Scrutiny in Gloucestershire

Annual report 2010-11

Making a difference

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

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1. Foreword

As Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2010-11.

2010-11 has been the first full year of our new scrutiny structure and it has been well received by members. You'll see from the following pages that effective scrutiny is so much more than just attending meetings at Shire Hall. Members have been involved in a number of task group reviews that have looked at specific issues and they have taken the opportunity to go out to meet people delivering services on the ground.

Working with partners is fundamental to strengthening the overview and scrutiny process and it is particularly pleasing that our new joint scrutiny committee looking at community safety issues led by Cllr Kathy Williams has been so successful.

It is being held up nationally as an example of best practice and this bodes well for the future with the introduction of a police and crime panel from May 2012 to scrutinise the activities of the directly elected police commissioner.

We are in unprecedented times with the council, in common with all other local authorities, having to make huge reductions in spending in order to balance its budget. This has presented some significant challenges for scrutiny and I would like to thank Cllr Dennis Andrewartha, Chairman of the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for the constructive approach his committee has taken to scrutinising the budget.

With the pressure on the budget it has also been a challenging time for the chairs of the other scrutiny committees. I would like to thank Councillors Phil Awford, Andrew Gravells, Martin Quaile and Kathy Williams for their efforts during the year.

Cllr Andrew Gravells has recently stepped down as Chairman of the Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank him for the work he has done since the joint committee was formed in 2008. It is pleasing to see that the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust was identified nationally as the most improved ambulance service in 2010.

Stephen Wood, Group Director for Business Management and the corporate lead for scrutiny, left the council at the end of March 2011. I have always appreciated Stephen's support and advice and I wish him well for the future. Jo Walker, Strategic Finance Director, has taken over Stephen's scrutiny role and we welcome Jo to the wider scrutiny team.

In what has been an extremely busy year for scrutiny I would like to thank the Scrutiny Team of Simon Harper, Andrea Clarke, Stephen Bace, Elizabeth Power and Jo Bolton for all their hard work and dedication.

As well as dealing with a new scrutiny structure they have also had to implement the new public petition process - which has meant trying to meet public expectations whilst dealing with complicated political and legal sensitivities. In recent months there have been petitions and an urgent call-in which has meant even more pressure but the team have not been found wanting and have always delivered - an outstanding effort from all of them.

I hope that you will agree after reading the following pages that effective scrutiny can make, and indeed has made, a real difference to the lives of people in Gloucestershire. Although the key issues for each committee are set out in the sections that follow it should be remembered that this is only a snapshot of the work that has been undertaken by councillors and officers during the year.

Councillor Rob Garnham

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

2. Our vision and track record for scrutiny

We are in unprecedented times with the council facing significant reductions in funding over coming years. In simple terms we will not be able to continue to provide services at the same level in the future.

We will need to find different and lower cost ways of delivering services and this will include working closely with partners across the public sector to ensure that we are doing things in the most efficient way possible.

Arguably it has never been more important for elected members who are not part of the 'executive' to engage in the decision making process.

The scrutiny of the 2011-12 budget and medium term financial strategy showed how valuable this process can be with members from all of the overview and scrutiny committees having an opportunity to be involved. The resulting recommendations were developed on a non-political basis and helped the cabinet in formulating its budget for the coming year.

Scrutiny is well placed to challenge how services are provided across the public sector in Gloucestershire. The joint arrangements with the district councils for the scrutiny of health and community safety have proved effective and we will need to develop these further as we move forward.

The work that was undertaken with Gloucester City Council on the adoption of roads on new housing estates demonstrates how scrutiny can undertake 'narrow and deep' reviews of issues that are causing real concern to local people.

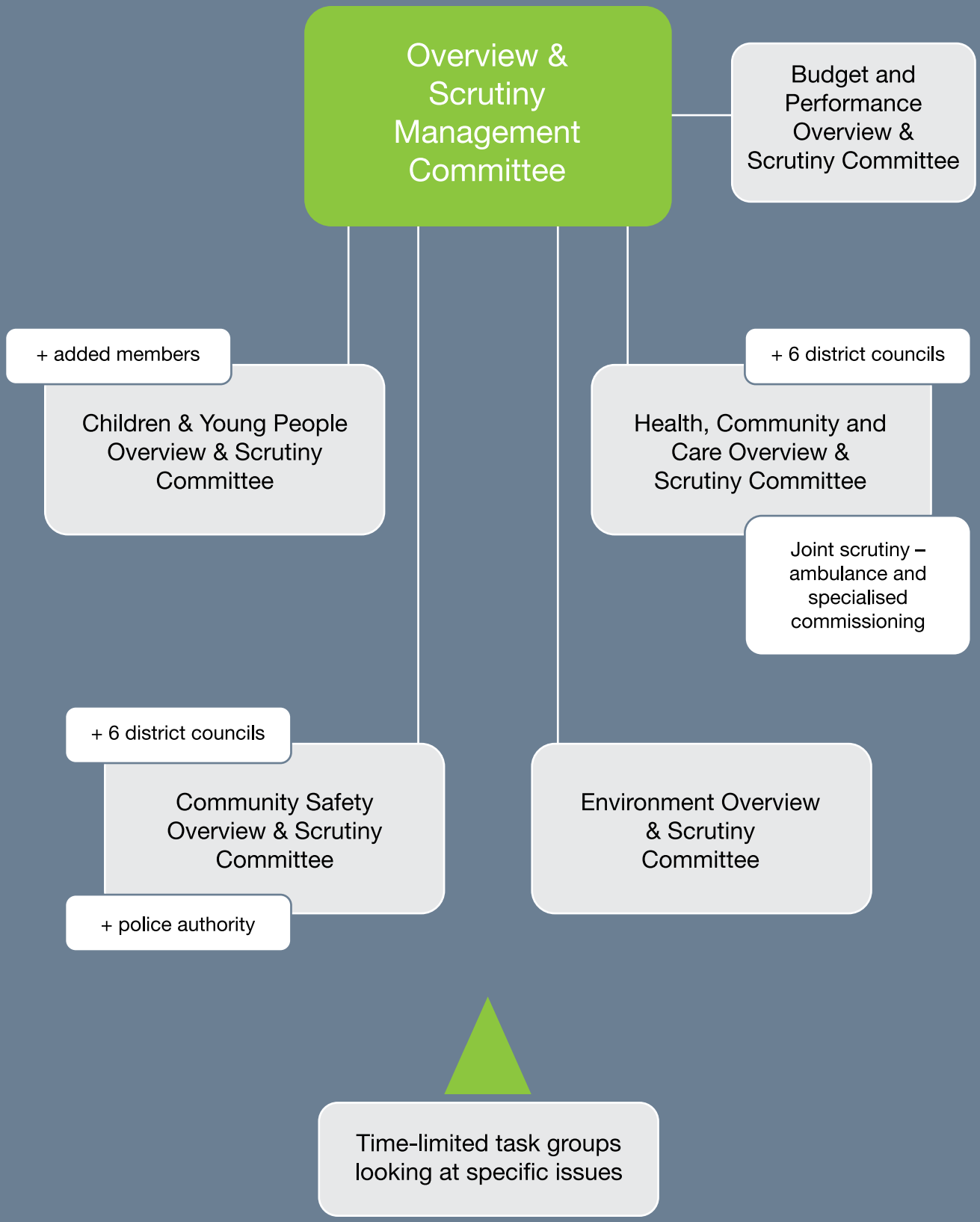
In summary scrutiny should:

- provide a strong voice in identifying areas of under-performance or local concern
- focus on those areas that matter to local people
- hold service providers (including the council) to account for their decisions, actions and policies
- make recommendations to improve existing policies and influence emerging policies of the council and its partners.

Pete Bungard
Chief Executive

Jo Walker
Strategic Finance Director
Corporate Scrutiny Lead

3. Scrutiny structure



4. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Chairman:
Cllr Rob Garnham

Lead members:
Cllr Dennis Andrewartha (vice-chairman)
Cllr Diane Hibbert
Cllr Steve McHale

The committee is responsible for managing the council's overview and scrutiny process and ensuring that it is operating effectively and is making a difference for local people. The membership of the committee includes the chairs of the other overview and scrutiny committees and they report on their committee's activities at each meeting.

The role of the committee also includes commissioning task groups, determining call-ins of cabinet decisions, considering appeals against petition responses and scrutiny of local economic issues.

Key areas of activity:

- **Scrutiny in the downturn**

Members received a report in July 2010 setting the scene for the reductions in public sector funding and the important role for overview and scrutiny in ensuring that services continue to be provided to vulnerable people at a time when significant savings need to be made.

- **Severn Trent**

Members were invited to see the flood defence work being undertaken at the Mythe water treatment works in Tewkesbury. They also visited a number of sites where pipes are being laid as part of a major scheme to provide an alternative water supply for the county. Severn Trent is investing more than £30 million in the two schemes.

- **New scrutiny structure one year on**

The new structure has been well received with members involved in both committee and task group activities. Some areas were identified for further consideration, notably the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the remit of the Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- **Petitions**

A new petition scheme was introduced in June 2010 and an opportunity was taken later in the year to review how it was operating. Members suggested a number of improvements in light of the difficulties that had been encountered when the Starvehall Farm (Prestbury) petition was presented to the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- **Scrutiny task groups**

Eleven task groups have been looking at specific issues during 2010-11. The new process that allows task groups to be set up more quickly by lead members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee rather than waiting until the next meeting has worked well.

- **Call-in**

Cabinet decisions relating to the library service policy and the residual waste project were called in.

- **Scrutiny task group monitoring**

Recommendations from task groups are monitored after 6, 12 and 18 months and progress reports were presented to the committee in September 2010 and April 2011. This has proved to be very effective and officers both from the council and partner organisations are aware that they will be asked for regular updates. The format of the report was improved during the year following comments from members.

Committee membership

Cllrs Ron Allen, Dennis Andrewartha, Phil Awford, Rob Garnham, Andrew Gravells, Diane Hibbert, Ceri Jones, Steve McHale, Shaun Parsons, Martin Quaile, Gordon Shurmer, Klara Sudbury and Kathy Williams

Officer contact:

Simon Harper, Scrutiny Team Leader
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01452 425230

5. Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman:
Cllr Dennis Andrewartha

Lead members:
Cllr Shaun Parsons
Cllr Sarah Lunnon

The role of the committee is to provide a corporate overview of performance, the budget and service improvement. It also undertakes overview and scrutiny of those county council functions that are not covered by other scrutiny committees.

Key areas of activity:

- **Budget scrutiny**

The committee believes it is important that scrutiny is involved in supporting and advising throughout the budget setting process. The committee has devoted a large proportion of its work plan to ensure that it can effectively engage with the process and is able to understand the significant issues that have to be considered when setting the budget.

- **Monitoring of the budget and performance**

The committee receives year-end forecasts for revenue and capital budgets, and updates on other financial management issues. The committee has previously highlighted the need for tighter budget control and looks to work with other scrutiny committees. The committee will continue to be provided with a strategic oversight of the council's performance.

- **Change programmes**

The committee had previously engaged with the 'Building our Future' programme and has noted the learning points around change management. This will be important as the council embarks on the 'Meeting the Challenge' programme. The committee will look at where it can best add value to this process and has requested dynamic reporting with clear milestones to help ensure that progress can be effectively monitored.

- **Procurement**

The committee supported the progress of the procurement strategy and the need for ongoing compliance across the authority. It will receive regular updates throughout the year.

Committee membership

Cllrs Dennis Andrewartha, John Burgess, Bill Crowther, Sarah Lunnon, Fiona McKenzie, Shaun Parsons, Brian Robinson and Martin Quaile.

Officer contact:

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5.1 Scrutinising the draft budget

Chairman of the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Cllr Dennis Andrewartha

The Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out a review in order to advise the cabinet on council and budget priorities in the lead up to the publication of the draft budget.

This process involved committee meetings and informal member briefings that took place from July 2010 until February 2011.

Members considered the emerging socio-economic challenges facing the county, current performance and the financial outlook in order to respond to the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS), the 'Meeting the Challenge' proposals and the proposed senior management structure.

The committee took the lead on scrutinising the budget on behalf of all scrutiny committees. The other committees were invited to consider the MTFS from the perspective of the directorates within their remit and to feed into the final report.

Key findings and recommendations:

- A clear vision of the future role of the organisation
- Effective project management with stronger accountability for delivery
- The culture of the organisation with a focus on staff compliance around procurement
- Concerns around the overspend in the Community and Adult Care Directorate, specifically relating to the cost of care packages
- Sufficient resources to be targeted at ensuring local people or community groups are supported in the setting up of community services
- The relationship between the commissioning and operational arms of the council within the new senior management structure
- Appropriate monitoring of the police contract
- Ensuring library proposals are compatible with proposals on the bus network and concessionary fares
- Focus on essential maintenance and repairing potholes on our roads.

Committee membership

Cllrs Dennis Andrewartha (chair), John Burgess, Bill Crowther, Sarah Lunnon, Fiona McKenzie, Shaun Parsons, Martin Quaile and Brian Robinson.

The following members attended some meetings:

Cllrs Ron Allen (Health, Community and Care), Dr John Cordwell (Environment), Ceri Jones (Children and Young People), Charmian Sheppard (Children and Young People and Community Safety) and Kathy Williams (Community Safety).

6. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman:
Cllr Phil Awford

Lead members:
Cllr Charmian Sheppard
Cllr Sonia Friend

The committee's remit covers all services relating to children and young people.

Key areas of activity:

- **OFSTED Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services**

The committee sees safeguarding as a key issue that underlies all the issues that it considers. Ensuring that the outcomes of the OFSTED inspection are addressed will be at the forefront of the committee's agenda in the coming year.

- **Locality based working**

This is about the council working in partnership with key partners within specific areas in the county so that there is a clear understanding of the level of need within each area, and that services can therefore be better targeted to meet those needs.

It is expected that this will result in better outcomes for children and families, enable earlier intervention, and improve safeguarding.

The committee intends to take its meetings out to the locality areas over the next 12 months as part of its work to ascertain whether this approach is delivering the expected outcomes, particularly whether there is evidence that children and young people are better safeguarded.

- **Aiming high for disabled children**

The county council in partnership with NHS Gloucestershire was one of 21 authorities leading on this national transformation programme. The programme is about providing respite breaks for families with disabled children.

It was clear to the committee that this is an innovative programme of work, which has been welcomed by families, and has received national recognition. More information on this work can be located at **http://www.youtube.com/ocwcglos**

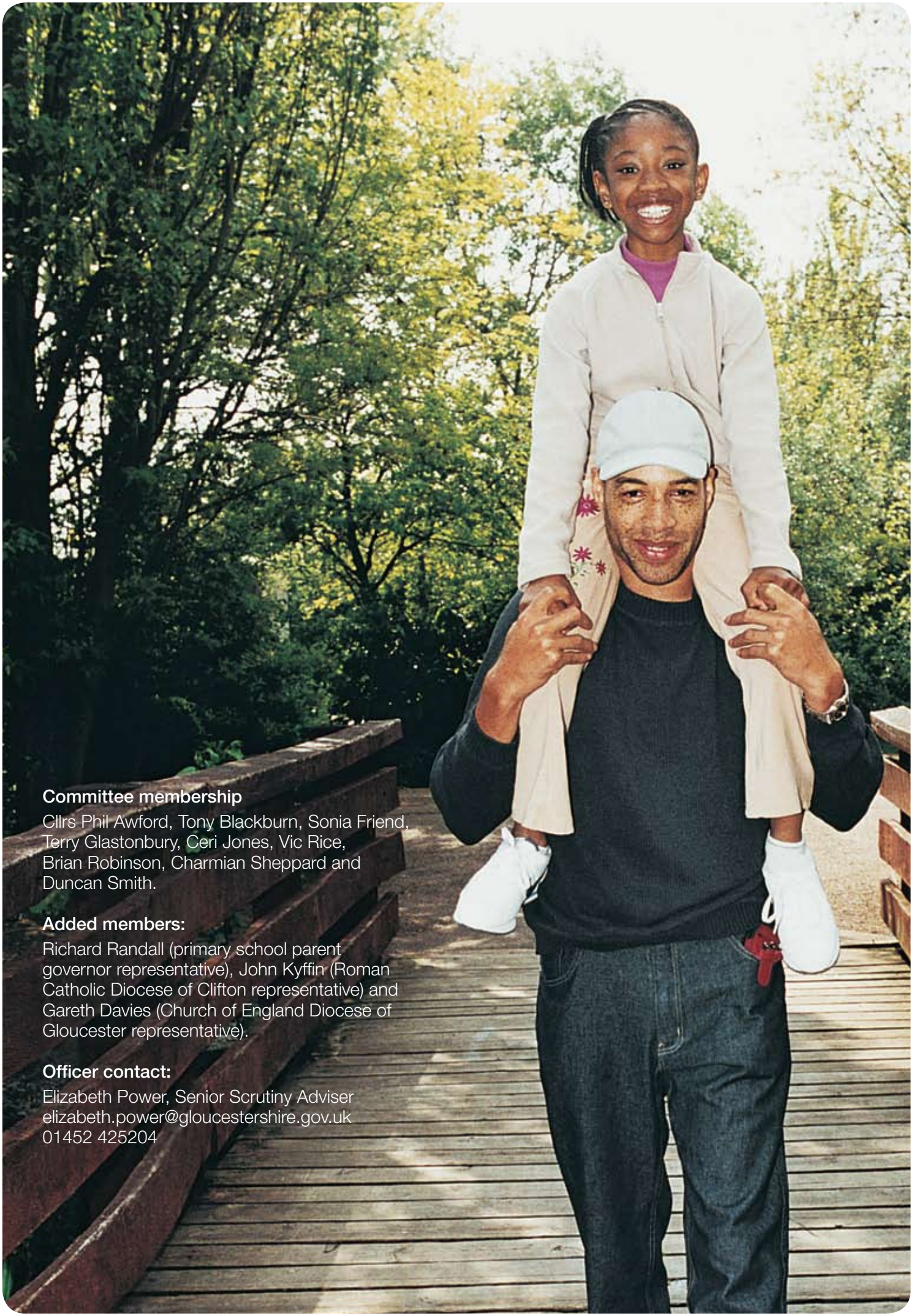
- **Transition from children's services to adult life for disabled young people**

This is a challenging area of work, and is an issue that has been of concern to members for some time. It is clear that there have been improvements in the transitions process over the last few years.

A lot has been done to ensure that a multi agency approach is taken, and that parents and carers are closely involved. However, members remain concerned and a task group has been commissioned to look specifically at the engagement between children's and adults' services.

- **Task groups**

The final report of the Improving Outcomes through Positive Activities for Young People was received by the Cabinet in July 2010.



Committee membership

Cllrs Phil Awford, Tony Blackburn, Sonia Friend, Terry Glastonbury, Ceri Jones, Vic Rice, Brian Robinson, Charmian Sheppard and Duncan Smith.

Added members:

Richard Randall (primary school parent governor representative), John Kyffin (Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton representative) and Gareth Davies (Church of England Diocese of Gloucester representative).

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6.1 Improving outcomes through positive activities for young people

Task group Chairman:
Cllr Brian Robinson

Cabinet members requested the preparation of a commissioning plan for positive activities including options for delivery models and level of service. Members felt that a task group would be able to work independently of cabinet to make recommendations and that a scrutiny inquiry would assist the robustness of the process and eventual outcome.

The task group visited youth service provision across the county as well as visiting a local school and meeting with youth MPs. The task group's final report was received by cabinet in July 2010.

Key findings and recommendations:

- The need to understand the importance of young people engaging in positive activities
- A consistent approach to the charging of bus fares for young people across the county
- Support youth workers and partners in breaking down the social barriers preventing young people from engaging with youth centres and other provision
- To work closely with schools to encourage them to make facilities available for after hours use
- Recognise the role of the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- High profile events or taster sessions to encourage young people to try new activities
- Priority given to provision that is accessible, flexible and meets the changing needs of young people in Gloucestershire
- The need for a review of buildings to ensure best value for money with a focus on activities
- Gloucestershire County Council provides leadership and a core structure, that is flexible and targets provision where need arises.

Task group membership

Cllrs Terry Glastonbury, Andrew Gravells, Brian Robinson and Charmian Sheppard.

7. Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair:
Cllr Kathy Williams

Lead members:
Cllr Charmian Sheppard
Cllr Brian Calway, Tewkesbury Borough Council (vice-chairman)

The committee is responsible for overview and scrutiny of crime and disorder related issues and the council's community safety activities. The committee focuses on crime and disorder issues from a public perspective and works in partnership with other agencies such as the Gloucestershire Police Authority and the six district councils in the county.

Community safety activities at the council include fire and rescue, trading standards, emergency management, coroners and registration.

Key areas of activity:

- **Private finance initiative contract**

Members have received further details of the project to build and maintain four community fire and rescue stations and a life skills centre, including the plans that are in place to work with partners.

- **Emergency management**

The committee has continued to receive updates on emergency management with a focus on business continuity. The committee recommended to cabinet that business continuity needed to remain a priority and has fed that view into the budget scrutiny process.

- **Police**

The committee responded to the consultation around the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill and will look to see where scrutiny can best get involved in the future. The committee also continues to monitor the police contract ensuring that it represents best value for the people of Gloucestershire.

- **Community safety**

Members will look to consider how scrutiny can best engage with services as they adapt to 'Meeting the Challenge'.

- **Task groups**

The final reports of the task groups looking at sickness absence in the fire and rescue service and community safety partnerships were received by Cabinet in September 2010.

Task group membership

County councillors
Peter Braidwood, Mike Collins, David Cooksley, Terry Glastonbury, Terry Hale, David Prince, Charmian Sheppard, Brian Tipper and Kathy Williams.

District councillors
Brian Calway (Tewkesbury), Gerald Dee (Gloucester), Helena McCloskey (Cheltenham), John Jones (Stroud), Carole Allaway-Martin (Forest of Dean) and David Penman (Cotswold).

Gloucestershire Police Authority
Susan Naydorf.

Officer contact:

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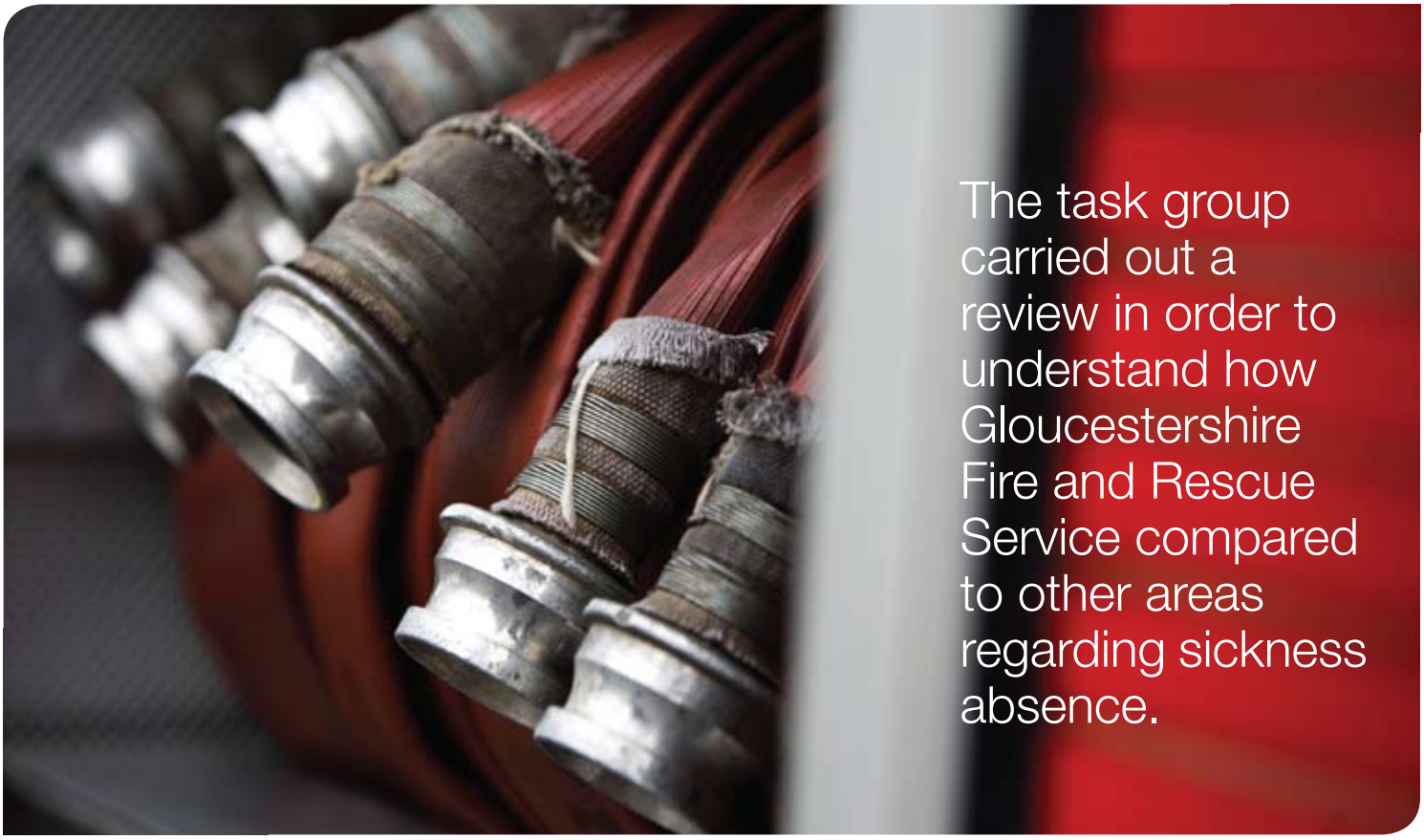
7.1 Sickness absence in the fire and rescue service

Chair:
Cllr Kathy Williams



It set out to examine the reasons for an upwards or downwards trend in sickness absence and consider how this might continue in the future. It also considered what measures would improve the physical and mental health of employees.

Cabinet received the task group's final report in September 2010. Members met senior officers from the fire and rescue service, human resources staff from the fire and rescue service and representatives from occupational health, as well as visiting fire stations to gain the views of whole time fire fighters, retained fire fighters and control staff.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group learnt that there had been issues with the way sickness absence had been recorded onto the GUS computer system and it was clear that these issues were at least one cause for the seemingly high level of sickness absence.

Despite this, the task group identified areas where it was important to make improvements:

- Relationship between the fire and rescue service's human resources and occupational health
- Further updates to scrutiny on occupational health
- Fire fighters to feel part of the council and understand its vision through better communication
- Public awareness of the work of the retained fire fighters
- Organisational structure in place to meet the needs of an ageing workforce
- Review of fitness work carried out at stations, as well as appropriate equipment to prevent musculo-skeletal injury
- The need to develop a culture of support to ensure the mental wellbeing of staff
- Understanding the environmental triggers that can effect fire fighters' mental health.

Task group membership

Cllrs Carole Allaway-Martin (Forest of Dean), Charmian Sheppard, Brian Tipper and Kathy Williams.

7.2 Community safety partnerships

Task group chairman:
Cllr Brian Calway (Tewkesbury)

This task group was set up in March 2010 to look at the role and funding of the community safety partnerships operating in the county.

The Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed some concern about the complexity of the current arrangements. The review was undertaken at a time of fast moving change with radical new proposals from the coalition government and unprecedented pressure on public sector finances.

The task group spoke to a wide range of people involved in community safety activities in the county. Questions were asked on funding, value for money, how community safety partnerships are making a difference for local people, how priority issues such as anti-social behaviour are being tackled and whether any changes to current structures are necessary.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report in September 2010, and following presentation to the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee, informed the cabinet and the Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership of its findings.

With such uncertainty about national policies regarding community safety, the task group did not try to make detailed recommendations but made some suggestions on the best way forward.

Recommendations centred around making responsibilities clear, streamlining structures, making the best use of limited resources and getting the message across that Gloucestershire is a safe place to live.

One of the main recommendations was that the Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership should merge with the Gloucestershire Criminal Justice Board to prevent duplication and ensure a more joined-up approach.

This has subsequently happened with the Gloucestershire Stronger Safer Justice Commission being launched in February 2011.

Task group membership

Cllrs Brian Calway (Tewkesbury), Gerald Dee (Gloucester), Terry Hale and Susan Naydorf (Gloucestershire Police Authority).

8. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman:
Cllr Martin Quaile

Lead members:
Cllr Dr John Cordwell
Cllr Graham Morgan

The committee is responsible for overview and scrutiny of environment related issues. Its remit covers a wide area including highways, waste management, planning, transport and climate change.

Key areas of activity:

- **Waste**

This is a significant issue for this council. Landfill is not a long term solution and how this council addresses this agenda is something that the committee closely monitors.

Members have looked at how the council is developing its joint working arrangements with the district councils; what is being done to promote the four Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover) to the general public; the joint waste core strategy; and how it will address the issue of residual waste. The committee regularly reports to the cabinet on the issue of the future management of residual waste.

- **Climate change**

The council has made a clear commitment to reduce its carbon emissions. It was invited to become the first 10:10 county in the country, and the carbon management plan is endorsed by the Carbon Trust.

The committee has a clear role to play in monitoring progress against targets and offering its support to this agenda. It has already commissioned a task group looking at the options for renewable energy.

- **Floods**

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has resulted in the council taking on the lead local flood authority (LLFA) role. This means that we are required to lead on the coordination of flood risk management across Gloucestershire.

The Environment Agency is a key partner in this work, and the committee would like to thank them for their direct engagement with the committee, and willingness to respond to members' questions.

- **Highway maintenance**

The committee robustly monitors this process and undertook a detailed session on quality assurance of the highways in May 2010. The committee will be undertaking a highways themed meeting in July 2011 where it intends to find out whether the improvements that were discussed in 2010 are making a difference to the quality of Gloucestershire highways. If necessary the committee will commission more detailed work in this area.

- **Road safety**

The committee considered this matter at its meeting in July 2010, and was pleased that the Police representative on the Road Safety Partnership was able to attend and engage with members. In response to members' concerns a task group was commissioned looking at the issue of speed limits.

- **Task groups**

The Speed Limits Task Group reported to Cabinet in February 2011, and the Renewable Energy and Carbon Reduction Task Group in April 2011.

Committee membership

Councillors Tony Blackburn, Basil Booth, Dr John Cordwell, Bill Crowther, Fiona McKenzie, Graham Morgan, Martin Quaile, Brian Robinson and Vernon Smith.

Officer contact:

Elizabeth Power, Senior Scrutiny Adviser
elizabeth.power@gloucestershire.gov.uk
01452 425204

8.1 Adoption of roads on new housing estates

County council lead member:
Cllr Phil McLellan

This task group was set up in August 2010 following concerns expressed by members of both Gloucester City and the county council regarding the adoption of roads on new housing estates.

It can take years from the time work on a new housing estate is finished to when the roads are adopted. This can result in public open spaces not being maintained and problems with litter, street lights, road repairs, grass cutting, parking and obstruction of service vehicles.

The task group spoke to a number of people with an interest in the estate adoption process. These included developers, Severn Trent Water and an officer from the county council. They were asked questions on the current process for adopting estate roads, difficulties that they encountered and areas for improvement.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report in December 2010 and notified the various agencies of its findings. Recommendations were made in a number of areas including partnership working, building control, staged adoptions, sewer and drainage issues, remedial issues, commuted sum payments and monitoring.

There is clearly scope for a more 'joined up' approach with the various agencies working together more closely. This will not only lead to better outcomes for local people but also to more effective and efficient processes.

With everyone involved from the outset those problems that take so much time to resolve later should be avoided. In overall terms there should be a significant saving as the cost of remedial work and the staff time in dealing with problems later can be considerable.

There are ongoing problems with the adoption of roads in various parts of the county. Some of these will be difficult to resolve, particularly where developers have gone out of business.

Highway adoption is a complex area and the task group will be meeting again during 2011 to check on progress.

Task group membership

Gloucester City Council - Cllrs Sebastian Field, Jan Lugg and Lise Noakes.

Gloucestershire County Council - Cllrs Phil McLellan, Chris Pallet, Shaun Parsons and Mike Sztymiak.

8.2 Renewable energy and carbon reduction

Task group chairman:
Cllr Dr John Cordwell

This task group was set up to look at the potential for renewable energy and carbon reduction on the Gloucestershire County Council estate. At present the council produces around 60,000 tonnes of carbon every year and spends more than £8 million on energy bills.

The county council estate is much wider than the buildings occupied at Shire Hall and includes the county farms, schools and numerous other buildings.

The task group spoke to a number of people with expertise in renewable energy and carbon reduction. Members took the opportunity to see what was happening on the ground by visiting the wind turbines at Avonmouth, a solar farm at Elkstone Manor in the Cotswolds and a biogas plant on a dairy farm at Kemble.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report in March 2011, and following presentation to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, informed the cabinet of its findings in April 2011. The main recommendations are summarised as follows:

- In light of the greater risk associated with solar farms, to recommend that the council enters into an option agreement with an industry supplier selected through an open and competitive process.
- To recommend that a new protocol for the provision of roof mounted photovoltaic panels is put in place by 30 September 2011. This should include a list of approved suppliers who would undertake the necessary surveys and install equipment to the required standard.
- To support in principle the construction of wind turbines on the county rural estate. The options for accessing the market will however need careful consideration.

- Having seen the success of the biogas plant run by Kemble Farms, to recommend that the council takes steps to encourage this type of approach elsewhere.
- To recommend that the council adopts the successful approach of Green Cornwall. Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency should be seen as part of the economic development of Gloucestershire with appropriately ambitious targets set for renewable energy over 5, 10 and 15 years.
- Steps should be taken to engage with local communities at the earliest opportunity when new schemes are proposed. Projects should benefit local people through jobs, business opportunities for local firms and improved community facilities.

Task group membership

Cllrs Dr John Cordwell, Basil Booth, John Burgess, Sarah Lunnon, Martin Quaile, Klara Sudbury and Brian Tipper.

RoadSafety

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

www.roadsafety-gloucestershire.org.uk

8.3 20mph speed limits

Task group chairman:
Cllr Tony Blackburn

This task group was set up in September 2010 following a debate on road safety at the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2010.

The task group spoke to a number of organisations with an interest in this area including Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, the '20s Plenty' Group, Gloucestershire Constabulary, members of local road safety liaison groups and Gloucestershire Highways.

Information was also sought from areas outside Gloucestershire where 20mph zones had been introduced such as Portsmouth, Kingston-upon-Hull and Warrington.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report in January 2011 and the findings were presented to the cabinet in February 2011.

Members supported the implementation of 20mph limits across the county but recognised the difficult financial climate and put forward recommendations that incur minimal cost.

They were anxious that the needs of the local community were at the forefront of any consideration of requests for speed limit reductions. With this in mind recommendations were put forward to ensure that a clear process is put in place to support local communities in initiating a reduced speed limit for their area.

A price list should be made available outlining the costs involved in different approaches and guidance should be produced on how funding can be accessed locally. It was noted that new development sometimes provided an opportunity for funding through section 106 legal agreements.

Task group membership

Cllrs Tony Blackburn, Dr John Cordwell, Terry Glastonbury, Terry Hale, Sarah Lunnon, Chris Pallett, Martin Quaile and Brian Robinson.

9. Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman:
Cllr Andrew Gravells

Vice Chairman:
Cllr Ray Apperley (Stroud)

The Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for overview and scrutiny of health related issues.

The committee focuses on health issues from a public perspective and works in partnership with other agencies to improve local health services.

The committee also scrutinises council services relating to adult social care, libraries and information, equalities, customer services and lifelong learning.

Key areas of activity:

- **Wingmoor Farm waste disposal site, Bishops Cleeve**

The committee has been looking into the health effects of toxic ash from the Grundon site in Bishop's Cleeve for five years.

In the autumn of 2010, the Health Protection Agency was commissioned to conduct an investigation into the safety of the dust particles around the site, following ongoing concerns from local people.

Analysis of dust samples collected over a 10 week period showed that the dust did not contain harmful levels of any substance which could be damaging to the health of local people.

The committee agreed to conclude their inquiries after receiving this analysis in March 2011. Members were grateful to the Health Protection Agency and the Environment Agency for their cooperation.

- **Health and social care reform**

The committee responded to Department of Health consultations on the Health White Paper (Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS) and together with health scrutiny committees from across the South West we successfully lobbied to protect health scrutiny in its current form.

This will allow scrutineers to continue to hold executives and commissioners to account which will be really important as the primary care trusts disappear and GP consortia take responsibility for planning services from 2013.

NHS Gloucestershire and the county council started moving towards integrating health and social care services by proposing the creation of a social enterprise trust. The publication of the Public Health White Paper prompted the committee to seek overview of plans for Gloucestershire County Council to take over responsibility for public health.

- **Adult social care**

The committee received overview briefings about 'Putting People First', 'The Big Plan' (learning disabilities), public protection and safeguarding. Regular performance monitoring reports prompted members to ask questions about care of the elderly and funding.

2010 was the start of a period of great change, and the committee will continue to discuss plans for the future of healthcare with local and national partners.

Thanks go to Jan Stubbings and Dr Shona Arora (NHS Gloucestershire), Dr Frank Harsent (Gloucestershire Hospitals' NHS Foundation Trust), Shaun Clee (2gether NHS Foundation Trust), Barbara Marshall (Gloucestershire Local Involvement Network), officers from NHS South West and other partner organisations for their continued support for the committee's work.

Committee membership

County councillors – Ron Allen, Peter Braidwood, Andrew Gravells, Stephen McMillan, Chris Pallet, Mike Skinner, Duncan Smith, Brian Thornton and Lesley Williams

District councillors – Ray Apperley (Stroud), Penny Hall (Cheltenham), Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold), Jan Lugg (Gloucester), Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury) and Marrilyn Smart OBE (Forest of Dean).

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9.1 Hospital bed closures – ward reconfiguration

Task group chairman:
Cllr Ron Allen

In February 2010 the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire Hospitals' NHS Foundation Trust announced changes to the location of some wards to improve the environment for patient care, make services more joined up and improve efficiency by reducing the number of beds. The committee considered the service change proposal at an extraordinary meeting on 9 March 2010 and was most concerned that the proposal included removing up to 200 beds across both Gloucestershire hospitals.

The trust then proposed to transfer beds on a trial basis to reassure the committee that this was appropriate action to take. The committee agreed that a task group should be established to work with the trust and with NHS Gloucestershire to oversee the trial transfer of surgical and acute medicine and cardiology beds on the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital site.

The aims of the task group were:

- To monitor the trial transfer using a variety of measurement tools
- To evaluate whether or not the project was effective and whether it delivered what it was intended to deliver
- To report the outcome of the trial transfer to the Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2010.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group met four times to examine the impact of a reduction of 45 beds at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. They spoke to cardiology, trauma and ENT consultants regarding concerns about bed numbers and strengthening of nursing skill mix. The trial was a dynamic one, with changes made to the bed base as issues were identified during the trial. In November 2010 the task group reported back to the committee that a new configuration of beds should be accepted, including 43 beds to be closed. The group also proposed that:

- The impact of the bed reductions should continue to be monitored
- The current skill mix of staff on Cardiology Ward 1, Acute Care Unit B, Chest Pain Assessment Unit and Coronary Care Unit should be maintained to ensure specialist cardiology nurse cover on every shift
- To allocate space for a further five trauma patients on Ward 9A when trauma beds are full.

The task group has since developed into a reference group involving committee members and LINk members to maintain a watching brief on bed allocations and services across the health community as a whole.

Task group membership

Cllrs Ron Allen, Ray Apperley (Stroud), Andrew Gravells, Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury) and Mike Skinner.

9.2 Dual diagnosis

Task group chair:
Cllr Kate Haigh (Gloucester)

Dual diagnosis describes a mental health disorder combined with drug or alcohol misuse. An individual's condition can affect physical health and wellbeing, social function, money and housing.

This task group was set up in April 2010 to look at the provision of services for people with a dual diagnosis in Gloucestershire, focussing particularly on housing. The committee had expressed concern that services were not joined up and that service users found it difficult to access everything they needed.

The task group spoke to a wide range of people involved in mental health care, housing provision and financial advice in the county. They also spoke to service users at a mental health support group. Questions were asked about information gathering, financial support available, how providers work together and whether improvements could be made.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report in March 2011, and following presentation to the Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, informed 2gether NHS Foundation Trust, the Independence Trust and housing providers of its findings.

The task group made recommendations centred around the needs of the individual, tailoring services to need and making the best use of limited resources. The recommendations took into account suggestions made by professionals and service users about how they would shape services.

These stressed the importance of follow-up plans for further treatment after discharge from a detox programme and included a suggestion to extend dual diagnosis training to all organisations and professionals who come into contact with people with a dual diagnosis. The task group heard about some excellent work that had been done by mental health professionals to develop support networks and coordinate services. Members were keen that this work should continue.

Task group membership

Cllrs Kate Haigh (Gloucester), Penny Hall (Cheltenham), Jan Lugg (Gloucester) and Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury).

9.3 Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Former chairman of the joint committee:
Cllr Andrew Gravells

Cllr Ron Allen
Cllr Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold)
Cllr Terry Hale

The Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was set up in February 2008 to collectively scrutinise the planning, design and delivery of services provided by the Great Western Ambulance NHS Trust (GWAS).

The committee has the same statutory powers as an individual local health overview and scrutiny committee, specifically in relation to issues regarding GWAS.

The committee comprises representatives from the health overview and scrutiny committees of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council.

Key areas of activity:

- **Community first responder (CFR) development and rural performance**

A task group was established to look at ways to improve rural performance in the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and Kennet in Wiltshire. One member from each area was nominated to participate in the group, and Councillor Terry Hale (Forest of Dean) and Councillor Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold) were the two Gloucestershire members. Campaigning by Cllrs Jeffery and Hale resulted in the recruitment of more community first responders and the placement of additional automatic external defibrillators. GWAS officers were very grateful to them for their hard work and for the sharing of local information which was very beneficial. It is expected that the scheme will have a positive impact on rural response times in 2011.

- **Performance monitoring**

The committee received a performance report at each of its quarterly meetings through 2010-11. It continued to hold the trust and its lead commissioners (NHS Gloucestershire) to account by questioning why targets were not being met. Members were pleased to learn that the Royal United Hospital in Bath was performing well in terms of patient handover and were keen to hear about the reasons for their success and encourage other acute trusts to apply some of their procedures.

The committee also monitored progress towards recommendations made in its interim report published in 2009, received presentations about the procedure for transporting a patient to a specialist hospital for primary angioplasty, and submitted a response to the GWAS Quality Account 2009-10.

The committee said goodbye to David Whiting, Chief Executive of GWAS, who left to take up another post. David had a good working relationship with the joint committee and members were sorry to see him go. Cllr Andrew Gravells has been chairman of the committee since it was formed in 2008 and he has recently stepped down. His successor is Cllr Tony Clarke from Bath and North East Somerset.

Joint committee membership

Cllrs Ron Allen, Andrew Gravells and Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold).

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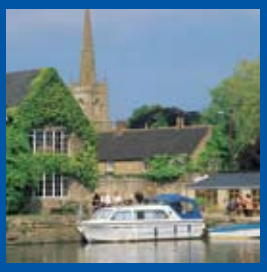
10. What's coming up?

Scrutiny 2011-12



2011-12 will be another challenging year for overview and scrutiny.

Major changes are being made to the way in which the council is delivering services, wide-ranging reforms are on their way for the NHS and a police and crime panel will need to be in place from May 2012 to scrutinise the activities of the directly elected police commissioner.

The following should give you a flavour for some of the things that are coming up for the committees:

Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutinising the budget setting process including public consultation
- Performance monitoring
- Regular updates on the 'Meeting the Challenge' programme
- Procurement
- Sickness absence.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Transition from children's services to adult life for disabled young people
- Monitoring of the OFSTED inspection action plan
- School admission arrangements
  - consideration of the new admission code
- Responding to the Green Paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - A consultation'.

Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Trading standards
- Coroners' and mortuary programme
- Police contract
- Business continuity
- Operating arrangements for the new police and crime panel
- Stronger Safer Justice Commission
- Private finance initiative for community fire stations and a life skills centre.

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Highway maintenance
- Waste management including the residual waste project
- Manual for Gloucestershire Streets
- Bus network
- Localism Bill – implications for planning.

Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- External care packages
- Transition from children's services to adult life for disabled young people
- NHS cash release efficiency savings
- Health service reforms including the formation of GP consortia and health and well being boards.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

- Monitoring scrutiny task group recommendations after 6, 12 and 18 months
- Reviewing the overview and scrutiny structure to ensure that it is effective in scrutinising services in the light of the changes being made to the way that the council operates.
- Monitoring the activities of Gloucestershire First, the county's economic development partnership.
- Considering the impact of the Localism Bill.

11. Contact details

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“As Gloucestershire LINk, we have appreciated the support given to us by Gloucestershire Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and in particular, its chairman, Cllr Andrew Gravells. It is important for the LINk to be able to communicate its views to a wider audience and help to influence decision making at the highest level. Being part of the committee’s agenda each month and having speaking rights helps us to do this as well as being able to discuss work plans and priorities at our regular informal meetings.”

Barbara Marshall,
Gloucestershire LINk Chair

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