

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Thursday, 17 March 2016, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

		Minutes
Present:		Mr R M Udall (Chairman), Mrs E A Eyre (Vice Chairman), Mr C J Bloore, Ms L R Duffy, Mr A C Roberts, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr T A L Wells
Also attended:		Jodie Townsend (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Alyson Grice (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)
Available Papers		The members had before them: A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2016 (previously circulated). A copy of documents A will be attached to the signed Minutes.
908	Apologies and Welcome	Apologies were received from Kit Taylor.
909	Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	None.
910	Public Participation	None.
911	Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
912	Developing a Scrutiny Approach to Quality Assurance	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board was asked to consider the Vice Chairman's report on scrutiny and quality assurance. Members were reminded that this item had been deferred from the last meeting.</p> <p>By way of introduction, the Vice Chairman made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrutiny currently did not have a full

understanding of quality assurance methods in the County Council. Worcestershire was not alone in this. It was an issue for all Councils.

- Following work last year with CfPS, the original idea had been to set up a separate member group to look at quality assurance. On further consideration, it was agreed that the people who were best placed to look at quality assurance were members of scrutiny panels.
- It was important for scrutiny members to know what information was available and what they could ask for.
- Appendix 1 to the agenda report outlined a starting point for each directorate and should be seen as a first draft of how this work could be taken forward.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Vice Chairman for the work she had done on quality assurance and informed members of the Board that he fully supported the recommendations as set out on page 5 of the agenda. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and the following main points were made:

- It was suggested that quality assurance methods should be embedded in the management of each department of the Council. The Vice Chairman reminded members that each directorate had quality assurance staff and robust quality assurance methods. Members were referred to the details given in the appendix to the agenda report.
- In response to a question about how scrutiny panels will know if they have been successful, it was suggested that this would be different for each panel. Following initial training, panel chairmen would be able to report back to OSPB whether they felt that the level of quality assurance was effective and whether it made a difference. All scrutiny reports should include a section on the quality of the service.
- It was confirmed that the Vice Chairman would continue to be the OSPB member with responsibility for Quality Assurance.
- Members were reminded that the Children's Services Directorate had set up a Performance Board which looked at outcomes in relation to education, skills and social care. This focused on quantitative measures, rather than the quality of the service. Similarly, the Balanced Scorecard did not focus on service quality.

- It was suggested that it was very difficult to measure quality and there was a danger that measurement could become very mechanistic.
- It was suggested that, if done well, this would allow scrutiny members to have access to information that they had not seen before, allowing members to see where things were going wrong, the level of risk and the actions being taken to reduce the risks. Members would be able to see whether there were mechanisms in place to protect the most vulnerable residents.
- It was suggested that, for this to be successful, there was also a need for a cultural change within the authority leading to a no blame culture. It should be the case that officers would be prepared to place issues in the public domain even if doing so may cause embarrassment.
- There may be some occasions when members would need to be cautious in their approach and even meet in private session. For example, the former Director of Adult Services and Health had given the example of an underperforming care home where a large number of fragile elderly people were resident. The Council would want to find a way to help the home improve its performance rather than close. Talking about this sort of issue in public would not be helpful and may put residents at risk.
- It was suggested that closed sessions should only be used in exceptional circumstances and the recommendations should be re-worded to reflect this.
- Members should be clear that they would be looking to see that quality assurance was done effectively rather than undertake quality assurance themselves.
- It was confirmed that any training for members would not be held in public session.
- It was suggested that a training session for Panel Chairmen and Vice Chairmen and other OSPB members should be held before the 2017 Elections in order to lead cultural change.
- It was suggested that training in quality assurance should be a requirement for any member who wished to serve on a scrutiny panel. Members were reminded that this would be for full Council to decide.

The Board agreed to recommend that:

913 Scrutiny Work Programme Consultation

- An initial training session on Quality Assurance should be held for Panel Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and other members of OSPB to help Members lead cultural change in the authority in relation to quality assurance. This should take place before the 2017 Council elections.
- As part of the Council's 2017 induction programme, further sessions should be held for all scrutiny members covering:
 - The importance of understanding service budgets, service scope, Key Performance Indicators and QA data
 - An introduction to the current Directorate QA arrangements
 - A brief familiarisation with the Council's complaints procedure and reports to facilitate interpretation of the quarterly complaints data.
- The Councillor working group, in identifying the skill set required for Members of scrutiny panels, should recommend that QA training is made compulsory for scrutiny panel members.

The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board was asked to:

- (a) Review the progress made in delivering the 2016/17 Overview and Scrutiny work programme consultation exercise;
- (b) Decide if any further action was required in preparing the Overview and Scrutiny work programme report for consideration by OSPB and then full Council.

The Democratic Governance Manager updated members on progress to date in delivering the overview and scrutiny work programme consultation, making the following main points:

- A consultation website was due to go live on 21 March. This would facilitate collection of suggestions from members of the public and Council officers.
- A programme of media work to publicise the website was also planned.
- As part of the March round of Panel meetings, all O&S Panels and HOSC were being asked for suggestions for scrutiny topics.
- All County Councillors had also been invited to send in suggestions as individuals, covering any aspect of the Council's work.

**914 Member Update
and Cabinet
Forward Plan**

- A further report would be brought to OSPB in April giving the results of all consultations. The draft work programme would then be considered at the May Council meeting.
- It was suggested that it might be more effective for each Panel Chairman to ask for suggestions for scrutiny topics from the public. In response, members were reminded that, to date, there had not been a great deal of public engagement in the Council's scrutiny work, so this should be seen as a starting point. Planning for next year was already underway and this should be seen as an ongoing process throughout the year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board was asked to:

- (a) Receive an update on emerging issues and developments within the particular remit of each member of the OSPB, including an update on each Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Task Group;
- (b) Consider the Council's latest Forward Plan in order to identify:
 - Any items it would wish to consider further at a future meeting; and
 - Any items it would wish to refer to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration;
- (c) Receive a verbal update from the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager on the Overview and Scrutiny Budget 2015/16.

Adult Care and Well-Being O&S Panel

The Chairman informed members that the Panel had invited 'Stand up for Care' (a local campaign group) to attend its next meeting. Members wanted to hear their concerns and question them on their views, seeing themselves as a conduit between services users and providers. The date for this meeting had yet to be confirmed. It was confirmed that this organisation represented adults only.

Concern was expressed that there was a danger that the public was becoming 'consultation weary' as public consultations often did not result in real change. The Board was reminded that the forthcoming Panel meeting should not be seen as consultation, but rather as 'triangulation'. It would be interesting to see why those attending felt it necessary to set up a campaign group

and what they saw as the issues needing attention.

The Panel had also held a useful meeting on the previous day. Firstly, this had looked at the performance of support services for those with drug and alcohol problems. The Panel had been concerned to hear that the current rate of success was approximately 4%. The Panel met representatives of the recently appointed new provider and also 2 former service users.

It was suggested that the briefing on drug and alcohol support services duplicated the work of the proposed scrutiny task group. In response, members were reminded that, due to staffing issues within the scrutiny team and the fact that the Commissioning: Staff Terms and Conditions scrutiny task group had not yet completed its work, there had been a delay in starting the task group on drug and alcohol services. The discussion at the Adult Care and Well-Being O&S Panel should be seen as a starting point for the task group's work. It was confirmed that several members of HOSC had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the task group and it would now be possible to take the work forward.

The Panel had also discussed a consultant's report on the state of the care marketplace in Worcestershire. The Chairman reported that the original plan had been to hold this discussion in private but he had challenged that. He expressed concern that the Panel had not been able to see the consultant's report and, as yet, there was no date given as to when the report would be released. The Panel had also been concerned about the impact on care providers of the implementation of the national living wage. Some providers had already reported that they were losing money on each Council contract. Worcestershire was unusual in that the County had a large number of small care providers. The Panel Chairman suggested that the current position was unsustainable. Either the County Council would need to provide more money for the service or adult services would need to review care packages, which would be difficult in the light of the requirements of the Care Act.

Children and Families O&S Panel

The Chairman reported that the Panel had met that morning and had discussed the 0-19 Starting Well service. Members had requested that the issue was brought back to a future Panel meeting as some questions remained unanswered. Also, in November 2015 Cabinet had agreed that future decisions in relation

to the re-design of the service should be made by the Cabinet Members for Health and Well-Being, and Children and Families, and the Directors of Adult Services and Children's Services under delegated authority. The Panel had concerns about this and wished to recommend to the Leader of the Council that future decisions should be made by Cabinet. The Chairman of OSPB supported the Panel's view.

The Panel had also considered Educational Outcomes for 2015 and services in relation to children who were 'educated otherwise'.

The Chairman of the Panel confirmed that social mobility would be included on the Panel's work programme. A recent report had shown that disadvantaged children living in well-off areas were not achieving the outcomes in education and in life that they should.

Economy and Environment O&S Panel

The Panel Chairman informed the Board that the Panel's next meeting had been postponed. The current main topic of interest was in relation to changes to bus services and a Member seminar with the service provider was being held the following week.

The Chairman of the OSPB reminded Members that, at the Board's last meeting, it had been agreed that a meeting would be set up between himself, the Chairmen of the Adult Care and Well-Being O&S Panel and the Economy and Environment O&S Panel, and the Cabinet Member to discuss the forthcoming changes to bus services. This meeting had not yet taken place and, instead, a Member seminar was being held. He felt that the smaller meeting with the Cabinet Member should still take place. The Chairman of the Adult Care and Well-Being Panel confirmed that the issue of bus services was of growing concern and was something that many County Councillors were still not aware of. The Member seminar that was being held was information giving rather than scrutiny and had no standing in the democratic process. It would be important to follow up on concerns that were first expressed when earlier changes were made 2 years ago.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy O&S Panel reminded Members that the Panel had looked at bus services 2 meetings ago but, at that time, no one was aware of the changes that were planned. The bus services were run by a commercial organisation and they

had concerns about the profitability of certain routes.

It was agreed that the meeting between the Chairman of the OSPB, the Chairmen of the Adult Care and Well-Being O&S Panel and the Economy and Environment O&S Panel, and the Cabinet Member for Highways would be set up as a matter of urgency following the Board's meeting.

It was confirmed that devolution would be included on the Economy and Environment O&S Panel's work programme.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman of HOSC informed Members that he was keen for the issue of access to hospital services at the Worcestershire Royal to be considered, both in terms of car parking and public transport. It was suggested that this work could be carried out by members from both Economy and Environment O&S Panel and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that this was an issue for residents travelling from both urban and rural areas of the County.

The Chairman also reported that the proposed scrutiny into integrated care may not now happen as it had been overtaken by events. Other possible topics for future scrutiny included:

- Consideration of the Public Health Annual Report and health inequalities
- Domestic violence – outcomes and treatment. The Chairman of OSPB reminded members that OSPB has previously agreed to consider services in relation to rape and sexual violence. He suggested that this exercise could also include domestic violence.
- Further changes to services provided by the Acute Hospitals Trust. Previous changes which had been made on a temporary basis as a result of urgent clinical need, had now been extended and were, by default, permanent. These should now be considered by HOSC, with HOSC having to decide whether they should be referred to the Secretary of State.

Overview and Scrutiny Budget

The Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager confirmed that for 2015/16 a budget of £3k was available

for scrutiny activities and, to date, none of this money had been spent. It was confirmed that staffing and member training were paid for from separate budgets.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would form a sub group to consider scrutiny finances and report back to the Board at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chairman