

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE

15 February 2017

1 Introduction

This report summarises the activities of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee during January 2017. Individual reports from the scrutiny chairs are referenced as follows:

Section 2	Cllr Brian Oosthuysen, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Section 3	Cllr Tim Harman, Chair of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Section 4	Cllr Iain Dobie, Chair of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Section 5	Cllr Robert Bird, Chair of the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Section 6	Cllr Joe Harris, Chair of Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Section 7	Cllr Roger Wilson, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel

2 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (23 January 2017) – Cllr Brian Oosthuysen

2.1 Budget Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has the lead role in terms of budget scrutiny. It produces a response to the Cabinet's draft budget on behalf of the scrutiny function as a whole. Briefing sessions with Directors and Cabinet Members were held throughout November 2016 with the opportunity to scrutinise the draft budget in detail in discussions held at service specific scrutiny committees in January 2017.

At the meeting on 23 January 2017, Members received a briefing on the draft MTFs from the Head of Financial Management and received feedback from the service specific scrutiny committees.

OSMC produced a response drawing out the key observations and comments made in response to the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy which went to Cabinet on 1 February and is to be approved at full Council on 15 February 2017

3 Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12 January 2017) – Cllr Tim Harman

3.1. Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusions are a serious problem in Gloucestershire. Data shows that the number here is not only higher than our statistical neighbours but also higher than the national average. Alongside this there is also a record level of elective home education. A particular concern is the growing number of permanent exclusions at the primary level. The committee had been concerned about this issue for some time and wanted to gain a greater understanding of the underlying issues. Members were pleased to welcome the Head of Education, the Lead Commissioner for Education and Skills, the Strategic Lead for Education, Performance and Inclusion, and the Headteacher of the Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School, to engage with the committee on this matter.

It was questioned whether the move to Academies was a particular factor. It was noted that whilst there may be some relevance to the type of school, the Director of Children's Service's informed the committee that this had been an issue for Gloucestershire for some time and was getting worse, and she therefore did not think that there was a direct causal link to the education structure itself. The Director also informed members that the same issues were faced across the country so the question is why is there a particular issue in Gloucestershire?

It was felt that concerns about the position on the school league tables could be a factor when a school may be considering permanently excluding a student. It was also important to consider whether teachers had access to sufficient behavioural management training opportunities to enable them to manage persistently disruptive students. Members heard that the majority of teachers, nationally, have less than ten years experience of teaching which could be a factor. Classroom sizes are increasing (potentially 30+) which makes managing challenging behaviour difficult particularly if there are students with special needs.

An over-riding concern is that if students are not in school they are missing out on education. Also if they are not able to access appropriate behaviour management support this could have a long term impact, not just on their education outcomes. Members agreed that that the standard school curriculum did not suit all students and it was important that there was access to more vocational education pathways. The role of Alternative Provision in the county was seen as a good investment in helping young people achieve good outcomes.

This is a complex area that the committee would like to consider in more depth, potentially through a task group. Alongside the factors already discussed members

would like to understand if there is a direct correlation between the increase in the number of students being home educated and permanent exclusions.

The committee agreed that it would recommend to the new council that a task group be commissioned to investigate this matter.

3.2 Quarter 2 Performance Reports

The Director of Children's Service's informed members that significant pressures remain but that targets were showing a small improvement. Whilst this was good to note it was important not to make assumptions based on one quarter's data. The vacancy rate for Social Workers has reduced, and was now below 7%. Case loads were reducing in line with the increase in social workers, although there was still work to do to upskill some of the newer social workers to broaden out the skill base across the system. The new front door process was in place which meant better triaging of referrals.

The Director of Children Services informed the committee that a deep dive into care proceedings had been undertaken, and actions to improve this area have been identified. The Annual Complaints and Compliments Report was also tabled. It was good to note that the number of compliments was greater than the complaints, and that there has been a significant improvement in resolving complaints at an early stage. (These reports were tabled are available on the council website for information.)

3.3 Revenue Budget Monitoring

The committee noted that the trends remained as previously reported. The second phase of the investment in Social Workers was included in the budget for the financial year 2017/18. It was anticipated that by the end of 2017/18 it should be possible to see the impact of this funding coming through, for example in a reduction in the external agency budget. In the interim it was good to note that there is a regional protocol in place with regard to agency costs; this included an agreement not to employ anyone who left local authority employment in the previous six months.

3.4 Scrutiny of the Budget – Children and Families

The committee welcomed the work that was being carried out, and the investment included in the budget, to establish the Intensive Recovery and Intervention Service (IRIS). This would be based around residential hubs providing effective support for those very vulnerable young people with multiple needs.

Members recognised the challenges around agency spend and the work that was being carried out in this area. In response to questions it was clarified that the actual

spend had risen sharply from 2016/17 and that the trend had not been apparent before that point. Members noted the second part of the additional investment for social workers which sat within the budget following the recommendations of the task group. Members looked forward to seeing the impact of this investment over the coming months.

4 Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 January 2017) – Cllr Iain Dobie

4.1. Taking Care of Mental Health in Gloucestershire

This agenda item looked particularly at crisis care, and the committee was pleased to welcome representatives from the 2gether NHS Foundation Trust, the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, the council and the Police to the meeting to engage with members on this important issue. There is a wealth of detail and links to three informative videos contained in the presentation slides, which are available on the council website, and I encourage all members to access these.

Members will know that there has been a real culture change in the way in which mental health services are commissioned and provided. The structure has changed from that of containment and sanctuary to one of hope and recovery; from a legacy of exclusion to one of an aspiration of and action to ensure inclusion. The understanding of mental health illnesses has greatly improved with significant investment in learning from experience and developing knowledge. A really good example of this is the establishment, by the 2gether NHS Foundation Trust, of the Severn and Wye Recovery College. This empowers people through peer support to become ‘students of their own recovery’, self-managing anxiety, depression and long term mental illness.

The Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Teams are currently being recommissioned to better meet the needs of people with high intensity needs. A pilot Crisis Café has been established in Gloucester City with Treasure Seekers. This will be evaluated and consideration given to whether to expand this initiative across the county.

It is important to note that the crisis teams are not a blue light service. However the Mental Health Acute Response Service (MHARS) is co-located with the Police at Waterwells, and also works closely with the Ambulance Service. The co-location of the MHARS has been in place for eight months and the Police representative informed the committee that this has been a huge step forward. Police Officers are benefitting from having access to health professionals for advice, and who also have access to health records and care plans which can inform decisions that need to be made when people are in crisis.

The committee also heard about the pilot schemes that are in place to better support children and young people, in particular the Stroud Schools Project. This is one of the areas that the committee will want to follow up in the new council, potentially through more joint workshops with the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust informed the committee that this was a significant issue for the Acute Hospitals, particularly with regard to children and young people. She felt that a good support model was in place, and recognised that there was a focus on evolving the service for children and young people.

Good mental health underpins everything we do. There has, and continues to be, a lot of activity to remove the stigma that has been associated with mental health. The committee fully supports this work, and in support of this principle some members chose to share their own experiences.

Going forward the committee will continue to include mental health on its workplan.

4.2. End of Life Strategy

The committee was pleased to receive this strategy, and agreed with its aim to make sure that the highest quality end of life care services are available to all who need it, irrespective of diagnosis, age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, and social economic status. A lot of work has gone into defining what is meant by palliative care, and to understand the main causes of death in this county. It was particularly good to hear that time had been taken to speak with families about their end of life experiences, both good and bad, and that this feedback had influenced the development of the strategy.

It was noted that the strategy does not currently include children and young people but this aspect will be debated at the next End of Life Board meeting with a view to expanding the strategy to cover under 18s.

There is a lot of work to do including improving access to palliative care across the county; increasing the number of people who are able to fulfil their wish to die at home; reaching the seldom heard groups; and improving support to homeless people.

4.3. Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) Performance Report

The committee noted that the concerns relating to 62 day cancer target, and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) remain and the GCCG continues to work through the associated action plans to address these issues.

Concerns remain with regard to ambulance response times but this issue will be looked at in greater detail at the committee's meeting in March 2017 when the ambulance service are due to report.

Members were disappointed that there seems to be no improvement in the performance against the non-emergency patient transport service delivered by Arriva Transport Solutions Ltd (ATSL). There was a frank exchange of views with the GCCG, and although the GCCG did make it clear that it was applying all the contractor clauses in this contract, members felt that it should be looking at stronger measures. This matter will be looked at in more detail at the committee's meeting in March 2017.

4.4. Quarter 2 2016/17 Adult Social Care and Public Health Performance

The committee noted that the performance picture had not changed significantly since receipt of the quarter one report. It is disappointing to note that although the council is a high performer with regard to personal budgets it has not been able to translate that into people choosing to take a direct payment, despite the work undertaken to promote this option.

4.5. Scrutiny of the budget – Adult Social Care and Public Health

Members understand that since the publication of the draft MTFS that the Council have now been notified that it will receive a further £2.5m for the adult social grant for 2017/18. This is a 'one –off' amount and is ring-fenced, aimed at starting the transition to the increase in the Better Care Fund from 2018/19.

Members discussed how this funding might be best utilised. Members noted the cost reductions in the adult mental health services budget as well as reductions in the budget for services for people with a learning disability. One member suggested that the additional funding could be used in these areas. Discussions will need to be had with the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners as to the appropriate use of this funding.

With regards to Learning Disabilities, members were made aware of the positive work that had been carried out in terms of helping individuals into employment and increasing independence. Members commented on performance concerns relating to a reduction in the number of assessments being carried out and queried this decrease in performance levels against intended reductions in budget. It is important to note that the cost reductions in the budget did not relate to a reduction in staffing

levels for social worker teams, but were through the changing approach brought about by the Building Better Lives Programme.

5 Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 January 2017) - Cllr Rob Bird

5.1 Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee

At the committee meeting on 13 July 2016, members requested an update on the role and work of the Joint Waste Committee. Head of Service, Steve Read, and Chairman of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee, Cllr Sue Coakley, gave a detailed presentation on the work of the committee, plus an update on the county's recycling rates. The update took into account the 'waste' motion considered at the full council meeting on 14 September 2016.

Following an in-depth and comprehensive discussion, members commended the enthusiasm and commitment of the waste team in promoting recycling initiatives, and supported the continued work of the Joint Waste Committee.

Key messages from the discussion included an overarching desire to establish an integrated waste service across Gloucestershire; a proposal that the Joint Waste Committee review key performance indicators; that the committee review current systems and practises to identify what shortfalls might exist and how to make improvements for the future; to consider what opportunities might be available to avoid potential disparities in delivering services to new communities located across the boundaries of more than one district authority.

An outcome report detailing the committee's proposals to be included in the scrutiny report to be considered at the full council meeting on 22 March 2017.

5.2 Chief Fire Officer Report

The committee received a report from Stewart Edgar, Chief Fire Officer, detailing information on the portfolio of services provided by the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. Please go to the following link to view the report.

<http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=673&MId=8400&Ver=4>

A key consideration raised during the presentation was the increase in the number of house fires caused by domestic appliances (tumble dryers). The Chief Fire Officer advised members to visit the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Website for more

information. The committee considered ways of raising awareness of the concern in their constituencies.

5.3 Commissioning Directors Report

Nigel Riglar, Commissioning Director: Communities and Infrastructure updated the committee on current issues.

<http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=673&MId=8400&Ver=4>

5.4 Draft Budget Proposals

The committee noted there had been a number of one-off schemes included within the budget for 2016/17 that no longer featured within the base budget for 2017/18. In particular, members referred to the Lengthsman Scheme and to funding relating to barriers to cycling and air quality. Some members believed there were arguments for continuing to provide this level of funding within these areas and advised that it would be up to Council to consider whether the one-offs should be included again.

One member raised a concern regarding the level of footway funding, suggesting more money should be invested.

5.5 Work Plan

The committee to receive updates on the following task group reviews at the March Committee meeting:

- a) Climate Change
- b) Access to and from the Forest of Dean
- c) A429 Fosse Way

The committee will be invited to suggest items for consideration by the incoming committee post the County Council elections in May 2017

6 Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (7 December 2016) – Cllr Joe Harris

6.1 This report relates to items considered at the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2016.

Members considered a series of reports that had been presented to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee earlier that day, including updates on Gfirst LEP Growth Deal Activity; Vision 2050 and future ambitions; Position Statement and Timeline; Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Plan and Business Rates Pool. The following items were considered at the meeting: -

6.2 Promoting Gloucestershire – request for a task group review

At the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 September 2016, a member proposed that a scrutiny task group be established to consider the impact of tourism in terms of creating opportunities for residents and new and existing businesses across the county and to investigate how tourism might benefit from a co-ordinated Gloucestershire approach. The majority of members supported the proposal, with a proviso that the review encompass a wide range of other factors, (including tourism), which might attract people and businesses to live and work in Gloucestershire.

Following consideration at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 September 2016, the committee requested that a meeting be held between the members of the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee and the Chief Executive of the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to consider whether the proposal for a task group review would duplicate or add value to the economic development of Gloucestershire.

David Owen (Chief Executive) and Pete Carr (Deputy Chief Executive) of Gfirst attended the meeting to answer questions on the proposals.

During a full and extensive discussion, members considered the range of activities undertaken throughout the county to promote Gloucestershire as a desirable location to live, work and play.

The outcome of the discussion was consensus of agreement to consider specific issues relating to 'Vision 2050' and the various strands of work undertaken by the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Vision 2050 Steering Group to look at the long term view of economic growth in Gloucestershire. Gfirst offered to provide a member workshop in February or March from which scrutiny members could consider a schedule of core issues to discuss at future meetings. The terms of reference produced to request a task group for promoting Gloucestershire to be incorporated into the committee work plan.

6.3 Fastershire Broadband

Matt Smith, Operations Manager for the Fastershire Broadband Project, updated the committee on current progress and key issues.

Members were informed that Lots 1 and 2 of the approved strategy were completed, with the procurement for the remainder of the phases (Lots 3 and 4) well under way, with evaluation of the tender submissions due for completion during Mid December.

Cabinet will be asked to consider further contract awards in February 2017.

Members were encouraged to consider further updates and information on the project website at www.fastershire.com.

A joint Leaders and Chief Executive meeting was scheduled for 12th December 2016.

6.4 Community Pub Task Group

In response to a motion to Gloucestershire County Council in November 2014, the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee considered an economic analysis of the local pub and restaurant sector, including the contributions pubs and restaurants make to the Gloucestershire economy. A cross party task group was established in July 2015.

Following discussions with non-profit charity organisation, 'Pub is the Hub', representatives from the organisation met with committee members to discuss how they could support the review, including offering to undertake strategic mapping of Gloucestershire to identify priority areas. The organisation has worked for several other local authorities in the past 15 years, attempting to support and encourage local pubs to diversify and better serve local communities. The organisation also provides workshops and assistance to local communities to apply for grants.

At the committee meeting on 7 September 2016, it was agreed to note the findings of the Pub is the Hub 'Mapping Analysis' of Gloucestershire and for lead members to;

- a) Identify possible locations to suggest as priority areas for the 'Pub is the Hub' to work with local councils and other stakeholders in targeting future rural regeneration programmes and support;
- b) Establish a realistic implementation plan and timeline from which to identify priority areas and engage with district and parish councils and other key stakeholders;
- c) Host a 'Pub is the Hub' countywide workshop for District and Parish Councils and other stakeholders to gain an understanding of what options might be available to assist rural communities in preserving and delivering local services;

- d) Consider nominating elected (district) member and officer (district) representatives to 'champion' and take the proposed schemes forward;
- e) Monitor progress with regular updates and periodical reports. The reports to be presented to the committee by the relevant district representatives.

The committee confirmed that the work of the task group was now complete. A Pub is the Hub workshop event for District and Parish Councils will be held at Shire Hall in the March 2017, where it was suggested representatives from the Rural Community Council and relevant stakeholders be invited to attend the event.

7. Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel– Cllr Roger Wilson

- 7.1 At the meeting on 3 February, Members considered the proposed Gloucestershire police precept 2017/18.

The Commissioner's report outlined that:

Funding for the proposed £107.22.8m revenue budget will require a police related Band D Council Tax element of £214.49. This represented an increase of 1.99% in the police related Band D Council Tax or £4.18 for the year.

- 7.2 The Panel had to review the proposed precept. Having considered the precept, the Panel would either:

- Support the precept without qualification or comment;
- Support the precept and make recommendations, or
- Veto the proposed precept

- 7.3 The Police and Crime Panel agreed that the proposed police precept for 2017/18 be supported without qualification or comment.