

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT

**September 2013**

## **1 Introduction**

This report summarises recent activities of each overview and scrutiny committee. The individual reports from the committee chirmen are referenced as follows:

- Section 2** Cllr Brian Oosthuysen, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Section 3** Cllr Stephen Lydon, Chairman of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Section 4** Cllr Robert Bird, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Section 5** Cllr Tim Harman, Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **2 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Cllr Brian Oosthuysen**

### **2.1 Effective Scrutiny**

The committee received a presentation outlining the changes to the Council's scrutiny structure, it provided members with details of the successful scrutiny work that had been carried out previously. In the new structure, the Overview Scrutiny Management Committee had an expanded remit which included scrutiny of the budget and monitoring of strategic performance. There was also a role for the committee in considering issues referred to it by Council, particularly those issues with budget implications. This was a flexible arrangement allowing members to feed back to cabinet throughout.

Members explored the challenges to achieving good scrutiny, such as balancing available resources, ensuring that task groups are not being motivated by personal interest rather than local mandate, giving partners a reason to listen, and ensuring that work was having an impact.

All councillors are requested to note there is a 'Councillor Call for Action' element which enables all Councillors to ask for a discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committees on issues where local problems had arisen and other methods of resolution have been exhausted.

Councillors are reminded to go to Democratic Services for advice, to look to informally resolve issues which have been causing frustration before taking it to committee.

Councillors are reminded that the Gloucestershire Principles of Good Scrutiny are:

- A clear public demand for action
- A real opportunity to influence
- Focus on key issues – a ‘narrow and deep’ approach to scrutiny
- Flexibility of approach to scrutiny

## 2.2 Gloucestershire Context

The committee received a presentation to help members to understand Gloucestershire. The purpose of the presentation was to provide an overview of the demographic make-up of the County and to predict how the population was likely to change over the next 25 years as well as a high level view of current performance. Benchmarking information had been used wherever possible, but the comparator group would vary depending on the particular service in question.

Members were provided with the details of the seven outcomes; these were based on taking a high level view of the county and its characteristics, as well as taking into account the way in which Gloucestershire was changing. The outcomes were:

- Outcome 1: Gloucestershire and its communities are attractive places to live, work and invest
- Outcome 2: People and communities are active and resilient
- Outcome 3: People with a disability or long-term illness live as independently as possible
- Outcome 4: People live healthy lives as free as possible from disability or limiting long term illness.
- Outcome 5: Vulnerable children, young people and adults are safe from harm
- Outcome 6: Young people are able to live successful lives and contribute to the economy
- Outcome 7: People can access education, training, work and essential services

## 2.3 Financial Outlook

Mark Spilsbury, Head of Finance: Financial Management, provided members with details of the current financial position and looked forward to 2014/15 onwards. Members noted the report within the agenda papers providing the agreed processes and timetable for producing the Council Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The committee agreed a structure of meetings for the committee to scrutinise the draft 2014/15 budget and priorities. This is a flexible arrangement allowing members to feed back to cabinet throughout.

### **3 Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Cllr Stephen Lydon**

#### **3.1. Draft Annual Report of the Director of Public Health**

This was an opportunity to not only comment on the draft report but to also explore what Public Health is all about. An important factor for members to consider is that public health is not about individuals but rather about populations; The Faculty of Public Health (2010) defined Public Health as: 'the science and art of promoting and protecting health and wellbeing, preventing ill health and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society'. Bringing public health back within the council will hopefully give it more opportunity to inform and influence council policy to improve the health outcomes for the people of Gloucestershire.

The key public health issues in Gloucestershire are: -

- ⇒ Health Inequalities - The gap between life expectancy between the most deprived areas of Gloucestershire and the most affluent is 6.6 years for men and 4.9 years for women, and
- ⇒ Ageing population – By 2035 people aged over 65 will have increased from 19% to 28% of the population.

Obesity is also an issue in Gloucestershire and the wider impact on health outcomes from being obese are significant. Members were concerned to hear about the high number of young people who are obese, but were pleased to note that the Online Pupil Survey undertaken in Gloucestershire's schools is proving invaluable in helping public health to understand underlying factors.

Members had not previously been aware that there was an issue with the number of people being diagnosed HIV positive in the county. There has been great improvement in managing this disease, and if the individual is diagnosed early then they can go on to lead a normal healthy life. However in Gloucestershire half of the people diagnosed with HIV are being diagnosed late. This means that they are more likely to die early; and more likely to spread the disease. Public Health is working with the Terrence Higgins Trust on this issue.

This was an informative and welcome session which left members with much food for thought. The committee will want to receive regular reports to understand the impact of public health activity on health outcomes and this will be discussed at the committee's work planning sessions.

### 3.2. Director of Adults Services Report

Previous Health Committees have received regular reports from the Primary Care Trust and now the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) and I thought that it would be helpful for the committee to receive a similar report relating to Adults Services.

This was the first report and was well received by members. Future reports will include performance information which will be helpful in highlighting issues/areas that the committee may wish to delve more deeply into.

The committee was pleased to note the work being done to support people with a learning disability into employment.

The committee would have liked to be able to receive an assurance that a Winterbourne View situation could not happen in Gloucestershire. However given the dependence on provider behaviour a categorical assurance is not possible. However the committee was assured that the council has taken steps to try to prevent a similar situation in Gloucestershire.

A particular aspect that the committee will need to look at is the integrated working between the council and the Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust (GCSNHST). It is important that members understand how this works not just to ensure good outcomes for patients and service users, but to also ensure that staff are appropriately managed.

### 3.3. South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST)

The committee welcomed this report and enjoyed a robust discussion with the SWAST on response times and activity.

At this meeting the SWAST informed members that it was looking at the re-provision of ambulances in Dursley. Reasons given included that the building was in need of modernisation; and also that Stroud District Council (SDC) had informed them that it would not renew the lease on the land (which expires at the end of the year). Within the context of this presentation it was not unreasonable that they would be looking at other options. However soon afterwards we were made aware that the situation was not so clear cut, and are questioning SWAST as to why they arrived at this position. I hope that by the time of the OSMC meeting on 30 July 2013 I will have more information for members.

### 3.4. GCCG Chair and Accountable Officer and Performance reports

The main issue of concern at present is the NHS111 service. This is causing great concern to members of the public and committee members are equally concerned. The GCCG did assure the committee that it shared members concerns and did

have an action plan in place to address concerns. This is of course an issue that the committee will be monitoring closely.

The committee was also concerned that the procurement of a new Out of Hours Service had again been deferred. The GCCG informed the committee that having weighed up the risks and wanting to learn from the issues raised in the NHS111 service it had felt that this was the most appropriate course of action.

The committee will also be monitoring the progress of the new non-emergency contract with Arriva Transport Solutions Ltd.

Members wanted assurances that there would be no 'Mid Staffs' in Gloucestershire. The GCCG informed the committee that there are robust quality assurance processes in place designed to prevent this from happening here. The committee was also assured that all partners have signed up to this work.

Performance has been closely monitored by this and predecessor committees. The performance against A & E targets remains of concern. The mitigating actions being undertaken to understand the pressures were explained and did offer some reassurance that the GCCG and the Hospitals Trust were working actively to address this matter. However given the implementation of the changes to emergency and urgent care at the end of this month this is an area that the committee will continue to monitor closely.

### 3.5 Wales/Gloucestershire Cross Border Referral Issues

This issue had been referred to the committee by the Forest of Dean District Council (FODDC). It involved English patients registered with a Welsh GP not being able to be referred to an English Hospital. This affected about 6000 people in the Forest of Dean.

This issue was taken up by Mark Harper MP and Jesse Norman MP (Herefordshire). There were discussions at Ministerial level and a debate on this issue was secured in the House. The full detail is contained within the committee's agenda.

The good news is that on 24 July 2013 the Aneurin Bevan Health Board met to agree recommendations that would address this issue and enable residents in the Forest of Dean to be referred to hospitals in Gloucestershire.

### 3.6 Joint Scrutiny of the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

To give context to this item the Great Western Ambulance Service (GWAS) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was established in January 2008 in response to shared concerns across the GWAS region with regard to GWAS's failure to meet performance targets. Following a period of intense activity the Joint Committee

published its report in January 2009. The committee agreed to take on a monitoring role for the following twelve months to follow the progress of its recommendations. (Cllr Andrew Gravells was Chairman of the Joint Committee from February 2008 to January 2011.)

The GWAS formally became part of the SWAST in February 2013. The GWAS Joint Committee began a discussion at its February 2013 meeting as to whether there was now a requirement for a joint committee, or was it better for local authorities to monitor SWAST performance locally.

At the HCOSC meeting on 4 June 2013 I was tasked with attending the meeting of the GWAS Joint Committee in June 2013 to engage with the other local authorities on this matter. (My report is available at this link <http://bit.ly/13XCLVC>.)

During the discussion on this matter on 16 July 2013 the committee was clear that the SWAST must attend the Health and Care OSC on a regular basis. This is essential not only to understand issues such as response times in the rural areas but to also engage with the committee's monitoring of the service change to emergency and urgent care in Cheltenham which comes into effect on 29 July 2013.

As to whether this council should engage with a joint committee monitoring the activity of the SWAST, members did not give a clear view on this issue.

Members agreed with the points made in my report on this issue, in particular that a joint committee must have a clear purpose and focus, be accountable and be able to influence. Members also questioned whether a 'standing committee' was the best option, and felt that a task and finish time limited approach to a clearly scoped piece of work would be a better option. Dedicated officer support was also seen as an important factor.

With hindsight it would perhaps have been more helpful for the committee to have received draft terms of reference for a joint committee for the SWAST. The other local authorities that previously engaged with the GWAS Joint Committee are also currently considering this matter. If there is a clear will across the region for a joint committee hopefully draft TOR will be forthcoming and the committee and council can make a considered judgement at that time.

An alternative approach that I put forward to the committee was that SWAST could hold forums at least twice a year which would enable them to share best practice across all local authorities in their area, and also enable local authorities to bring forward concerns/issues and share them with colleagues. Members of the committee supported this idea.

#### **4 Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Cllr Robert Bird**

The first meeting of the newly established Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on Thursday 6 June 2013, incorporating an overview of the work of the previous committee and an update on topics for consideration at future meeting. The second meeting, on Tuesday 23 July 2013, included presentations from the Environment Agency and Joint Waste Team.

##### **4.1 Environment Agency Presentation**

Following an in-depth and detailed presentation from the Environment Agency (EA), it was agreed that concerns relating to the current flood risk management strategy would be incorporated into a formal response to the Environment Agency to form part of the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation. The response was agreed and submitted to the Environment Agency on 7 August 2013.

##### **4.2 Procurement Options for the Treatment of Food and Garden Waste**

The committee received a presentation from the Joint Waste Team on the procurement options for the treatment of Food and Garden Waste in Gloucestershire. Following a series of in-depth questions, members were invited to submit their views to the waste team prior to consideration at the Joint Waste Committee meeting on 31 July 2013 and at the cabinet meeting on 11 September 2013. The Waste Team noted the committee's views, including several suggestions that the Anaerobic Digestion (AD) System was the better option.

##### **4.3 A417 Highway Considerations**

A draft letter to the Highways Agency (HA), expressing the committees concerns about the section of single carriageway on the A417/A419 trunk road linking the M5 motorway at Junction 11a and the M4 at Swindon, was circulated prior to the meeting. Subject to amendments at the meeting, it was agreed that the final version of the letter be sent to the Highways Agency, followed by an invitation for the HA to attend a committee meeting in the autumn. The letter was sent to the Highway Agency, Gloucestershire MP's and the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan on 7 August 2013.

##### **4.4 Thames Water**

Following a request at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting on 26 June 2013, the committee agreed to submit a request for a scrutiny inquiry into concerns about the lack of action from Thames Water in response to flooding issues in the Cotswold area. Concerns were also raised at the Full Council meeting in June, and by Cotswold District Council, where it was suggested that the inquiry

be conducted as a joint inquiry. The request was approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting on 30 July 2013.

#### 4.5 Committee Work Plan

At the meeting on 6 June 2013, the committee agreed that a review of issues relating to the Fire and Rescue Service might be a useful item to consider in advance of the Sir Ken Knight Review in 2014. Having received the Commissioning Directors Report at the meeting on 23 July 2013, members requested a briefing note on the forthcoming highway winter maintenance programme at its meeting on 17 September 2013. The committee also requested a report on the Superfast Broadband Deployment at the same meeting.

### **5 Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Tim Harman**

#### 5.1 Safeguarding Gloucestershire's Children and Young People

Safeguarding children and young people is one of the most important jobs that the council undertakes. This is a complex and emotive area and today's meeting was just the start of the committee's work in understanding and scrutinising this area.

Alongside council officers the committee was pleased to welcome Roger Clayton, independent Chair of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board (GSCB), to engage with members on this issue.

The committee received a presentation outlining what safeguarding meant and explaining the council's statutory responsibilities. The presentation also included population information relating to children and young people which was helpful in that it helped members to put into context the number of looked after children in relation to the overall number of children and young people in the county.

The committee also viewed clips from an episode of the BBC Series 'Protecting our Children' which shadowed social workers in Bristol. This was extremely useful in helping to understand the challenges faced by Social Workers and the level of resilience, and support, they need to do their job. This aspect was also supported by local case studies and provided an extremely useful insight into their work. Members were assured that there is a structure in place to support newly qualified social workers to help them develop their skills and be resilient to the challenges that they face. Members were clear that they fully support our social workers and want them to understand how much they are valued.

The GSCB has a key role to play and it was reassuring to hear from the Independent Chair of the GSCB on the work of the Board. It was good to note that he is also the Independent Chair of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB). This has enabled good practice to be shared; and importantly supports the



transitions process and will hopefully enable the development of a 'think family' approach.

The Safeguarding Framework that had been developed with the Children and Young People OSC in the previous council was seen as a useful mechanism to help structure the committee's work with regard to safeguarding and will be taken forward by the committee.

Members also agreed that it would be helpful to visit a Children's Centre to gain an understanding of the support that they give to children and families. The aim is to undertake this visit in the Autumn. The committee will also consider the Families First initiative which has the potential to not only effect savings but importantly effect change at an early stage which should engender positive outcomes for these families in the longer term.

Members are very clear that our children and young people must be safe and fully agreed with the GSCB Chair that safeguarding is everyone's business. Within the context of the challenging financial climate there will be difficult decisions ahead about how limited funding should be used; the committee will need to engage with this debate to ensure that safeguarding children is not compromised.