



**Gloucestershire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

**Gloucestershire County Council**  
**Scrutiny Annual Report**  
**2019-20**

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## Introduction

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.

Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the Council and, if done well, amongst other public service providers too. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failures.

It is right that we as a Council continue to evaluate our scrutiny arrangements and reflect on the successes and challenges within scrutiny over the past 12 – 18 months. This report includes details of the scrutiny activities and outcomes, including responses to recommendations made from our significant task group activity. In addition it provides a health check for scrutiny in light of the previous review of our arrangements.

This previous review itself stemmed from a peer challenge in June 2018 which had identified the need to ensure effective and transparent challenge by reviewing the structure and impact of the Council's scrutiny arrangements. It was recommended that members should be equipped with the necessary skills and tools and that the review should reinforce and support good effective governance.

A review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements was undertaken from September 2018 through to recommendations being made to full Council in March 2019. These recommendations included key principles for scrutiny and a consensus of opinion on a number of working practices. A new scrutiny structure was also put in place which included a new Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the establishment of a Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. This structure also led to remit changes for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As part of this review the decision was made to separate adult social care from Health Scrutiny in order to ensure there was sufficient time available to properly scrutinise these items. The suggestion had been made that Health Scrutiny was unable to allocate enough time given its large workload. It was recognised that from time to time it would be necessary for each committee to be aware of the work of the other and to be flexible in finding ways to work together. To some extent this has been achieved through a small number of joint meetings and the attendance of relevant directors at both committees. I know this is an area that members' have strong opinions on and will no doubt be a key factor in considering how we take scrutiny forward in the future.

I must also reflect on the impact of the unprecedented changes to our everyday lives brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. In these challenging times it is even more evident that strong scrutiny can provide support and strength in helping the Council make the right choices for the people of Gloucestershire. I am pleased to say that Gloucestershire County Council was one of the first councils to hold virtual scrutiny meetings and through Q&A



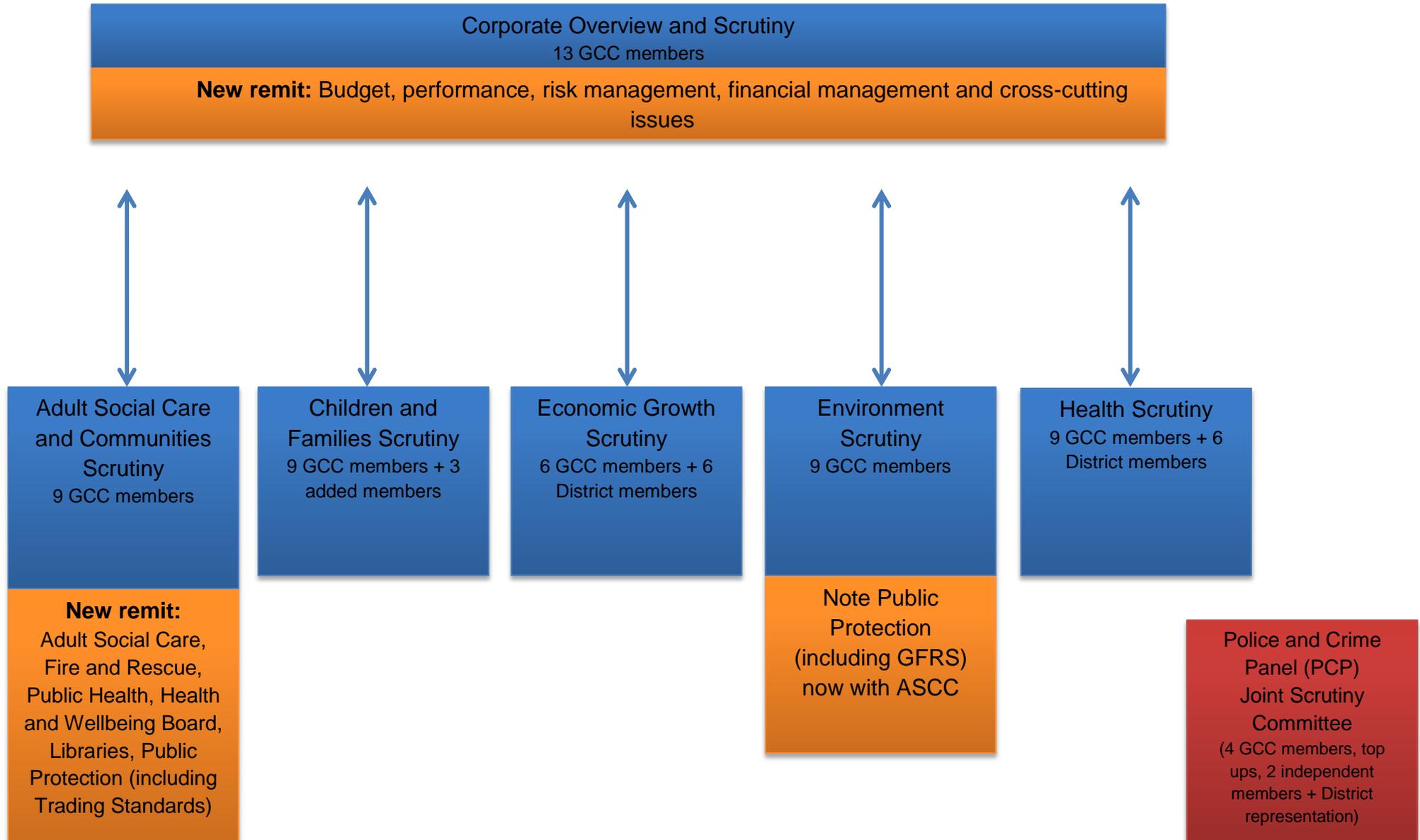
sessions allow scrutiny members to speak to Cabinet Members and Senior Officers about the measures that were being put in place and the strategic direction of the Council.

I am sure that through the new arrangements put in place as a result of the review, and the lessons learned about how scrutiny can function during an emergency period, scrutiny can only go from strength to strength moving into a new Council in 2021.

Cllr Shaun Parsons

**Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## Scrutiny Structure



## **Activities and outcomes**

- 1. Biodiversity**
- 2. Examining the Culture of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service**
- 2. General Surgery**
- 3. Youth Strategy**
- 4. Single Use Plastics**
- 5. Workforce Issues and Challenges across ICS**
- 6. Taxi Licensing**
- 7. Public Participation**
- 8. Aspen Centre Visit**
- 9. Budget Scrutiny**
- 10. Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel**
- 11. Children and Families**
- 12. Impact of Covid-19**
- 13. Local Meetings – GEGSC**
- 14. Local Transport Plan**
- 15. Fit for the Future**
- 16. Member Development**

# BIODIVERSITY TASK GROUP

Established: June 2018, Reported to Cabinet: April 2019

## Background:

In June 2018 a motion was unanimously carried at Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) Full Council meeting to set up a working group to look at protecting and encouraging biodiversity in Gloucestershire.

It was noted that in 1935 almost 40% of the Cotswolds landscape was covered with wildflower-rich grassland. Since then, unimproved grassland sites have fallen to just 1.5% of the area of the Cotswolds.

It was further noted that:

- That thousands of species are at risk of extinction due to habitat loss.
- That the loss of biodiversity is having serious consequences for the resilience of ecosystem functions on which our communities and countryside depend.
- With the loss of lowland meadows and pastures across the UK, grassy road verges in particular offer vital refuges for plants and wildflowers.

## Membership:

Councillors Rachel Smith (Chair), Lesley Williams, Paul Hodgkinson, Suzanne Williams, Shaun Parsons and Terry Hale.

## Aims and Objectives

- Work with districts, towns and parishes to develop highways management systems that protect and support biodiversity in Gloucestershire.
- Review the GCC highways and biodiversity guidance for Gloucestershire, taking into consideration Plantlife's Road Verges and Wildlife Management Guidelines: [http://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/uploads/documents/Road\\_Verge\\_Campaign\\_full\\_guidelines\\_2015.pdf](http://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/uploads/documents/Road_Verge_Campaign_full_guidelines_2015.pdf)
- Embed action points into highway management contracts which give contractors clear instructions and communicate expectations. For example, the pro-active management of registered conservation verges and careful monitoring of pesticides.
- Look at best practice examples, picking out some key options for trial in Gloucestershire to consider their effectiveness, both from an environmental and cost point of view.

## Meetings:

15 October 2018  
26 November 2018  
11 January 2019 (Seminar)  
18 February 2019

At the first meeting of the group, it was decided that the final objective was to set up a public workshop to explore biodiversity in Gloucestershire with other local authorities and ecological groups.

Members met with officers from GCC to understand what the Council already practised to promote biodiversity and to scope what form the workshop would take. Members agreed that the main focus of the task group's work should be the management of road verges (grass cutting).

## **Recommendations**

### Points to note

1. To highlight the importance of not littering. If verges are full of litter, it is very difficult for biodiversity to thrive. It causes a hazard to plant flourishing, animal safety and the environment as a whole through pollutants.
2. As the task group terms of reference committed to look at the use of pesticides, to highlight GCC's current position:

'Gloucestershire County Council use glyphosate to treat noxious weeds and also it may be used when we are undertaking surfacing treatment work to prevent weed germination under a new surface. The spraying programme uses glyphosate, but this is not part of our cyclical programme, and only occurs if County Councillors specifically request it to be funded from their Highways local allocation.'

### Recommendations to Gloucestershire Highways

1. To allocate a sufficient and appropriate budget from within the total costings of every major highways project to protect and enhance green infrastructure, bearing in mind our commitment to the Green Infrastructure Pledge.

Timescale: Immediately

2. To undertake to create a business case for allowing a greater collection of grass cuttings whilst managing verges through the purchase of suitable machinery.

Timescale: To feedback by 1st July

3. To commit to using low fertility treatments as an alternative to top soil, where this involves no extra cost. Members learnt in the workshop that using alternatives such as chalk, limestone or even sand have the potential to save time and money, both on creation and during future management. Not only do

low-fertility treatments reduce grass growth but they also allow wildflowers to thrive.

Timescale: Immediately

4. To commit to reviewing the 'Plantlife' technical guidance when available, to incorporate any practical points into the verge management strategy where possible and feed this back to members.

Timescale: Technical guidance due spring 2019

5. To consider the best way to mark and identify protected verges 'on the ground' as well as updating the electronic register. There were examples given during the workshop where sub-contractors managing the verges have accidentally cut on a protected verge. Examples such as marking the beginning and end of a protected verge with a white post were highlighted.

Timescale: To feedback by 1st July

6. To feedback to Ringway, as the new term maintenance contractors, the Council's view of taking a flexible approach when it comes to the timing and frequency of verge cuts. The group agreed that the later the cut into the growing season (generally April to early July), the more likely it is to cause a disadvantage to flora, flowering and seeding. It was noted however that road safety must be the governing factor when considering timing/frequency of cuts throughout the year.

Timescale: Immediately

7. To write to Highways England to feedback the recommendations and findings of this report.

Timescale: Immediately

8. To encourage better engagement with parish/town councils regarding the delegation of verge management and awareness of biodiversity. The group acknowledge that this engagement could also come from members within their own parish/town Councils. Therefore, there would be a request to officers to produce a short information sheet covering the following, for all members to distribute as they wish within their areas:

- How GCC can support parish/town councils to take responsibility for their own verge management.
- Awareness of biodiversity e.g. examples of recommendations from this report and exemplar cases such as Cold Aston Parish Council.
- Litter picking and herbicides use policies.

**Response:**

Extracts from the Cabinet Panel report received by Environment Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2019:

(Link to the minutes of the meeting:

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g9337/Printed%20minutes%20Tuesday%2026-Nov-2019%2010.00%20Environment%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>)

### **Recommendation 1**

Gloucestershire County Council Highways have a robust approach to protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity as part of our major projects. During initial project stages an environmental checklist is completed to identify potential environmental constraints including features, habitats and species – this allows relevant specialists to become involved in developing the project in a sensitive manner from an early stage. The green infrastructure and biodiversity assets within and around a project are identified by environmental specialists (including ecologists, landscape architects and arboriculturalists) through a combination of desk-top research, consultation with relevant council officers and site surveys.

Our specialists work with design teams to challenge proposals and identify opportunities to avoid, reduce, mitigate or offset the green infrastructure and biodiversity impacts of a project and, if possible, deliver enhancements. Subject to the level of potential impact and consenting regime for a project, environmental assessment is undertaken following industry best practice to report on the existing situation, the expected change resulting from the project, proposed mitigation measures and the overall significance of impact.

Landscape and environmental design proposals are produced accompanied by specifications in order to achieve the intended environmental outcome. Where actions are required to protect environmental features during construction, Environmental Management Plans are produced detailing processes and exclusion areas that will be followed by the contractor and identifying where watching briefs may be required by specialists during specific activities or seasons.

### **Recommendation 2**

Our contractor Ringway has obtained some initial costs and looked at the feasibility of undertaking this work on the county Highway network.

Unfortunately it is not practical to use the available cut and clear equipment on all Highway verges so only a limited number of flat clear sites would be suitable. This may change when other appropriate equipment is designed and comes on to the market.

An initial estimate shows an approximate 8 fold increase in the costs of cutting and collecting as opposed to a standard flail cut. Again this uplift cost may reduce with the availability of suitable equipment.

It may be a number of years before the action of grass cutting removal has the desired effect of reducing nitrogen levels in the verge. This would improve wild flower diversity and provide some reduction in verge cut and clear costs.

### **Recommendation 3**

Embed no or low fertility treatments in scheme design and following Plantlife's new technical guidance (see Recommendation 4 below) We will take care to avoid using too much top soil for tree planting/landscaping which can harm surrounding low

nutrient grassland/ wildflower vegetation. The default will normally be to not use top soil. Bare surfaces can be roughened up to allow colonisation by or seeding with appropriate wild flowers. This approach should also save costs.

County and District Ecologists to make appropriate comments in all planning application consultations involving new roads including those of Highways England, e.g. A 417 missing link, improvements to J10 (11) of the M5, A40, large new strategic developments etc.

### **Recommendation 4**

Plantlife's technical guidance was due spring 2019 but was only released on 27th September and can be found at <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/our-work/publications/road-verge-management-guide>. Officers are reviewing its content which will serve as useful detailed background information and advice. The County Council's Biodiversity Guidance will be further updated accordingly to generally follow the Plantlife publication.

See also Recommendation 3 above

### **Recommendation 5**

A review has determined that the most practical and cost efficient solution is to use road studs in the carriageway to mark the beginning and ends of all registered Conservation Road Verges (as shown in the 2019 update which consists of just over 100 verges across the county).

Work to install studs has been issued to the contractor and should be complete by spring 2020.

If parishes want additional marking, e.g. small signs on posts, then they can do this at their own cost and subject to County Highways agreement.

GPS use by tractor drivers/mowing operatives is to be introduced in the medium term (2021 to 2023) to map areas to be cut. This can be extended to locating Conservation Road Verges etc. so they are left or cut at the right time of year.

### **Recommendation 6**

Following Plantlife's new technical guidance (2019) determine what might be possible in 2020/2021.

We will engage with Ringway (Dec to March 2019) to trial some flexibility being built into the periods and frequencies for cutting visibility splays and also the main cut with the aim of improving biodiversity and lowering costs in the longer term.

### **Recommendation 7**

Ongoing consultations with Highways England on major projects, including A417 missing link scheme, where new/changed cuttings and embankments provide opportunities for wildflower enhancement.

Recommendations and feedback have not yet been sent formally to Highways England until reviewed by Scrutiny (Environment & Communities) November 2019.

See also Recommendation 3 above

### **Recommendation 8**

A suitable information sheet for parish/town councils will take some time to collate but it should be focused on biodiversity conservation but also include reference to Plantlife & GCC guidance, safety requirements, verge cultivation licences, litter picking, weed control and new emerging approaches to managing Conservation Road Verge's, top soil use, plus cut and clear methods etc.

Update GCC guidance and supporting text of website page <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/plans-policies-procedures-manuals/biodiversity-and-highways/> to indicate GCC has a programme of trying to improve biodiversity on verges which is being rolled out in phases

By end of 2019 – update GCC guidance and on website page add a few references to GCC's evolving work on improving biodiversity on verges. Compile draft information sheet for parishes by February 2020 and agree final version for April 2020.

### **Further actions**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a draft of the information sheet at their meeting in March 2020.

# Examining the Culture of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Established: September 2018, Reported to Cabinet: April 2019

## Background:

In June 2018, the Chief Fire Officer resigned acknowledging 'poor judgment' by not recognising the significance of his personal interest in acquiring a fire service vehicle, where the disposal process had been overseen by himself. This was the result of a whistleblowing allegation that has led to the commencement of an extensive investigation carried out by Internal Audit at the County Council including a review of relevant policies, practices, systems and processes. Progress updates against any actions identified through these reviews will be provided to Audit and Governance Committee.

Following the resignation of the Chief Fire Officer, a number of additional whistleblowing allegations were received which detailed other governance issues and concerns around the culture within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Scrutiny members agreed to set up a task group to support the work being carried out with a specific focus on the culture of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

## Membership:

Councillors Iain Dobie, Kate Haigh, Jeremy Hilton (Chair), Stephen Hirst, Shaun Parsons, John Payne, Will Windsor Clive.

## Aims and Objectives

- To explore the current culture within the Fire and Rescue service (to understand its behaviours, attitudes, values and beliefs) and recommend changes to improve it.
- To ensure that GFRS is fair and transparent in its relationships with others and its working practices (including procurement) and establish how the service can be more robustly scrutinised to ensure any issues relating to governance or culture do not reoccur.
- To propose ways in which GFRS can move forward as a county council fire and rescue service, working in collaboration with other council and blue light services

- To consider any issues relevant to the work of the task group that arise from the report presented to Audit and Governance Committee into the sale of a fire service vehicle.

## **Meetings:**

9 October 2018  
15 November 2018  
13 December 2018  
15 January 2019  
8 March 2019

The task group met with the following

- Acting Chief Fire Officer
- Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Parking and Libraries
- Commissioning Director
- Head of Human Resources
- Consultant on GFRS Culture Review
- Leader of Council
- Chief Executive
- Trade Unions (invitations sent, meeting did not happen)
- Internal Audit

## **Recommendations**

- A. Explore whether the Fire and Rescue Service can adopt a more integrated model of back office support service, such as HR, IT, Property, Communications and Finance. In particular, whether a stronger business partner model might provide the service with greater access to skills and expertise to help the service manage its change programme. The HR leadership at the County Council should possess the necessary expertise to enable it to play a leading role in culture change within GFRS.
- B. Redefine the role of the Chief Fire Officer within the County Council to reflect the positive integration of services but not overload the role during such a vital time of change.
- C. Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should adopt the County Council values. This will reflect that the service is part of the County Council with a shared culture.
- D. Ask the current Scrutiny Review to consider the most appropriate way of strengthening scrutiny of the Fire and Rescue Service.

- E. The task group has suggested that Cllr Dave Norman as Cabinet Member responsible for Public Protection set up a Cabinet Panel to ensure oversight of the current change programme within the Fire and Rescue Service. (it is noted that this could include cross party membership.)

**Response:**

Extracts from the Cabinet Panel report received by Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 28 January 2020:

*With Cllr Norman, (Cabinet Member for Public Protection), as Chairman, a Cabinet Panel was established in June 2019. The Panel agreed to meet at regular intervals over a defined time period.*

*The purpose of the Panel was to provide support to the Cabinet Member, (following on from the work undertaken by the GFRS Scrutiny Task and Finish Group), and working within the operating principles set out by the Panel Operating Principles included in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.*

*The Panel supported the following ambitions: -*

- a) To explore the culture of the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, (to gain an understanding of behaviours, attitudes, values and beliefs), and to make recommendations for improvement;*
- b) To clarify the role of the Chief Fire Officer and senior officer roles;*
- c) To ensure the working practices (including procurement) and the relationships within GFRS and between GFRS and other organisations were fair and transparent;*
- d) To consider ways in which GFRS could be more robustly scrutinised,*
- e) To propose ways in which GFRS could move forward as a County Council Fire and Rescue Service, (working in collaboration with other council and blue light services);*
- f) To consider issues emerging from the recommendations made by the GFRS Task Group and any outcomes arising from the reports presented by the GCC Audit and Governance Committee.*

*The clear focus within GFRS over the coming 12-24 months is for the GFRS Improvement Programme Board to work through the action plan, ensuring that the audit and HMICFRS findings are addressed in a professional and sustainable way, which will develop skill and competence alongside process and procedure.*

*Supervisory and middle management development are key to ensuring that the strategic vision and values are continually role modelled and communicated and all*

*staff are supported to understand the direction of travel and work within a well-established values framework to clear organisational objectives. This is a cultural change which will take patience and time to embed.*

*During 2020, the next integrated risk management plan will be developed. The data analysis to support this will be closely aligned to the latest National Fire Chiefs Council learning and from other Fire and Rescue Services who have been inspected by HMICFRS and are deemed to have performed well in relation to the development to their IRMP. This will set the future objectives of GFRS and will be linked to and supportive of the GCC strategic plans and vision 2050 documents as well as strategies relating to public health, social care and policing.*

*Combined with the improvement programme board outcomes, a clear strategy and objectives with a fresh and forward looking vision will be in place by the summer of 2021.*

*The improvement and integration journey for GFRS has begun. A period of consolidation will be required, led by the Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Leadership Team of GFRS, but equally supported by senior officers and members from wider GCC.*

*The service is ready to meet the challenges arising from the audit reports and from HMICFRS. This will need stability and governance provided by GCC as the Fire Authority.*

*The professional relationship established by the Lead Cabinet Member and GFRS is open to scrutiny. A commitment to full collaborative working within GCC will deliver positive outcomes for Gloucestershire residents and staff at GFRS.*

*I wish to place on record my thanks to the Panel and for the support provided by staff from the GCC DSU Team and from GFRS, whose involvement through the life of the Panel has been both constructive and invaluable.*

**Cllr Dave Norman**

# General Surgery

Established November 2018 :, Reported: July 2019

## **Background:**

The Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee was first made aware of proposals around a pilot on General Surgery was following a leaked internal staff memo by a Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust consultants writing to all members of the GHNHSFT Board expressing views on the preferred model of care.

General Surgery is an overarching term for upper gastrointestinal surgery and colorectal surgery. This was a proposal to pilot the reconfiguration of general surgery where Emergency general surgery and complex planned general surgery would be centralised at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and short stay and day case general surgery would be centralised at Cheltenham General Hospital

A report provided a timeline of events and detailed the initial work that was carried out prior to the suspension of the task group's work.

## **Membership:**

Councillors: Carole Allaway Martin, Martin Horwood (Cheltenham), Stephen Andrews (Cotswold), Brian Oosthuysen, Colette Finnegan (Gloucester).

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To act as a critical friend in the development and implementation of a pilot for the change to the model of emergency general surgery
- To understand any potential impact the pilot might have on other Health Care Services and partners (including social care/ transport)
- To fully understand the available options and input into the long term approach for emergency general surgery in Gloucestershire.

## **Meetings:**

- **November 2018-** At a committee meeting in November, Members were provided with a detailed presentation on the proposal highlighting the benefits that were expected to be achieved, and the metrics that would be used in the evaluation of the pilot. Members understood that the following timescale was being followed:
  - Implementation planning November 2018 – March 2019
  - System mobilisation – April to September 2019
  - Go-live – September 2019
  - Progress report to Health Scrutiny after 3 months and then frequently as agreed
  
- **20 February 2019** - The Committee held an additional meeting to discuss the proposals and gain a better understanding of the detail. The Chair of Health and Care Scrutiny Committee had written to the Secretary of State on this matter and it was clarified that the stage at which the committee could ask the Secretary of State to intervene had not been reached. The Committee agreed to request the setting up of a task group that would allow members to receive answers to their questions and raise their concerns.
  
- **22 March 2019** - The County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed the one page strategy so the task group could begin its work.
  
- **18<sup>th</sup> April 2019** -, Due to the NHS facing the potential of a judicial review in relation to their general surgery pilot in the county, the Chair of the county's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee suspended the work the task group.
  
- **2 May 2019** - The Trust stated that it had carefully considered a recent challenge to its proposal to pilot changes to the configuration of general surgical services in the County and had concluded that it would set aside the intention to implement the proposed pilot scheme. The Trust stated it would continue to look at options for the future working with local people in preparation for the planning public engagement and consultation later in the year.

## Recommendations

As the pilot is no longer going to be implemented, the task group has now been brought to a close. It will be up to Health Scrutiny to consider how they wish to scrutinise any future proposals in this area in due course.

The Health and Care Scrutiny Committee has now had a remit change; responsibility for the scrutiny of adult social care will now sit under a new Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee. This will allow greater focus on the pilots and temporary service changes in progress. It will also mean that consideration of workforce issues as well as a number of other topics will need to be carried out jointly with the newly formed committee to ensure that the national integration agenda is not lost at a local level.

The Health and Care Scrutiny Committee has been clear in the past about their disappointment regarding the way in which news of the pilot was brought to their attention.

The Committee is developing a memorandum of understanding with the Trusts which will help guide the way in which it scrutinises service change and clarifies the definitions around, 'temporary', 'pilot' and 'substantial variation'. The focus for members will be putting place effective scrutiny of the upcoming engagement and consultation which will include General Surgery proposals later this year.

**Response:**

Update provided on 17 March 2020 at Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the next steps for General Surgery.

# YOUTH STRATEGY TASK GROUP

Established: March 2019, Reported to Cabinet: November 2019

## **Background:**

In March 2019, Cllrs Lesley Williams and Steve Robinson submitted a request to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for a task group to look at a Youth Strategy for 8 - 24 year-olds in Gloucestershire.

## **Membership:**

Councillors Lesley Williams (Chair), Steve Robinson, Colin Hay, Suzanne Williams, Eva Ward, Terry Hale, Stephen Davies and Carole Allaway-Martin.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To review and scrutinise current provisions for 8 – 24 year olds in Gloucestershire.
- To consider how the Council could encourage young people's personal and social development outside of school hours, and their preparation for adult life, through promoting youth provision in every community, delivered by a mix of volunteers and trained staff.
- To make sure that whatever their background or circumstances, every young person has the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.
- With partners, to use the continuum of need, in the new Right Placement First Time: Sufficiency Strategy, to develop recommendations to help the council better co-ordinate intervention services and provide a county-wide strategy.

## **Meetings:**

17 April 2019  
14 May 2019  
18 June 2019  
5 August 2019  
11 September 2019  
16 September 2019 (Seminar)  
11 October 2019

At the first meeting of the task group in April 2019, the group agreed on two main outcomes for the task group: to host a youth strategy seminar and to carry out a consultation process. The further four meetings of the task group allowed members to plan for these, as well as develop their understanding of the current youth provision in Gloucestershire.

## Recommendations

1. That the direction of travel of council youth support services and council-supported youth provision, becomes more preventative. That means reaching out to groups of young people who may be on the cusp but have not yet been referred by police, education, health or social care for specialist youth support.
2. That the council works with its partners to organize a programme of regular events for people and organisations working in the youth sector – from whatever angle – for the purpose of networking, collaboration and continuous professional development. That some of these are countywide, others specific to a district.
3. That the council works with its partners to agree a new common approach to the youth work training pathway, from youth leadership to volunteer training to degree-level professional qualification. That, to support this, the council builds in to any specification for youth support services a requirement to offer and support full youth work Apprenticeships at various levels.
4. That an investment is made into council youth support services to enhance outreach and street-based youth work delivery across the county, and to bring professional youth work expertise into supporting community initiatives. And that the minimum number of full-time JNC-qualified youth workers in the YST is one per district, each supported by at least five part-time workers (i.e. approximately double current levels).
5. That an investment is made into council-supported youth provision through an adequately resourced grant programme devolved to division or district level, and supported by officers, to support and sustain the valuable preventative youth work by local voluntary and community sector organisations.

## Response:

Extract from the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee considering the report in November 2019:

*The Director of Children's Services (DCS) informed the meeting that the instruction from the Cabinet Member Children's Safeguarding and Early Years was to feed this work into the review/refresh of the Youth Service. The committee was informed that the Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning was leading the procurement process for the Youth Service and the Youth Offending Service – this would take place in 2020. It was noted that the contract with Prospects (now part of the Shaw Trust) had been extended to end of March 2021.*

*Members indicated that they wished to have a clearer understanding of the tender document and the associated timescale of the procurement process. It was agreed that this report be included in the committee's workplan to be considered again in six months.*

**Update:** Due to Covid-19 and the impact on services and the market, Children services have decided to seek approval to extend the current contract for a further year and development of the new youth strategy was postponed as a result.

Extract from initial Cabinet response in November 2019:

*Cllr Richard Boyles, Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years, thanked the task group for its work. He also thanked officers for the extensive work they had provided in supporting the task group.*

*Cllr Boyles stated that the proposals from the review would be added to the council's existing work in developing a wider Youth Strategy for 2020; this included considering measures to help shape the future of the young people of Gloucestershire. Cllr Boyles welcomed the task group observations and offered to discuss the proposals in more detail after the meeting.*

*Leader of the Council, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, praised the task group for its work. Referring to the innovative work being undertaken throughout the county, Cllr Hawthorne suggested that the report be used to draw on the positive aspects of the council's work and referenced to when considering areas requiring improvement.*

*The work of the task group had been presented to the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee and considered by the Children and Families Commissioning Team. The report was noted.*

#### **Further actions**

- To be considered alongside the development of the new youth strategy

# SINGLE USE PLASTICS TASK GROUP

Established: March 2019, Reported to Cabinet: December 2020 *(tentative)*

## Scrutiny activity:

### Background:

In March 2018, a motion was unanimously carried at Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) full Council as follows:

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Eliminate all SUP within County Council managed buildings and facilities by 2020, and seek to encourage the elimination of SUP within its supply chain by 2025.
- Asks the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Partnership to consider how they could promote the reduction of SUP across the county and to highlight areas of further lobbying to central government by both collection and waste disposal authorities.

In February 2019, following a member question at full Council from Cllr Eva Ward, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning expressed support for a task group to be established to examine all options to become a 'single-use plastic-free' Council and reduce SUP use in the County.

Following this, in July 2019, Environment Scrutiny Committee approved a one page strategy request from Cllrs Eva Ward and Andrew Miller to establish a task group.

### Membership:

Councillors Eva Ward (Chair), Andrew Miller, Lesley Williams, Suzanne Williams, Loraine Patrick and Carole Allaway-Martin.

To note: Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin had to leave the task group membership in January due to her appointment to the Council's Cabinet. The Constitution for GCC states that executive members cannot be members of scrutiny task groups.

### Aims and Objectives

- To understand the current progress towards the elimination of SUPs within County Council managed buildings and facilities, including any promotional campaigns.
- To understand the technical impact of different plastics on the environment.
- To explore SUP initiatives at other county councils.
- To work with and learn from local district councils on their SUP initiatives.

- To understand how to effectively engage and enable Council partners, schools and the public to reduce their use of SUPs, taking account of projects run by 'Surfers Against Sewage': <https://www.sas.org.uk/about-us/>

### **Meetings:**

12 September 2019  
10 October 2019  
28 November 2019  
16 January 2020  
14 February 2020  
10 September 2020  
23 October 2020

To note: The group's work was suspended from March – September 2020 due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Recommendations**

October 2020 – the group are in the process of finalising their report with an aim to report to Scrutiny in November 2020 and Cabinet in December 2020.

# WORKFORCE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ACROSS THE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM

Established: July 2019

## Background

As part of the Scrutiny Review it was agreed that joint meetings would be held between Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny members.

A joint committee meeting was held made up of members from both committees to consider the workforce issues and challenges across the Integrated Care System. The purpose of the meeting was to receive information to help inform both committees' work planning and to ensure members had the background on these issues to help understand future service changes.

## Membership

Cllr Phil Awford  
Cllr Collette Finnegan  
Cllr Terry Hale  
Cllr Jeremy Hilton  
Cllr Stephen Hirst (Chair)  
Cllr Paul Hodgkinson  
Cllr Martin Horwood  
Cllr Steve Lydon  
Cllr Carole Allaway Martin  
Cllr Helen Molyneux  
Cllr Dilys Neill  
Cllr Nigel Robbins OBE  
Cllr Steve Robinson  
Cllr Jill Smith  
Cllr Pam Tracey MBE  
Cllr Robert Vines

## Meeting

30 July 2019

# TAXI LICENSING TASK GROUP

Established: September 2019, Reported to Cabinet: TBC

## **Background:**

In September 2019, Cllr Haigh requested to set up a task group with the ambition to explore the economic benefits and make recommendations in respect of adopting a common set of standards, sanctions, fees and guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing for all local authorities in Gloucestershire.

This request was approved by the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee and the following areas were outlined for consideration:

- The National Revocations and Refusals Register
- The fit and proper persons test
- Environmental concerns, including air quality
- Adaptations for people with disabilities
- The ongoing government review and LGA best practise
- App based taxi services
- The role of taxis and PHVs in rural communities
- School transport
- Training and how training is shared
- Safeguarding and vulnerable users
- The economic benefits to be gained by a common partnership approach between District Licensing Authorities (DLAs)

## **Membership:**

The membership comprised of both County Councillors and District Councillors most of whom were Chairs of their particular Licensing Committee.

Members from Gloucestershire County Council (GGC) were Councillors Kate Haigh (Chair), Bernard Fisher, Stephen Hirst and Brian Robinson.

District Licensing Committee Chairs were Councillors Clive Walford (Gloucester), David Willingham (Cheltenham), Graham Bocking (Tewkesbury), Mattie Ross (Stroud), Juliet Layton (Cotswolds) and Maria Edwards (Forest of Dean).

## **Meetings:**

5 September 2019  
7 October 2019  
25 November 2019  
20 February 2020

To note: The group's work was suspended from March – September 2020 due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Groups and individuals were invited to give evidence and information, as decided by the group within a series of meetings. Meetings focused on different groups and areas which govern and are impacted by licensing; the Integrated Transport Unit, the Gloucestershire Licensing Officers Group, hackney and private hire drivers and members of the public. The group also carried out two consultation processes; one aimed at taxi drivers and one at the public.

## **Recommendations**

**TBC – these are currently awaiting sign off by members and supporting officers**

### Recommendations to District Licensing Committees and the Gloucestershire Licensing Officers Group

- 1.1. To sign up to and implement the National Register of Refusals and Revocations (NR3) for the respective authorities if they have not already done so.
- 1.2. To draw up a comparison of policies and licensing standards across all authorities and explore how vehicle standards and enforcement can be aligned and organised jointly. This may be done through a transition period of implementing new standards gradually.
- 1.3. To agree and implement a joint training offer on safeguarding and disability awareness for licensing committee members and drivers.
- 1.4. To work towards a common approach to the use of CCTV in taxis and private higher vehicles across the County by 2024. The group note the recent Statutory Guidance that has been published on this which identifies the benefits of using this technology and of a common approach to adopting changes to the licensing regime.

(Please refer to paragraphs 7.7 – 7.13 at the following link for further information:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904369/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english-28-07-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904369/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english-28-07-2020.pdf)).

### Recommendations to Transport Planning and Integrated Transport Unit

- 1.5. To work together with District licensing committees and the GLOG to ensure that planned changes to infrastructure such as electric charging points and

projects such as the community transport pilot take taxi and private hire vehicles into account, particularly for those operating in rural areas.

- 1.6. To sign Gloucestershire County Council up to and implement the National Register of Refusals and Revocations (NR3) if they have not already done so.
- 1.7. Recommendations to District Licensing Officers and the GCC ITU To collaborate on a County wide awareness raising media campaign to improve public awareness of the differences between hackney and private hire vehicles.
- 1.8. To run annual County wide surveys for drivers and the general public via the District licensing authorities to monitor progress and effectiveness of recommendations. The responses from this are to be discussed between District Licensing Committees, GLOG and ITU at a joint annual meeting.

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

Established: November 2019, Reported to Cabinet: December 2020 (Tentative)

## Background:

At the 13 February 2019 Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Budget Council, an amendment was proposed by Cllr Ward and Cllr R Smith to create a Public Participation Officer role dedicated to improving the public's experience of engaging with Council meetings and consultations.

This budget amendment was later withdrawn, subject to a commitment for a task group to be set up instead to examine how people engage with the council and how engagement could be improved.

## Membership

Councillors Eva Ward, Stephen Hirst, Shaun Parsons, Lesley Williams, Rachel Smith and Kate Haigh. Councillor Eva Ward was appointed as chair.

## Aims and Objectives

The ambitions for the review were as follows;

- To understand what GCC does at present in terms of improving public participation;
- To explore how effective these processes are at helping the public to meaningfully engage and promote active citizenship;
- To learn from relevant outside sources and other Local Authorities to identify examples of best practice; and
- To make recommendations, including any resource implications that would enhance public engagement with the Council and its processes (copy of the full one page strategy at Annex 1).

## Meetings:

The group met three times from November 2019 to February 2020 to develop their understanding of how GCC performed in this year currently, and explore examples of how this could be improved. Following the Covid-19 pandemic the group paused its work, reconvening in September 2020. The group reflected on the changes in working practice over that time and lessons learned with regards to public participation.

## Recommendations

- A. To ensure that the facility of public questions at meetings of County Council, Cabinet and other committee meetings are clearly outlined on the website and that there is appropriate promotion through the Council's Communications Team.
- B. Notifications of petitions received to be sent to members regularly via communications channels such as the Members Matters weekly update (updated and maintained on the Members' website).
- C. That a review be carried out of the Consultation processes including how feedback from councillors and members of the public can help to ensure they are carried out more effectively.
- D. That the Communications Team continues to work on improving how information is presented.
- E. Review the County's Community Charter, which sets out the way engagement is carried out between the county council and communities (such as through town and parish councils). This review will include gathering intel and insight of approaches to consultation and engagement and will allow all residents to benefit from the offer.

In addition the task group wishes to recommend to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee that:

- F. The public representation pilot being carried out by Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be made a standing item and expanded to all other scrutiny committees.

**Response:**

Due to report to Cabinet in December 2020.

# ASPEN CENTRE VISIT

Established: December 2019, Reported: January 2020

## **Background:**

At previous Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, a local member had expressed anecdotal concerns regarding the Aspen Medical Centre. Issues raised included:

- Accessibility of the site including car parking
- Long waiting times at the centre
- Difficulty in getting timely appointments
- Long wait times on the phone lines
- Challenge of increased registration activity
- Management of change for staff and patients

## **Membership:**

Councillors: Carole Allaway Martin, Terry Hale, Jeremy Hilton

## **Aims and Objectives**

Members wished to understand what the benefits were of the hub approach and the timeline of improvement.

## **Meetings:**

Members visited the Aspen Centre on 17 December 2019.

Report circulated on 17 January 2020.

## **Recommendations**

There are learning points for other areas to take on board based on the challenges the hub has faced. In particular:

- It is important to communicate changes appropriately and promote the new initiatives in place so that patients understand why a different approach is being taken and what the benefits are.
- It is important that there is experience within the team to help manage processes and join up all the parts within the hub.
- There needs to be a good feedback and troubleshooting mechanism that is then listened to and responded to.
- It was acknowledged that whilst this set up at the Aspen Centre was initially a hub model, due to the practice mergers it was now more like one large practice with a couple of branch surgeries.

The Committee will continue to monitor the development of this approach with a potential roll out to other areas of the County.

**Response:**

N/A

# **BUDGET SCRUTINY – MEETING OF CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting held: 9 January 2020:, Reported to Cabinet: January 2020

## **Background:**

Members met with Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of the Council, and Pete Bungard, Chief Executive to discuss the Council Strategy and receive an introduction to the budget scrutiny day. Throughout the day the committee would meet with the Cabinet Members and Directors under the remit of each Scrutiny Committee and discuss their areas of the budget. Members on each of the Committees were welcome to attend for their relevant sessions or to stay for the whole day. The minutes of the meeting would then be provided to Cabinet to help inform their consideration of the budget.

## **Membership:**

Councillors: Carole Allaway Martin, John Cordwell, Kevin Cromwell, Iain Dobie, Ben Evans, Kate Haigh, Jeremy Hilton, Stephen Hirst, Paul Hodgkinson, Graham Morgan, Shaun Parsons, Brian Robinson, Steve Robinson, Rachel Smith, Ray Theodoulou, Eva Ward, Lesley Williams,

## **Aims and Objectives**

Members were advised to consider how effectively the proposed budget responded to:

- The changing needs of Gloucestershire residents and communities
- The priorities and ambitions set out within the Council Strategy – Looking to the Future
- Any legislative or other changes in national policy or guidance

## **Meetings:**

9 January 2020.

In addition to scrutiny members, the following were in attendance:

## Officers

Pete Bungard, Chief Executive (Item 1 & 6)

Rob Ayliffe, Monitoring Officer and Head of Planning, Performance & Change (Item 1)

Paul Blacker, Director of Finance

Mandy Quayle, Director of People (Item 5)

Colin Chick, Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure (Item 2)

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (Item 3)

Mark Branton, Deputy Adult Social Care (Item 3)

Sarah Scott, Director Public Health (Item 3)

Chris Spencer, Director Children's Services (Item 4)

Stephen Bace, Lead Democratic Services Adviser

## Cabinet Members

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of Council (Item 1 & 6)

Cllr Richard Boyles, Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years (Item 4)

Cllr Vernon Smith, Highways and Flood (Item 2)

Cllr Kathy Williams, Adult Social Care Delivery (Item 3)

Cllr Nigel Moor, Environment and Planning (Item 2)

Cllr Lynden Stowe, Finance and Change (Item 5)

Cllr Dave Norman, Public Protection, Parking and Libraries (Item 3)

Cllr Patrick Molyneux, Economy, Education and Skills (Item 2 & 4)

Cllr Tim Harman, Public Health and Communities (Item 3)

## **Recommendations/ summary**

At the conclusion of the day, the Committee provided feedback to the Leader of Council and Chief Executive. Members outlined a number of recurring themes and

areas of concern that they wished to emphasise in addition to the points raised throughout the day.

- Members expressed their concern over the pressure on the Vulnerable Children's budget and, while welcoming the additional investment, expressed caution that this budget needed to be closely monitored.
- Members commented on the importance of the level of general reserves, noting that it was now at less than 4% of the revenue budget. It was recognised that the Section 151 Officer had signed off the draft budget including the level of reserves. Some members emphasised that the reserves provided an important contingency in relation to any loss of control of the Children's budget.
- Some members asked that consideration be given to presenting the budget information in a more easily accessible way.
- The Committee highlighted the way in which Cabinet Members had considered the Council's commitment to responding to climate change throughout the day's discussion. Members welcomed the introduction of a Climate Change Strategy. Some members felt that the commitment should be more explicit within the budget and reflected in the commissioning intentions.
- Some members felt that the £10,000 per member for highways local was disappointing and they would like to see the figure increased.
- The Committee outlined the importance of transport and how it had links to a wider range of areas such as schools, employment and adult social care. Some members highlighted the importance of support for public transport.
- One member commented that in some areas of the budget, savings were attributed to a review of a particular service or staffing structure, but it was unclear how those reviews would save the Council money. It was felt that greater detail was needed to understand how savings would be achieved. The example of libraries was given.

**Response:**

The budget was agreed at the meeting of full Council on 12 February 2020.

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

The Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel receives a range of reports to enable it to scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire. These include reports from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Chief Executive, and regular highlight reports listing the activity undertaken against each priority area in the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel is also required to receive the Police and Crime Plan and associated delivery reports.

Whilst appreciating the detail in the reports received Panel members agreed that they needed to be able to engage directly with the Police and Crime Commissioner on work undertaken between Panel meetings. The Panel has therefore been piloting receiving a verbal update from the Police and Crime Commissioner at each meeting; this pilot was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Panel is required to comment on the Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Panel received this in July 2019 just ahead of its publication. Panel members questioned how some of the data in the report had been presented, why there was no information regarding the number of non crime calls managed by the Police and the impact on the service, why there was a lack of crime data included in the report, and no reflection on the climate change agenda and wildlife crime. Members agreed that it would have been helpful to have received this report earlier in the drafting process. The Police and Crime Commissioner agreed to feed members comments into the report ahead of its publication.

Following the HMICFRS Crime Data Inspection (CDI) (report published July 2019) Gloucestershire Police had received a rating of inadequate. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable met with the Panel to discuss what this meant for the Police in Gloucestershire. The Chief Constable informed members that it was important to note that this inspection report was not discussing service failure but about the recording of data. He was clear that his intention was not to make excuses for this rating; the constabulary had let itself down, but had understood the issues and had already recovered the position. At the time of the Panel meeting in response to the recovery plan the Police were at a 90% compliance rate.

The Panel is required to comment on the appointment of the Chief Executive of the OPCC. During this year the Panel were pleased to agree the appointment of the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive position. The Panel had worked with the Deputy for some time and was cognisant of their professionalism and suitability for the post of Chief Executive.

The Panel is concerned about the impact on the Police of their being seen as the first line of response for non-crime calls, in particular mental health related calls. The Panel had a detailed discussion on this matter with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (as lead on this area). It was clear that this was a complex issue and one that would only be resolved through strong partnership work. The OPCC had

commissioned a detailed analysis of this issue and it was agreed that the outcome of this work would be reported back to the Panel in due course.

# CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2019-20

## **Children's Services Improvement Journey**

Following the council's rating of Inadequate from the Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in February 2017 much of the committee's focus has been on the council's Improvement journey.

The council received monitoring visits from Ofsted in April and September 2019, and February 2020. The committee held additional meetings to debate/discuss the outcome letters from these visits. The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board, the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years attended these meetings to inform and engage with members on the issues raised. The meeting to receive the outcome of the February 2019 Monitoring Visit was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The main frustration for members following the Ofsted Inspection has been the pace of change. This issue has been reflected in the outcomes from the Ofsted Monitoring Visits and in discussions with the Independent Chair of the Improvement Board and the DCS. Members were, however, pleased to note at their meeting in July 2020 that the Independent Chair indicated that they were now confident in the council's direction of travel, and that the pace of change had picked up.

Important factors in the Improvement Journey included: the establishment of the Social Work Academy; the Essentials Training programme; the changes to the Senior Leadership Team; and, a reducing dependence on agency workers. Concerns remain with regard to culture change, but members feel assured that the changes in the Senior Leadership will drive through the necessary change, and that the council is working with the DfE to achieve this.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown had presented challenges it had also identified strengths, including the robust communication channels that enabled clear and consistent message to be shared with staff, and the speed with which the ICT kit had been rolled out to support staff in working from home. Staff had also used their initiative and driven through ways of working to ensure that children and their families were best supported during this period, eg. the virtual court process.

There had been a reduction in the number of referrals to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) during the lockdown but it was anticipated that with schools reopening this number would increase. The committee was assured that the service was prepared for this increase.

The committee was pleased to note that the council benefited from the placement of Ofsted Inspectors and Regional Schools Commissioner team members with council staff during the lockdown. This has proved beneficial in informing preparations for the upcoming inspection, and work with schools.

The council was subject to a Focused Review by Ofsted in October 2020 and the committee will receive the outcome of this in December 2020.

Concerns remain as to whether the council will achieve an improved rating in the next full Ofsted Inspection. However, the committee recognises the hard work by social work staff, the strong leadership and determination of the Senior Leadership Team in Children's Services to maintain the pace of change and deliver robust services for children and families in Gloucestershire.

### **Other areas covered**

Schools - The committee met with the Regional Schools Commissioner to discuss and debate the challenges around the Academy Schools agenda.

The committee also discussed the impact of the pandemic on schools and the work in place to support schools and families as pupils returned to education settings.

Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire – the committee receives the Annual Safeguarding Children Report each year. This year the Working Together to Safeguard Children arrangements came into force and the committee was briefed on these changes.

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) - the committee receives briefings as necessary. It is important the committee is assured the learning from the SCR's is taken forward appropriately.

Revenue Budget Monitoring – the committee is concerned about the significant overspend in the budget. It receives regular monitoring reports, and has also held a (virtual) briefing session to enable members to fully explore the issues. Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny were invited to this briefing as that committee leads on the scrutiny of the budget process.

Youth Offending Service (YOS) – The YOS received a requires improvement rating from HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons) in January 2020. The committee was disappointed given that the main factor in this decision related to the out of court work, which in Gloucestershire is delivered through the Children First programme. Children First has delivered a significant reduction in the re-offending rate, and it was disappointing that the inspection regime appears to be at odds with positive initiatives such as these. The council and the Youth Justice Board had challenged this rating. The committee will follow up on this area of work at its meeting in January 2021.

## **IMPACT OF COVID-19**

Scrutiny activity commenced March 2020, and is ongoing.

### **Background**

During 2020, the world was faced with the emergence of a novel coronavirus, COVID-19. This led to a pandemic on an unprecedented scale, and resulted in the United Kingdom locking down on 23 March 2020, whereby people were asked to stay at home wherever possible, non-essential shops and businesses were shut, and the provision of many services, including County Council services, was disrupted. Throughout summer 2020, there was some return to normality, however restrictions have tightened again as the number of COVID-19 cases have increased moving into autumn.

The Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee has been responsible for scrutinising the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Membership**

Councillors: Phil Awford, Iain Dobie, Andrew Gravells, Terry Hale, Jeremy Hilton, Stephen Hirst (Chair), Shaun Parsons, Brian Robinson, and Steve Robinson.

### **Aims/ Objectives**

The Committee wished to have an understanding of the impact of the pandemic within the County, including on County Council services, and as to how the Council was responding. This would enable the Committee to scrutinise the effectiveness of the response and identify any areas of learning for the future.

### **Recommendations**

Regular updates have been received on coronavirus data within the County through the Director of Public Health report, as well as on the establishment of the Local Outbreak Management Plan, and the impact of the pandemic on Council services.

The Committee has also received several in-depth focused reports relating to the response to and impacts of the pandemic in the County, including COVID-19 testing in care homes; support to care homes during COVID-19; and the impact and changes to Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Services as a result of COVID-19.

Scrutiny of COVID-19 in Gloucestershire is ongoing, as the pandemic continues. Additionally, as the Council moves into the recovery phase, there will be an

opportunity to scrutinise the effectiveness of the response to the pandemic, as well as to consider the lessons learned.

# LOCAL MEETINGS – GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## **Background:**

In June 2017 the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC) agreed that the two 'stand alone' Committee meeting dates in February and October would be held at one of the six district council offices (arranged on a rotational basis).

## **Membership:**

Cllrs Brian Robinson, Cllr Matt Babbage, Cllr Kevin Cromwell (Chair), Cllr Stephen Davies, Cllr Ben Evans, Cllr Kate Haigh (Vice-Chair), Cllr Klara Sudbury, Cllr Sajid Patel (Gloucester), Cllr Nicky Packer (Forest of Dean), Cllr Paul McCloskey (Cheltenham), Cllr John Murphy (Tewkesbury), Cllr Gina Blomefield (Cotswolds) and Cllr Simon Pickering (Stroud)

## **Meetings:**

Tewkesbury Borough Council – 19 October 2017  
Cotswold District Council – 22 February 2018  
Cheltenham Borough Council – 19 October 2018  
Forest Of Dean District Council – 14 February 2019  
Stroud District Council – 30 October 2019  
Gloucester City Council – 26 February 2020

## **Aims and Objectives**

This aimed to provide an opportunity for each authority to present to the Scrutiny Committee an overview of the economic growth related issues in their area, and for all members of the respective district to attend the meeting and present questions on local issues.

In addition, the Scrutiny Committee would aim to gain a better understanding of the issues impacting the economic growth agenda for each district and consider how engagement between the GFirst LEP, the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC), the GEGSC and District Authorities might be improved.

## **Recommendations**

Following the completion of the six meetings, a report was produced that

summarised each meeting, points raised and any outcomes (a copy of which can be found [here](#) – item 10). The report was presented as an information item at the Committee’s meeting on 2 July 2020, members were asked to review it and submit any comments or observations to DSU. Comments received then formed an outcome report (a copy of which can be found [here](#) – item 5).

In response to both the summary and outcome report, the Committee have agreed that going forward; there will be a standing item on the Committee’s agenda to give district members an opportunity to feedback on key economic growth points/issues/actions from their respective councils.

The Chair is due to present this report to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee in November 2020 for information.

**Response:**

N/A

# Joint Scrutiny of the Local Transport Plan Review

## Background:

Noting comments made in the scrutiny review of the close working nature of Environment and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committees, it was agreed that one the 'lap over topics' was the Local Transport Plan.

It was requested therefore that officers kept both Committees up to date on this topic and save officer time on making the presentation twice, two joint Committee meetings were arranged.

## Membership:

Cllrs Brian Robinson, Cllr Matt Babbage, Cllr Kevin Cromwell (Chair), Cllr Stephen Davies, Cllr Ben Evans, Cllr Kate Haigh (Vice-Chair), Cllr Klara Sudbury, Cllr Sajid Patel (Gloucester), Cllr Robert Bird, Cllr Dr John Cordwell, Cllr Stephen Hirst, Cllr Keith Rippington, Cllr Eva Ward, Cllr Suzanne Williams, Cllr Phil Awford Cllr Nicky Packer (Forest of Dean), Cllr Paul McCloskey (Cheltenham), Cllr John Murphy (Tewkesbury), Cllr Gina Blomefield (Cotswolds) and Cllr Simon Pickering (Stroud)

## Meetings:

Members had two Joint Scrutiny meetings on 18 September 2019 and 23 September 2020. These were both existing Environment Scrutiny Committee dates, agenda and minutes were published following normal guidelines.

## Aims and Objectives

To scrutinise the ongoing LTP Review from both an environmental and economic growth point of view

The meeting on 18 September asked members to consider the emerging LTP Review updates and changes with regards to the LTP Review (2019). This is ahead of taking a draft LTP revised document to Cabinet in December.

Once a draft document had been approved by Cabinet, officers went out to public consultation. The meeting on 23 September 2020 therefore reviewed changes make following the consultation.

From both meetings, officers took away comments and suggested amendments to work them into the revised document.

## Recommendations

There comments, questions and amendments from members were minuted and can be viewed at the following links:

18 September 2019:

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g9336/Printed%20minutes%20Wednesday%2018-Sep-2019%2010.00%20Environment%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

23 September 2020:

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=773&MId=9577&Ver=4>

The final revised document is now due to go to Cabinet in January 2021.

**Response:**

N/A

# **FIT FOR THE FUTURE CONSULTATION**

(Developing Specialist Hospital Services for Gloucestershire)

## **Background:**

Scrutiny plays a key role in holding NHS Commissioners and NHS Trusts to account, scrutinising local NHS services and ensuring NHS Commissioners and Trusts involve, engage and consult lawfully and appropriately with local residents. Part of this role includes determining whether a service change constitutes a 'substantial variation' in the delivery of NHS services. It is the role of the relevant Local Authority to consider whether a proposed service change is 'substantial' and subject to public consultation. In Gloucestershire this role is delegated to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

HOSC members had been advised of NHS 'Fit for Future' proposals via regular updates to the committee over several years. At its meeting on 22 October 2020, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, (represented by One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System), set out its consultation proposals and outline plan to consider options for the organising of specialist hospital services across Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal Hospitals. Having sought the views of the committee, consultation commenced on 22 October 2020, engaging with Gloucestershire residents, NHS and care staff, community and voluntary partners, (including HOSC). The consultation continued until 17 December 2020.

Noting strong expressions of concern from some members of the committee, (in relation to the timing of the consultation and the need to respond to the challenges and pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic), the NHS CCG advised that, to delay the consultation was not an option and could seriously hinder the process. The committee noted the steps taken to proceed with the consultation, including mitigations taken in response to the committees concerns. The NHS CCG reiterated the significance of the benefits anticipated from the Fit for the Future Programme and reaffirmed its decision to consult on the proposals at this time. The consultation followed an extensive period of public and staff engagement.

## **Membership:**

Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **Aims and Objectives**

The consultation aimed to seek feedback on options for organising the following services:

- Acute Medicine (acute medical take)

- Gastroenterology inpatient services - medical care for stomach, pancreas, bowel or liver problems
- General Surgery – conditions relating to the gut. Services: emergency general surgery, planned Lower Gastrointestinal [GI]/colorectal surgery and day case Upper and Lower GI surgery
- Image Guided Interventional Surgery (IGIS) – where surgeons use instruments with live images to guide the surgery, including following a heart attack, trauma and cancer. Services: interventional radiology, interventional cardiology and vascular surgery
- Trauma and Orthopaedic inpatient services (T&O) - diagnosis and treatment of conditions relating to the bones and joints.

The objectives of the consultation were to: -

- Improve health outcomes for patients
- Reduce waiting times and limit the number of cancelled operations
- Make sure patients are assessed by the appropriate hospital specialist with timely decisions about their treatment and care
- Ensure there are always safe staffing levels, including senior doctors available 24/7
- Ensure hospital teams have the best equipment and facilities
- Support joint working between services to reduce the number of hospital visits people have to make
- Create flagship centres for research, training and learning – and in doing so attract and retain the best staff for Gloucestershire Hospitals
- Deliver more specialist services in Gloucestershire to enable people to receive care locally rather than travelling to Bristol, Birmingham and Oxford
- Provide two thriving, vibrant hospital sites with strong identities and providing world class, leading edge treatment.

There were no proposals to close Cheltenham General Hospital's A&E Department.

In response to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, consultation was be undertaken in a number of ways, offering a wide range of consultation activities from which to support the required socially distanced consultation process.

### **Recommendations/summary**

The NHS sought feedback from 22 October until 17 December 2020. An independently run online Citizens' Jury will be held in January 2021 to consider the feedback and make recommendations. People from across Gloucestershire will be selected and paid to take part in this process. A consultation review period will follow before final decisions are made by the CCG in March 2021. Update reports will be presented to HOSC at its committee meetings on 12 January and 2 March 2021.

# MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

## **Membership**

Cllrs Kate Haigh (Chair), Kevin Cromwell, Lorraine Patrick, Eva Ward, Joe Harris, Andrew Gravells

## **Aims/ Objectives**

The Member Development Group coordinates activities and events organised to provide members with information to support them in their role, for example seminars, workshops, presentations, conferences and visits relating to services provided by the Council and its partners. Their remit also includes:

- Reviewing the ongoing member development programme  
Reviewing the four yearly County Council election member induction programme
- Considering opportunities for working with district councils and neighbouring areas.

## **Activities**

### ***Members Matter Website***

The Member Development Group worked alongside Communications and Democratic Services to redesign the Members Matter website. The group was keen to develop a website where members could easily access up to date information and dedicated resources at any time. The redevelopment began in 2019, and the new website was launched alongside a revamped Members Weekly Update email on 16 November 2020. The website will continue to be updated and developed by the Member Development Group, to ensure the most relevant and useful information for members is readily available online, particularly in preparation for the county council election in 2021.

### ***Virtual Training Sessions***

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, events and sessions for elected members have moved online. The Member Development Group have been exploring events on offer through organisations such as the Local Government Association, and assessing their benefit for member development. The group has agreed to promote events with members in a targeted manner, by identifying where members would benefit, based on particular interests or development needs.

### ***Member Induction Programme 2021***

The Member Development Group has started the process of reviewing the member induction programme which will be run for members elected at the county council election in 2021. The aim is to ensure that councillors are provided with the right information, and helped to develop the right skills, to fulfil their role as an elected member. In particular, the group is feeding into the development and content of sessions, as well as the development of the induction pack which is presented to successful candidates on election. The group will also contribute to and feedback on the ICT offer for members.

# Summary

**Simon Harper**

**Statutory Scrutiny Officer**



Over the years I have developed good working relationships with colleagues supporting scrutiny across the SW region and further afield. I commonly hear the frustration that scrutiny is not working and is failing to deliver the outcomes that it should.

This report demonstrates that scrutiny really can make a difference, not just in terms of Council services, but also the wider public sector including health. It is important for the scrutiny committees to take ownership of their work plans and prioritise those areas where they can make an impact.

I am pleased that more often than not scrutiny members have been able to ‘leave politics at the door’ and have worked on a cross-party basis in developing recommendations for improvement. I would like to pay tribute to each of the political groups for the non-partisan way they have approached scrutiny since our review of the committee structure. District members have embraced this way of working too and we should rightly be proud of the joined up approach to scrutiny we have in Gloucestershire.

We are fortunate in having a Cabinet that includes a number of members who have previously held senior scrutiny positions within the Council. They understand the value of scrutiny and show a willingness to attend meetings and engage in reviews.

This report provides a timely opportunity for everyone, not just GCC scrutiny members, but also district colleagues, GCC cabinet members, officers, partners and the wider public to express their views

Finally, I would like to make special mention of our scrutiny chairs, vice-chairs and the officers who support scrutiny who work so closely together to make scrutiny as effective as it is. The value of the working relationships they have developed over recent years should never be under-estimated.

Thank you