

Overview and Scrutiny **Annual Report 2014**

May 2015

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Foreword

I'm pleased to present to Council the 2014 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

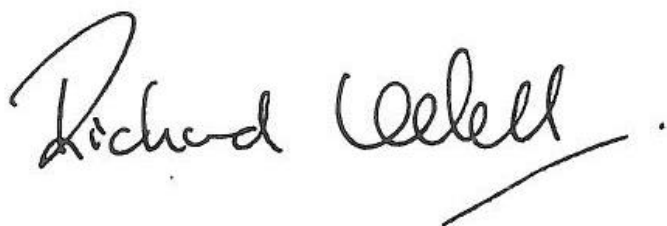
It has been a busy and challenging year. As well as dealing with our agreed work programme we have also considered requests for call-ins and responded to motions agreed in Council which asked us to undertake scrutiny reviews.

We have also attempted to assist the Executive with proposals and ideas with policy development and pre-decision scrutiny; I believe this to be a crucial role for scrutiny, something which allows us to be pro-active and not just re-active. We have continued to invite people from outside the County Council to give evidence and address concerns. I was also pleased that we worked in partnership with District Councils in producing two Scrutiny Reviews; this is something I would like to continue to do in the future.

Looking ahead we have to ensure resources and skills are available and met to enable us to undertake the challenges of undertaking our role within a new council structure and in new and changing circumstances.

I would like to thank all scrutiny members, and in particular the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, for their hard work and commitment over the year. Also, I would like to place on record my appreciation and thanks to the Scrutiny Team; without their help, patience and assistance the job of scrutiny would be impossible.

This report highlights some of the key activities that have taken place during the year but if you would like to know anything more we would be delighted to talk to you. Contact details for the Scrutiny Team can be found on the back cover and you can find out more about our work by visiting our website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Udall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Richard Udall
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

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Introduction

Overview and Scrutiny has had a busy year, looking at over 50 issues and publishing seven scrutiny reports since the last annual report. Worcestershire also successfully bid for free support from the Centre for Public Scrutiny to help the Council develop ways of involving scrutiny members in the commissioning process; this project is ongoing.

This report highlights just a few of the key pieces of work from the past year. The complete work programme can be seen at **Appendix 1**.

The remits of all the scrutiny bodies and their memberships can be found at **Appendices 1 and 2** and **Appendix 4** shows activity data.

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

OSPB has considered a variety of issues this year. Councillors called-in two Cabinet decisions which were determined by OSPB: Kingsford Forest Park and the consultation on passenger transport reductions, and it set up two scrutiny reviews following requests by Council: one to look at the benefits of integrating waste services, and another on food banks.

As well as considering strategic Council-wide issues such as FutureFit, the public health report and the future operating model, the OSPB has also had helpful discussions with a number of key partners in Worcestershire:

- Citizens Advice Bureau and members' concerns about its financial sustainability
- the Environment Agency in relation to flooding
- the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership about the Strategic Economic Plan
- and the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service in relation to their joint working with Warwickshire

Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Domiciliary Care (Homecare)

The Panel has looked at the overall domiciliary care service and also the Council's monitoring of domiciliary care providers. The Panel made suggestions for greater weighting of service user issues/complaints as part of the risk analysis process. It is likely that further scrutiny will be given to domiciliary care during 2015, potentially to look at capacity, resources and resilience of the domiciliary care market.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Positive Activities for Young People

In July 2014, Cabinet agreed that the Council's current approach to Positive Activities should be reviewed to see whether the Council could ensure sufficient local offer (in accordance with its legal duties) without any Council funding of service delivery from 2016-17. As part of the review process, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel was asked to comment.

The Panel met officers, the Youth Cabinet and commissioned service providers, to understand how the complexities of the planned budget reductions would impact on services. The Panel is currently pulling together its views which will be submitted to Cabinet in time for its discussion of the future of Positive Activities.

Safeguarding

In the period covered by this annual report the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel met with the Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board to discuss two of its annual reports – 2012-13 and 2013-14. Issues discussed included:

- The voice of the child
- The role of district councils in terms of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Safeguarding of children who are home educated.
- The complexities of gathering multi-agency data.
- Information sharing and access to data.
- The robustness of safeguarding arrangements in non-LA controlled schools, including academies, free schools and independent schools.
- Transition from children's to adult services.
- The cumulative impact of budget cuts across agencies.

Economy, Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Passenger Transport

The Panel discussed the outcomes of the consultation on the withdrawal of subsidised bus services and then carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the subsequently modified proposals before they were considered by Cabinet. Members felt the impact on vulnerable people had been fairly examined and acceptable mitigations had been put in place. The Panel will continue to monitor the impact of the reductions on residents.

Trading Standards

During 2014 the Panel considered the proposed efficiency savings for Trading Standards, which amounted to £1.5 million over three years up to 2016/17. Members were concerned about the risks of reducing funding, including impacts on capacity and effectiveness and welcomed the proposal to put £185,000 back into the service for 2016/17. Members remain concerned and will continue to monitor the work of Trading

Standards.

The OSPB Chairman also represented the County Council on a joint scrutiny review of Regulatory Services.

Renewables

The Panel commented on the draft Renewable Energy Strategy for Worcestershire, which sets out how the Council will develop its own renewable energy schemes and the role that the Council could play in renewable energy generally. To get an external perspective, the Panel heard from OxFutures and Sharenergy and received a report from the Renewable Energy Foundation. Members welcomed what the Council was already doing to support renewable energy, but felt that it could do more to promote opportunities for renewable energy projects and to exert pressure on the power distribution company and the Government to try and increase capacity in the Grid.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Acute Hospital Services Review

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been taking a keen interest in the '*Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire*' programme, which was launched in September 2013 to take forward the proposals outlined in the previous Joint Service Review. The Committee broadly welcomed the outcome of the Independent Clinical Review of recommendations for future service delivery, but has been very disappointed by the subsequent delay in finalising the reconfiguration of services.

The Committee has asked for regular updates on progress and in response to new developments, such as Birmingham University Hospital Trust's temporary embargo on referrals from outside the Birmingham area for some treatments and more recently, the resignation of five A&E consultants.

The Chairman also has sought assurances that clinical standards are being maintained and the Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust remains financially sustainable during this time. Members look forward to a clear direction after the general election.

Mental Health Services

The Committee has focused on several aspects of mental health care and support, looking at services for older adults, including dementia and also the hospital based liaison service which responds to A&E referrals and to self-harm and suicide request assessments. This is an increasingly high profile policy area both locally and nationally, to which it is likely that further scrutiny will be devoted during the coming year.

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Municipal Bonds Agency

The Panel was consulted on the proposal to amend the Treasury Management Strategy in order to enable the Council to purchase shares in the Municipal Bonds Agency being established by the Local Government Association. The Municipal Bonds Agency would raise finance by issuing bonds and lend it on to local authorities. If successful the Agency could provide loans to local authorities at rates below the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). The Panel was supportive of the initiative and suggested there be a limit

to the amount which one authority could borrow, and that the Council is well represented on the Agency Board.

Smarter Working

The Panel has been monitoring the progress of the Streamlining Management project, which is expected to make up to £3m savings. Members were pleased that layers of management had been reduced from 8 to 5 or 6 in most Directorates, although they are keen to understand the impact of this on frontline staff and level 1 and 2 managers and will continue to look at staffing issues in 2015-16.

Food Banks Scrutiny Task Group

Following a Notice of Motion at full Council, the OSPB agreed that a Scrutiny Task Group should be set up to look into food banks in the County.

Members heard strong evidence that benefit delays and sanctions were major factors behind the increasing demand for food banks. The task group's report was sent to all County MPs with a request that they contact the Department for Work and Pensions to seek data on benefit withdrawal and sanctions, and helpful responses were received from several MPs.

Budget Scrutiny Task Group

This year the OSPB agreed a new way to scrutinise the 2015/16 budget. It was agreed that a scrutiny task group should be set up to examine budget issues across the whole council and talk to a variety of witnesses to enable a fuller analysis to be put to Cabinet in February 2015.

The task group made a number of specific recommendations and highlighted several areas of concern. Although Members were pleased to hear that each savings project was being fully assessed to establish its impact on equality, they were concerned about the cumulative effect of the savings, particularly on those who were from socio-economically deprived communities. The Task Group was also concerned about the proposed removal in 2016/17 of the budget for positive activities and the financial impact this might have in other areas of the Council's work.

Libraries Scrutiny Task Group

Following member concerns about the future outcomes for the mobile library service, a pre-decision scrutiny task group looked at the proposals before they were considered by Cabinet in July 2014.

Overall, the Task Group was impressed with the savings plan for fixed libraries and pleased that the County Council will continue to deliver, and be responsible for running, the full library service. They considered that provision of a mobile service only outside a 3 mile radius of fixed libraries was reasonable, and made a number of recommendations to explore how an enhanced service could be achieved and suggested questions to incorporate into the consultation. The Task Group suggested a future review to find out users' views on the quality of service and establish the level of drop off.

Digital Inclusion Scrutiny Task Group

The scrutiny examined how the Council would ensure that all Worcestershire residents benefit from the opportunities offered by its Digital Strategy and aimed to identify possible risks and how these can be mitigated.

Members stressed the importance of the Council working with residents to "co-produce" digital inclusion and clearly communicating the aims of the strategy, and the fact that face to face and phone contact would continue to be available for those with complex needs or without access to online reporting. Sufficient resourcing for these alternative channels must also be kept in place. The OSPB agreed that members should monitor implementation of the Digital Strategy.

Integrated Waste Service Scrutiny Task Group

Following a Notice of Motion at Council, a Scrutiny Task Group was set up to investigate the potential for introducing an integrated waste collection and disposal service in Worcestershire, and examine potential costs, savings, benefits and barriers.

The Task Group found that, while combining operations could bring financial benefits, it was essential that there was a strong desire from at least one of the participating authorities. In Worcestershire there are few signs that such desire exists. However, the scrutiny established that there would only be a desire to integrate waste services if significant savings could be guaranteed for all partners. Given this, the task group recommended an audit is conducted to find out what savings might be made.

Reducing Crime against People at Risk

This Scrutiny Task Group investigated how the County Council, with partners (including the Police), can reduce crime against people at risk, including Domestic Violence, Hate Crime, Honour Based Violence/Forced Marriage.

The Scrutiny found that the amount of domestic violence, hate crime and honour based violence in Worcestershire is relatively low, but available data must be seen as the tip of the iceberg, given reluctance to report incidents. There was a huge amount of excellent work being undertaken across Worcestershire but it was not possible to gain a clear picture of how such work was funded (e.g. where County Council funding is directed), whether the funding was appropriate, and how to support planning for the future.

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APPENDIX 1 - Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

- 2014-15 Budget Scrutiny
- Winter 2013-14 Flooding and Storms
- FutureFit: A Future Operating Model
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Worcestershire Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme – Annual Report
- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services Joint Scrutiny Final Report
- The Role of Overview and Scrutiny
- Worcestershire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Worcestershire Public Health Annual Report
- Worcestershire Next Generation
- Consultation on Public Transport Reductions – call in
- Transfer of Kingsford Forest Park to the National Trust – call in

Scrutiny Task Groups

- Libraries
- Digital Inclusion
- Integrated Waste Service
- Archive and Archaeology Service

Adult Care and Well Being

- Future Lives – Consultation of proposed changes to Prevention and Support Services for adults and young people
- Budget scrutiny
- Assessment processes within new models of care
- Performance monitoring
- Homecare
- Ways of working including quality assurance
- Sickness rates within the Directorate of Adult Social Care and Health
- Corporate strategy planning
- Safeguarding Adults
- Performance Monitoring – focusing on Older People Services
- Your Life, Your Choice website briefing
- Carers Strategy 2015-2017

Children and Young People

- Budget and Performance Monitoring
- Learning and Achievement Service
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Reports 2012-13 & 2013-14
- Draft Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan 2014-17 – Proposed Priorities and Areas of Focus
- Short Breaks Service for Children and Young People – Ludlow Road
- Re-design of Child Development Centres and Child Developmental Assessment
- Commissioning and Provision of Child Development Centres
- Transition Arrangements (from Children to Adults)

- Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reform
- Positive Activities for Young People – Future Direction
- Corporate Strategy Planning – Children's Services
- Fostering Transformation – Recruitment and Retention Project
- Children Missing from Care and Child Sexual Exploitation

Economy, Environment and Communities

- Passenger Transport
- Utility Streetworks
- Highway maintenance
- Satisfaction with roads
- Transport infrastructure
- Streetlighting
- Flooding
- Sustainable transport
- Renewable energy
- Superfast Broadband
- Trading Standards
- Budget
- Corporate Strategy Planning
- Performance Monitoring
- The Hive
- Community Based Transport

Health

- Future of Acute Hospital Services
- Patient Flow and delayed discharges
- West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Worcestershire Urgent Care Strategy, including Worcester Walk-in Centre
- NHS Quality Accounts
- Winter pressures
- Pilot project introducing a system of clinical navigation at the Alexandra Hospital
- Community Stroke Rehabilitation Services in North Worcestershire
- Wyre Forest Integrated Intermediate Care Programme
- Community Service Development Programme
- Personal health budgets
- Mental Health Liaison
- Mental Health Services
- Care Quality Commission inspection of Mental Health and Community Services
- Tenbury Minor Injuries Unit
- Healthwatch: Consumer experiences of the health and social care complaints system
- Mental Health Services for Older People, including dementia
- GP Commissioning

Resources

- Performance Q2
- Volunteering and Community Resilience
- Redditch Youth House
- Living Wage update
- Joint Property Vehicle Proposal
- Strengthening Act Local
- Municipal Bonds Agency
- Smarter Working
- Budget Scrutiny & Performance Q2 (2013/14)
- Performance Q4 (2013/14)
- Corporate Strategy Planning & Budget consultation (2013/14)

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APPENDIX 2 - Overview and Scrutiny Structures

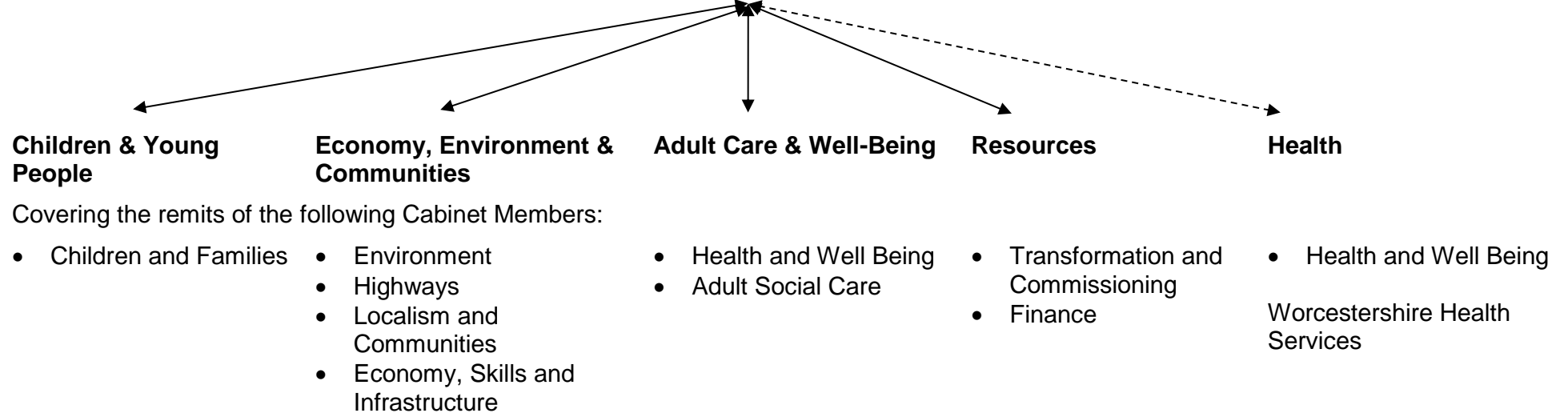
COUNCIL

- Appoints OSPB chairman and lead scrutiny members
- Approves outline scrutiny programme
- Discusses annual scrutiny report



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD

- Considers Corporate Plan and strategic issues
- Agrees the scrutiny work programme
- Commissions scrutiny from Panels, task groups, joint work with districts, or itself
- Is the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee
- Decides how call-ins are dealt with
- Determines budget and performance scrutiny process



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APPENDIX 3 - Membership

Overview & Scrutiny Performance Board

Richard Udall - Chairman
Kit Taylor - Vice Chairman
Bob Banks - Resources
Chris Bloore - Crime & Disorder Lead Member
Lynne Duffy - Children & Young People
Ken Pollock – Economy, Environment & Communities
Andy Roberts – Health O&S Committee
Tom Wells - Adult Care & Well Being

Adult Care & Well Being O&S Panel

Tom Wells - Chairman
June Griffiths - Vice-Chairman

Rob Adams, Chris Bloore, Andy Fry, Phil Grove, Anne Hingley, Clive Holt, Jim Parish

Children and Young People O&S Panel

Lynne Duffy - Chairman
Fran Oborski – Vice Chairman

Marc Bayliss, Paul Denham, June Griffiths, Ian Hopwood, Rachel Jenkins
Bryan Allbut – Church of England rep
Francis Mohan - Catholic Diocese rep
Charmian Richardson – Parent Governor
Vacancy – Parent Governor

Economy, Environment & Communities O&S Panel

Ken Pollock – Chairman
Graham Vickery – Vice Chairman

Alastair Adams, Pat Agar (from June 2014), Alan Amos (until June 2014), Phillip Gretton
Ian Hopwood, Matthew Jenkins, John Thomas, Paul Tuthill

Resources O&S Panel

Bob Banks – Chairman
Stephen Peters – Vice Chairman

Marc Bayliss, Stuart Cross, Clive Holt, Robin Lunn, Kit Taylor, Liz Tucker, Paul Tuthill

Health O&S Committee

Worcestershire County Council

Andy Roberts – Chairman

Phillip Gretton, June Griffiths, Phil Grove, Pattie Hill, Tony Miller, John Raine, Mary Rayner, Graham Vickery

District Councils

Jan Marriott – Malvern Hills DC – Vice Chairman

Brian Cooper – Bromsgrove DC
Pat Witherspoon – Redditch BC
Dr David Tibbutt (until July 2014) Mike Johnson (from July 2014) – Worcester City Council
Frances Smith – Wychavon DC
Fran Oborski – Wyre Forest DC

APPENDIX 4 - Performance and Activity Measures

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
No. of Scrutiny Reports published	4	3	5	7	7
% of scrutiny recommendations accepted by Cabinet	95	98	80	100	95
"Short scrutinies" ¹	37	39	68	45	54
No. of call ins received	0	0	1	0	2
No. of reviews of previous scrutinies	1	3	1	1	0
Total no. of issues considered	42	45	75	53	63
No. of meetings serviced ²	67	44	61	51	65

¹ Number of separate issues considered

² OSPB/Panels/HOSC/Task Groups

Further copies of this report are available from:

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<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny>

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio tape, computer disk and Braille) on request from the Overview and Scrutiny Team on telephone number 01905 728713 or by emailing scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

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