation to benchmarking existing outcomes for GRT children; setting targets that narrow achievement gaps for GRT children; and the targeting of resources towards improving outcomes for GRT Children. The Committee also requested that the Cabinet Member bring to the attention of all Members of the Council their responsibility towards GRT Children.
- Considered an overview of government initiatives affecting Children’s Services. Amongst other things the Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member(s) consider whether the Youth Service could provide any support towards those Playbuilder schemes ready to proceed so that the impetus at community level isn’t lost; and that the Cabinet Member(s) ensure that there are clear, fully coordinated, joined up links in the 16-19 area to ensure that young people have clear information and assistance during their transition to adult life.

- Considered work on sustainable school provision in the County given the decline in overall pupil numbers in the County.
- Considered standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the primary school phase and attainment and progress of pupils in the secondary phase of maintained schools in the County.
- Been advised of the outcome of the OFSTED inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services.
- Called in Cabinet's decision that Dilwyn Church of England Primary school be discontinued, concluding by accepting Cabinet's decision.
- Considered the partnership priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014.
- Considered the position in respect of mobile working for children's social workers and support workers within the County. Amongst other things the Committee supported the proposal for ICT technical options to be identified between the Children and Young People's Directorate and ICT Services to find a suitable and cost effective way for staff to work in a more mobile way; and for all Herefordshire children's workplaces, including children's centres and the proposed locality "hubs" to have capacity and connectivity for staff to connect to the network when in the locality.

8. The **Community Services Scrutiny Committee** has:

- Scrutinised the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership focusing on performance against national indicators within the joint corporate plan: NI 21 dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police; NI30 to reduce the reoffending rate of prolific and other priority offenders; NI39 to reduce alcohol harm related hospital admission rates and NI40 to increase the number of people in effective drug treatment.

The Committee appointed a Review Group to carry out this scrutiny work. The Group reported back to the Committee with recommendations for the Committee to consider. The Committee has recommended that this approach to the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters should be continued.

- Considered the findings of the independent review of the Destination Management Partnership responsible for the operation of Herefordshire's Tourism promotion. The Committee has also considered a report on the future of tourism and tourist information centres in the County. The Committee expressed concern regarding the potential loss of skills as a result of the closure of Tourist Information Centres in the County, and urged the Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services to take urgent note of this in any redeployment of staff.
- In addition to carrying out a review of the strategic direction of the Edgar Street Grid project the Committee has received regular updates on the project.
- Received an update on the relocation of the open retail market from the former cattle market site to Commercial Street, Hereford.
- Considered and commented on the proposals contained within a report on third sector support and development services on the future provision of support services to front line voluntary and community organisations.

9. The **Environment Scrutiny Committee** has:

- Received the annual presentation of the Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation. The Committee requested him to take up in the strongest terms the matters concerning the lack of local train capacity and station facilities with the train companies. The Committee also requested that local Member(s) be informed when any serious incident or accident occur on roads in their ward;
- Received the annual presentation of the Cabinet Member – Environment and Strategic Housing. The Committee requested him to note the concern of the Committee that the enforcement of planning conditions was far from satisfactory and the Committee wished to see continued improvements in this area. The Committee also requested the Cabinet Member to press Welsh Water and other bodies concerned to deal with the issue of unadopted sewers as soon as possible.
- Received an update on the Council's plans to reduce carbon emissions. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the Herefordshire Environment Partnership. It encouraged all Directorates to make every effort to establish accurate baseline data to ensure that true carbon savings are achieved. The Committee also supported the work on how financial savings could be made through the carbon reduction plan.
- Considered an overview of progress on Herefordshire Schools Travel Plans and the contribution that reducing travel to school by car makes to reducing carbon emissions. The Committee requested that new build school schemes incorporate lessons learned from previous schemes e.g. Riverside, on designing in the best and safest routes to school for pupils thereby encouraging walking and cycling.

The Committee also requested an investigation into whether the school mini bus fleet is fully utilised be investigated; and that Chairs of school governing bodies be reminded of the importance school travel plans have in contributing to carbon reductions in the County.

- Considered a report outlining the results of the Council vehicle fleet review undertaken in response to concerns expressed by the Committee about the management of the vehicle fleet. The Committee supported the aim to rationalise the vehicle fleet and ensure that vehicles used are the best for the job, energy efficient, produce low CO2 emissions and present a good example to members of the public.
- Received an update on the operation of the single Planning Committee and the planning enforcement function following on from an earlier scrutiny review of the service.
- Received a presentation by the Local Access Forum on the Forum's work.
- Considered the operation of the public rights of way service, including the respective responsibility of Amey and the Council, current performance and progress towards achieving desired outcomes. Amongst other things the Committee agreed that the possibility of obtaining funding from other 'partners' who benefit from the public using the rights of way network e.g. NHS, tourism should be investigated; further consideration be given to how the public are informed about route closures, particularly major tourist routes, on the PROW network; and consideration be given to approaching the National Farmers Union to urge them to remind their members of their responsibilities concerning any Public Right of Way over their property.
- Received an update on progress in developing the Local Development Framework.

- Received an update on progress in developing the Local Transport Plan and subsequently commented on the emerging Strategy. The Committee recommended that the Executive take particular account of the higher range of traffic volume estimates when formulating the Local Transport Plan; and ensured that the Council maximises any funding opportunities for transport issues.
- Received an update on the work of the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership and recommended that an awareness campaign be initiated to highlight to the agricultural community the contribution they can make to improving road safety.
- Received an update to see whether any issues had arisen following the opening of the Colwall railway bridge and in doing so requested that a report be presented on the number and condition of road bridges over railway lines for which the Council has any liability for maintenance.
- Considered the Council's performance on environmental issues in 2009/10 in relation to commitments made, in particular in the environmental policy and corporate plan.
- Received an update on planned improvements for rail services and facilities in Herefordshire and agreed to invite the key providers of rail services and facilities in the County to a future meeting to discuss issues of concern.
- Received an update on the Connect 2 Greenway scheme prior to submission of a planning application for the scheme.

10. The **Health Scrutiny Committee** has

- Received regular updates from the Chief Executives of Health Trusts responsible for health care in the County providing assurance to the Committee about health services.
- Received the annual report of the Director of Public Health
- Revised its work programme to include a particular focus on population health issues. This has included what Herefordshire Public Services are doing to

address alcohol misuse and smoking.

improve people's diet and take up of exercise, suggesting all Councillors should be encouraged to champion this work in schools and in the Community.

improve access to health services with a particular focus on dental services.
- Considered the mental health procurement project seeking clarification on how the new arrangements will improve services and benefit service users and their carers and deliver value for money. The Committee has also requested that any significant proposals to vary the range and location of service are referred to it for consideration. It has also registered concerns at the length of time taken to conduct the procurement exercise and requested that officers undertake a review to see what lessons can be learned from this exercise with the outcome of the review to be reported to the Committee.
- Considered the Herefordshire Service Integration programme designed to deliver a new integrated model of health and social care provision in Herefordshire through an integrated care organisation under one management structure composed of an integrated NHS Trust combining community and acute health services. The Committee welcomed the aspiration underpinning the proposals but emphasised the importance of both the NHS Herefordshire

Board, the Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust Board and the Cabinet satisfying themselves that the proposals are sustainable in terms of cost.

- Welcomed the assurance provided to it that the response in Herefordshire to the Swine Flu Pandemic between April 2009 and August 2010 was appropriate, timely and proportionate.
- Considered progress in response to a number of reviews of the West Midlands Ambulance Service.
- Considered an outline of quality assurance systems in place to assure the Primary Care Trust (PCT) Board that services commissioned are high quality services.
- Sought clarification on initiatives being taken to discourage inappropriate attendance at A&E and how Councillors could support these initiatives as community leaders.
- Noted the key points and recommendations of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010
- Received a presentation on plans for the West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust to become an NHS Foundation Trust and submitted a response to the Trust's consultation exercise on its proposals

11. The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** has:

- Considered a number of reports on the Shared Services programme and submitted comments to Cabinet upon it.
- Supported the joint working to develop a joint Herefordshire Public Services feedback policy and the Customer Insight Unit.
- Hosted a partnership consultation event on the Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence: liberating the NHS" and associated consultation documents and contributed to the proposed response.
- Considered a report on the project management and financial controls in place for Capital Schemes managed by Asset Management and Property Services, as requested by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.
- Considered an update on progress with the proposed joint office accommodation strategy for the Council and NHS Herefordshire.
- Considered progress reports on Information Communication and Technology Service issues following a scrutiny review of the service.
- Considered arrangements for the preparation of the 2011/12 budget including proposals for engaging the community and submitted views to Cabinet on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2011/14.
- Commented on the joint NHS Herefordshire Corporate Plan.
- Considered Cabinet's recommendations to Council on the preparation of the Local Development Framework and arrangements for the Local Transport Plan.

12 All the scrutiny committees have:

- Scrutinised performance across the Council and asked Cabinet Members and officers to account for performance and explain future plans.
- Considered capital and revenue budgets, highlighting to the executive areas of concern.

Future Work

13 Whilst the Work Programme for 2011/12 will need to be given consideration by Members following the Council elections the following issues have currently been identified for consideration:

- A review of festivals in the County
- Further work on population health and the delivery of effective preventive interventions.
- Local Development Plan Process

Background Papers

Agenda papers and Minutes of the meetings of the scrutiny committees.