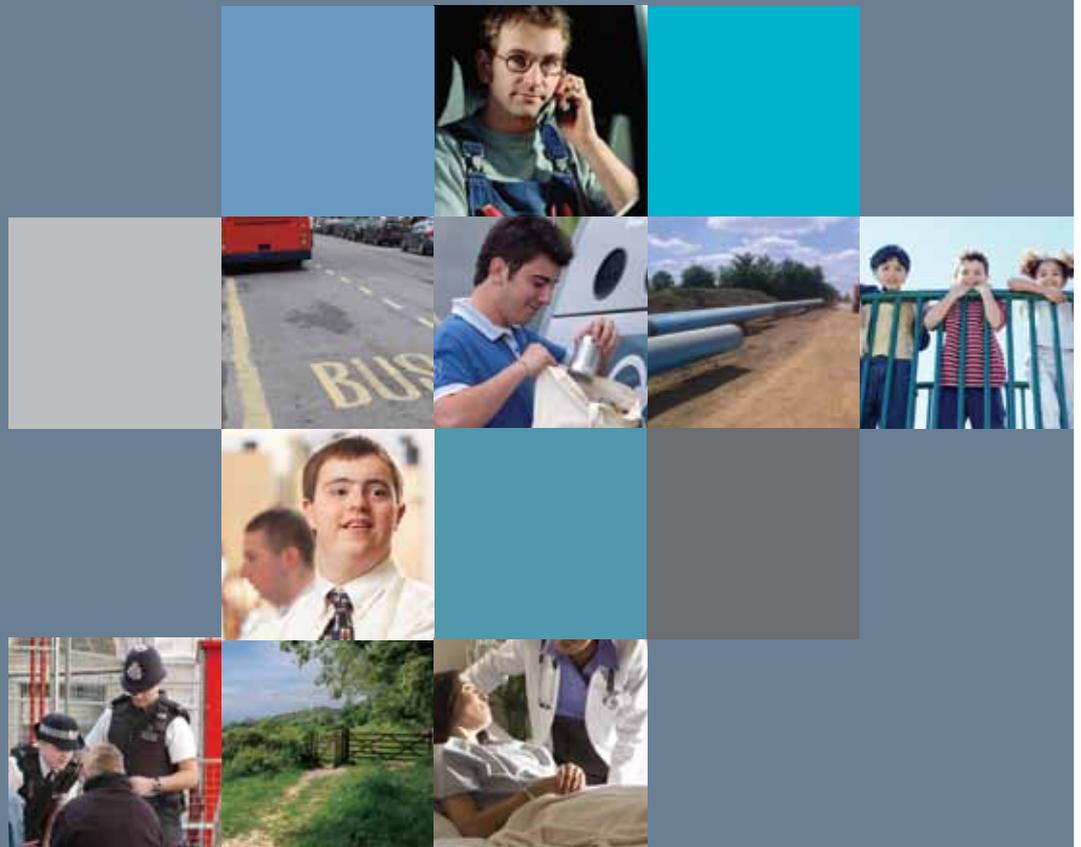

Scrutiny in Gloucestershire

Annual report 2011-12



Making a difference



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

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1. Foreword

As Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2011-12.

You'll see from the following pages that effective scrutiny is so much more than just attending meetings at Shire Hall. Members have been involved in a number of task group reviews that have looked at specific issues and they have taken the opportunity to go out to meet people delivering services on the ground.

Working with partners is fundamental to strengthening the overview and scrutiny process and it is particularly pleasing that our joint scrutiny arrangements with the district councils have been so successful. This bodes well for the future with the introduction of a police and crime panel from November 2012 to scrutinise the activities of the directly elected police commissioner.

I would like to thank the chairs of the scrutiny committees, Councillors Dennis Andrewartha, Phil Awford, Fiona McKenzie, Stephen McMillan and Kathy Williams for their efforts during the year.

This year had been a difficult one for all of our staff in the organisation. Normally at this time I would say 'thank you' to officers in the Scrutiny Team for their outstanding efforts, especially for the quick turnaround of reports and minutes. However, I think that 'thank you' must also include the wider Democratic Services Team who have, as ever served us councillors so well this year.

Therefore as we move forward with a new team that covers both Scrutiny and Democratic Services, and as we say good bye to Elizabeth Power, Sharon Clutterbuck, and Helen Symonds, I would like to place on record my thanks, and that of all the scrutiny committee members to Democratic Services.

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



Councillor Rob Garnham

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

2. Our vision and track record for scrutiny

Last year the council set itself the challenge of not increasing council tax, while protecting services to the most vulnerable.

To do this we are squeezing budgets elsewhere by living within our means, providing good basic services and helping communities to help themselves. We are finding different and lower cost ways of delivering services and we are working closely with partners across the public sector to ensure that we are doing things in the most efficient way possible.

It has never been more important for elected members who are not part of the 'executive' to engage in the decision making process. The scrutiny of the 2012-13 budget and medium term financial strategy showed how valuable this process can be with members from across the council having an opportunity to be involved.

The resulting recommendations were developed on a non-political basis and helped the cabinet in formulating its budget for the coming year.

Scrutiny is well placed to challenge how services are provided across the public sector in Gloucestershire.

The scrutiny task group that was set up to look at the Environment Agency's proposals to manage flood risk on the Severn Estuary shows how effective scrutiny can be.

Local stakeholders, including community groups, were able to present their views and 'non-executive' councillors were given an opportunity to have a fresh independent look at all the issues. As a result, the Environment Agency has adopted a new approach and is working closely with local communities.

In summary scrutiny should:

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



Pete Bungard
Chief Executive



Jo Walker
*Strategic Finance Director
Corporate Scrutiny Lead*

3. Scrutiny structure



4. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee



Chairman:
Cllr Rob Garnham

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



The committee is responsible for managing the council's overview and scrutiny process and ensuring that it is operating effectively and is making a difference for local people.

The membership of the committee includes the chairs of the other overview and scrutiny committees and they report on their committee's activities at each meeting.

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



Key areas of activity

• Localism

Members received an overview of the Localism Bill and the emerging implications for the council. The committee generally welcomed the bill and the opportunities it will provide but members did highlight some areas of concern. Members recognised that there could be a huge rise in expectation among local people brought about through the new powers. Managing the message was a key issue for central and local government.

• GFirst

Members received an overview of the direction and strategy of GFirst. An update was provided on their activities including progress with the local enterprise partnership. Members found the update useful but requested a further report giving more details on how measurable outcomes were being achieved.

• Severn Trent

Alan Payne, General Manager at Severn Trent Water, updated members on progress with the project to improve the resilience of water supplies in the county.

An alternative water supply pipeline had been installed in the north of the county and the flood defence works at the Mythe Water Treatment Works had been completed. The next stage of the project would secure supplies to the Forest of Dean and parts of the Stroud area.

• Future scrutiny structure

Initial discussions were held on a new structure for scrutiny to build on the success of the council's current arrangements. This will need to take account of:

:: The new operating model that splits commissioning from the delivery of services.

:: The reduction in the number of councillors from 63 to 53 in May 2013.

:: The introduction of the police and crime panel, a joint committee of the seven councils, to scrutinise the activities of the police and crime commissioner from November 2012.

The plan is for a new structure to be in place in readiness for the new council in May 2013.

• Scrutiny task groups

Five task groups were commissioned during the

year and their activities are summarised elsewhere in this report.

• Call-in

Cabinet decisions relating to the residual waste project and the library strategy were called in. In both cases, the decision of the cabinet was upheld. For the residual waste project, members made comments regarding the timing of scrutiny meetings and the availability of information for members and these were included in a subsequent report to the cabinet.

• Scrutiny task group monitoring

Recommendations from task groups are monitored after 6, 12 and 18 months and progress reports were presented to the committee in September 2011 and April 2012. This has proved to be very effective and officers both from the council and partner organisations are aware that they will be asked for regular updates. The improved format of the report has been well received.

Committee membership

Councillors Ron Allen, Dennis Andrewartha, Phil Awford, Rob Garnham, Diane Hibbert, Ceri Jones, Steve McHale, Fiona McKenzie, Stephen McMillan, Shaun Parsons, Gordon Shurmer, Klara Sudbury and Kathy Williams.

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5. Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chairman:
Cllr Dennis Andrewartha

Lead members:
Cllr Shaun Parsons
Cllr Sarah Lunnon



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

Key areas of activity:

• Budget scrutiny

The committee believes it is important that scrutiny is involved in supporting and advising throughout the budget setting process.

The committee has devoted a large proportion of its work plan to ensure that it can effectively engage with the process and is able to understand the significant issues that have to be considered when setting the budget. The outcome of this has been to identify areas where scrutiny can add value over the coming year.

• Monitoring of the budget and performance

The committee receives year-end forecasts for revenue and capital budgets, and updates on other financial management issues. The committee understands the importance of ensuring that the council effectively deals with the ever increasing demands on services. The committee will continue to be provided with a strategic oversight of the council's performance.

• Change programmes

The committee has received updates on the 'Meeting the

Challenge' programme and monitors its progress through the finance and performance reports. The committee will continue to consider where it can best add value to this process with initial focus being on the customer experience.

• Procurement

The committee continues to support the developments taking place in this area. Members have discussed the importance of having ambitious saving targets in this area that are identified up front.



Committee membership

Councillors Dennis Andrewartha, John Burgess, Bill Crowther, Barry Dare, Sarah Lunnon, Shaun Parsons, David Prince, Martin Quaile and Brian Robinson.

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5.1 Scrutinising the draft budget



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

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

This process involved committee meetings and informal member briefings that took place from July 2011 until February 2012.

Members considered the emerging socio-economic challenges facing the county, current performance and the financial outlook in order to identify high priority areas for further scrutiny and to respond to the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

The committee welcomed the input from other scrutiny committees who had considered the MTFS from the perspective of the budget areas within their remit.

Key findings and recommendations:

- Ensure that the customer is at the heart of decision making. The committee will focus its attention on ensuring that the customer experience improves.
- Regular updates for scrutiny on the 'Right First Time' programme.
- Scrutiny to engage with the work being carried out to improve educational attainment of our looked-after children.
- Scrutiny to monitor the development of children's social care performance data.
- Scrutiny to be consulted on the establishment of the new function for transitions pathway for disabled young people.
- Scrutiny to examine the work being done to move service users on to personal budgets.
- Scrutiny to continue to monitor performance in relation to the current highways contract and to engage with the development of the new contract.



6. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chairman:
Cllr Phil Awford

Lead members:
Cllr Brian Oosthuysen
Cllr Charmian Sheppard



The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for overview and scrutiny of matters relating to children and young people.

Its remit covers a wide area including schools, children's centres, adoption and fostering, child protection, childcare, early years education and advice to families. The committee not only scrutinises the services delivered by the council but also those provided by partner organisations.

Key areas of activity:

- **Safeguarding**

The committee regularly considers the quality and performance of safeguarding services. Members wanted to be confident that progress was being made and therefore adopted a framework for scrutinising safeguarding.

The committee used the framework to examine and test how well the safeguarding system was performing and offer advice to cabinet members where necessary. This will allow the committee to gain an overall view of the strengths and challenges across the system in Gloucestershire.

- **Home to school transport**

The committee was concerned about the cost of home to school transport. Members acknowledged that efforts had been made to reduce the expenditure but they wanted to fully understand the processes involved.

A report in January 2012 outlined the council's duties and processes, and highlighted current issues and actions to reduce expenditure. At a subsequent meeting, members questioned officers from home to school transport procurement, commissioning and admissions about service delivery, procurement costs and the actions taken which have reduced expenditure.

- **Youth provision and young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**

These are areas of particular interest to the committee and updates have been provided for

members during the year. The members received a report on the district programme of positive activities for young people. These issues will continue to be monitored during the coming year.

- **Performance monitoring**

The committee monitors the performance of outcomes relating to children and young people and partnership performance against the Children and Young People's Plan priorities for 2011/12, including current and emerging risks.

- **Consultations**

The committee contributed to national consultations including the school admissions code and the school appeals code, school funding reform, special educational needs and disability green paper proposals. The school funding reform consultation gave the opportunity for the committee to work with the Schools Forum on a joint response.

Committee membership

Councillors Ron Allen, Phil Awford, Tony Blackburn, Peter Braidwood, Terry Glastonbury, Ceri Jones, Brian Oosthuysen, Vic Rice and Charmian Sheppard

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

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6.1 Transitions from children's services to adult life for disabled young people in Gloucestershire



Task group chairman:
Cllr Shaun Parsons

Members identified that the transition from children's services to adult life was not always smooth for young people with physical and learning disabilities in Gloucestershire, and that capacity often prevented adult care services from engaging early enough in the transition planning process.

The task group was formed in May 2011 to investigate whether consistency of delivery could be improved and to find ways of encouraging those involved in commissioning and delivery to take ownership of their areas of responsibility. The task group spoke to a wide range of people involved in the transitions pathway. They were asked for their impressions of the transitions pathway, what the issues were from their perspective, and how they thought the pathway should operate.



Key findings and recommendations:

The findings of the task group were presented to the cabinet on 25 November 2011.

The recommendations centred around the following areas:

- Undertaking further scrutiny of the transition pathway, in particular looking at the formal plan for remodelling transition services, and examining how transitions outcomes are delivered

and monitored.

- Better planning, specifically around using available data as a planning aid as early as possible once needs are identified.
- Temporary additional resources being made available to support operations teams in helping to clear the waiting list.
- Dedicated resource and posts being allocated within adult services to ensure timely involvement in transition cases.

- Officers establishing a robust performance framework for transition-related activity which focuses on person-centred outcomes.

The task group put together a list of key principles which it recommended to the cabinet member and commissioners of adult social care consider when planning services for disabled young people.

Task group membership

Councillors Ceri Jones, Brian Oosthuysen, Shaun Parsons and Brian Robinson.

7. Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chair:
Cllr Kathy Williams

Lead members:
Cllr Brian Calway
Cllr Steve McHale
Cllr Charmian Sheppard



The committee is responsible for overview and scrutiny of crime and disorder related issues and the council's community safety activities. The committee focuses on crime and disorder issues from a public perspective and works in partnership with other agencies such as the Gloucestershire Police Authority and the six district councils in the county. The committee's remit covers all matters relating to the fire and rescue service, trading standards, civil protection, coroners and registration.

Key areas of activity:

- **Development of police and crime panels**

The committee has taken the lead in developing the arrangements for the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel in response to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Members have considered draft terms of reference, panel arrangements and rules of procedure for the panel. The committee has played an important role in informing district and borough councils of the implications of the act as well as promoting the establishment of the panel.

- **Skillzone**

The aim of the Life Skills Centre is to educate the communities of

Gloucestershire utilising 16 risk and consequence scenarios. The committee has been active in supporting its development and members have discussed with officers the plans to establish the centre, and to work with partners.

- **Integrated risk management plan**

The plan assesses the changing and new risks within the county, reviews the response and resource needed to meet the risks, and looks to maintain a value for money service. Members were updated on the consultation that had been carried out with specific details around road traffic collision development within Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Members took the opportunity to question officers on the content of the plan.

- **Emergency management**

The committee continues to be updated on the emergency management and business continuity arrangements with representatives on the Business Continuity Management Steering Group. Members have received details of the changes to the service following its relocation to the Tri-Service Centre and integration into the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

- **Performance monitoring**

The committee monitors the performance of outcomes relating to community safety across the council.

Committee membership

County councillors - Mike Collins, David Cooksley, Terry Glastonbury, Terry Hale, Steve McHale, Brian Robinson, Charmian Sheppard, Brian Tipper and Kathy Williams.

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

Gloucestershire Police Authority - Susan Naydorf.

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7.1 Trading Standards



Task group chairman:
Cllr Brian Tipper



A task group was set up in response to the 'Meeting the Challenge' proposals to ensure that an efficient and effective Trading Standards Service continues to be provided to the most vulnerable communities in Gloucestershire following the changes.

The members of the task group spoke to a wide range of people involved in Trading Standards activities in Gloucestershire.

These included council officers, Police Safer Community Team representatives, Environmental Health Officers from the district councils and representatives from regional and national agencies.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group presented its final report to cabinet on 25 November 2011. Members were concerned that the loss of some of the staff skill set would lead to a reduced

service, and should there be a need to increase staff in the future, the level of expertise would be hard to find.

The task group therefore made a recommendation to cabinet to ensure that a knowledge and skill set was retained, and that there was appropriate succession planning.

When considering how the Trading Standards Service was to continue with a reduced budget, the task group made a recommendation to cabinet to explore the following areas: working with partners, sharing

services with other authorities, moving premises, considering further income opportunities and examining the existing complaints procedure.

Animal Welfare is an important area of work which the council has a statutory duty to undertake. Much of this work is funded by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) through an agreed framework. In recognition that funding was not ring-fenced, a recommendation was made that Trading Standards receive the full amount of Defra funding as part of its budget.

Task group membership

Councillors Ron Allen, Gerald Dee (Gloucester City Council), Terry Hale and Brian Tipper
Susan Naydorf (Gloucestershire Police Authority).

8 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chair:
Cllr Fiona McKenzie

Lead members:
Cllr Dr John Cordwell
Cllr Graham Morgan



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

Key areas of activity:

• Changes to subsidised transport services

The committee considered the early drafts of bus consultation documents in May 2011. A special single-issue meeting took place in August, during which the committee had the opportunity to advise the cabinet on the robustness of the overall consultation process.

The committee received the same information which was presented to cabinet. Members selected bus routes at random and used key lines of enquiry as a way of testing how market research had informed the process for contract award and 'second look' proposals. The committee advised the cabinet on sharing

and using local knowledge through consultations, the impact of service change on vulnerable people and sustainability.

• Severn Estuary Management Plan and flood risk

An agenda item about the Severn Estuary Management Plan and flood resilience allowed members to discuss the role and responsibilities of the county council as lead local flood authority, and the responsibilities of riparian ownership, which impacts upon flood risk management.

The committee meeting discussion also highlighted the concerns of some members about the use of local councillor knowledge when developing strategies. This discussion led to

the setting up of a task group on flood resilience (see section 8.1).

• Residual waste project

The committee met prior to the cabinet meeting in December when a decision was made on the preferred bidder for the residual waste project. Members considered the same information which was presented to the cabinet and provided advice to the cabinet on whether the consultation had been thorough and whether the bidder selection should go ahead.

• Performance monitoring

The committee monitors the performance of outcomes relating to environmental issues across the council.



Committee membership

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

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8.1 Severn Estuary shoreline management



Task group chairman:
Cllr Tony Hicks

The task group was set up following concerns raised by members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at one of its meetings. They highlighted the concerns of the local community at proposals published by the Environment Agency as part of its Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy in January 2011.

The role of the task group was to contribute to the Environment Agency's emerging plans for managing flood risk on the Severn Estuary. The group also considered critical infrastructure issues, particularly those relating to Gloucestershire County Council.

After holding an initial scene setting meeting, a day long session was held on 29 November 2011. The following organisations and groups were represented on the day: parish councils from the areas affected, Environment Agency, Natural England, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board, the National Farmers Union, Stroud District Council and Gloucester City Council. The group benefited from the detailed knowledge of Councillors Phil Awford and Basil Booth who represent divisions adjacent to the estuary.

Key areas of activity:

The task group presented its findings to the cabinet on 14 December 2012.

Recommendations to the Environment Agency:

- To ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged by being given an opportunity to be involved in the community engagement exercise before a new strategy is developed.
- To make sure that the information presented is accurate and has a sound evidence base. Flood lines should follow the national flood zone maps and not be based on the indicative flood

line from 1947 which has little or no relevance today.

- To ensure that there is a common understanding of the impact of the proposals on habitats in the estuary. The legal position regarding the protection and replacement of habitats should be made clear from the outset.
- To make clear what levels of compensation will be available to residents and land owners either through EU grants or directly from the Environment Agency.
- To provide clarity on the rights, opportunities and responsibilities of landowners.

- To work closely with public sector agencies such as Gloucestershire County Council, the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board, Network Rail, district councils and utility companies to ensure that critical infrastructure is protected. This includes roads, railway lines, schools, the Gloucester to Sharpness canal, electricity substations, water supplies and pumping stations.

Task group membership

Councillors Tony Blackburn, Dr John Cordwell, Bill Crowther, Tony Hicks and Martin Quaile.



9 Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chairman:
Cllr Stephen McMillan

The Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the overview and scrutiny of health and adult social care services.

Key areas of activity:

• Ageing Well in Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire's ageing population presents a significant challenge for the council and its partners. The committee received a detailed presentation led by the Director of Public Health on the joint approach being taken to develop a strategy for Ageing Well in Gloucestershire.

A huge amount of work has been invested in understanding the key issues and risks relating to the needs of older people in Gloucestershire. The approach taken by the Total Place project has demonstrated how taking a person centred approach and removing many of the bureaucratic barriers faced by professional staff members can really make a difference.

• Telecare and telehealth

This emerging technology can support both an individual patient to remain independent in their own home, and health and adult care services to manage staff and budgets effectively and efficiently. If achievable, this dovetails with the drive to help more people to stay in their homes, and

to receive early intervention before presenting to the acute services. National government also endorses this approach. The committee heard that feedback from patients is positive as this technology is enabling them to maintain their independence. As the projects progress the committee will receive updates to determine whether the predicted benefits and savings are being realised.

• External care packages

Following concern expressed regarding the cost of external care packages, the committee set up a joint task group with the Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Detailed information on the findings of the task group is provided in section 9.1.

• Gloucestershire Care Services

In line with the Transforming Community Services guidance, NHS Gloucestershire (NHSG) must separate the commissioning and provision of services. The updated NHS Operating Framework 2010/11 issued in July 2010 reinforced this directive. NHSG initially proposed a

community interest company but following a legal challenge will now be advertising for expressions of interest through appropriate channels which will allow NHS bodies, voluntary and third sector organisation as well as private sector providers to come forward. The committee has previously agreed that this is organisational change, not service change and the committee's role is therefore that of critical friend offering constructive support, advice and challenge to NHSG throughout the procurement process.

• Great Western Ambulance Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillors Ron Allen, Terry Hale and Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold District Council) are the council's representatives on this committee. They have continued to hold the Great Western Ambulance Service to account on ambulance response times, particularly in rural areas such as the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean.

• Performance monitoring

The committee receives regular performance monitoring reports relating to adult social care and NHSG performance targets.

Membership

County councillors - Ron Allen, Peter Braidwood, Terry Hale, Stephen McMillan, Christopher Pallet, Mike Skinner, Brian Thornton, Brian Oosthuysen and Gordon Shurmer.

District councillors - Penny Hall (Cheltenham), Sheila Jeffery (Cotswold), Jan Lugg (Gloucester), Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury), Marilyn Smart OBE (Forest of Dean) and Karon Cross (Stroud).

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9.1 External care packages



Task group chairman:
Cllr Chris Pallet

In March 2011, members from the Health, Community and Care Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the reported forecasted overspend of the external care budget for 2010/11 of around £7 million. Following this meeting, a task group was established to consider this budget area to determine whether the actions put in place were sufficient, and to also gain an understanding of how locality funding panels operate.



The task group spoke to a wide range of people involved in this area including council directors and senior managers, the principal auditor and general managers from each locality.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report at the Health, Community and Care Scrutiny Committee on 20 September 2011 and Budget and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 23 September. The findings were presented to the cabinet on 25 November.

Throughout its review the task group continued to monitor the weekly spend of the locality funding panels, and found that five localities were operating within their budgets.

Members felt that this suggested that there had been improvements in the management of this budget area and recognition of the reasons that

had led to overspends in the past. The task group recognised, however, that there was still much work to be done in ensuring that all locality funding panels were operating within budget. Making the changes required would take time but members were confident that the process had begun.

The task group's recommendations are summarised as follows:

- General managers should make their attendance at panel meetings a priority.
- General managers to ensure that local members are kept informed of factors within their localities that impact on service delivery.
- That the enhanced financial management and reporting arrangements continue.
- The good practice in some localities around timely completion of assessments be communicated

to all localities. The 'holding back' of assessments should be strongly discouraged.

- The Commissioning Team work with care providers to renegotiate contracts where possible to ensure flexibility for service users who were previously in high cost residential care
- That the ability to negotiate a rate of care to support service users for a short period of time following discharge from hospital is built into contractual frameworks.
- That there is a clear strategy on the way personal budgets are communicated to service users as well as any other changes to existing packages. Members have a contribution to make to this.
- Work is carried out to establish the best approach to allocating resources around physical disabilities, taking into account the option of a co-ordinated approach.

Task group membership

Councillors Ron Allen, Bill Crowther, Chris Pallet, Mike Skinner and Marilyn Smart OBE (Forest of Dean).

9.2 Utopia hospital project looking at unscheduled care pathways



Task group chairman:
Cllr Ron Allen

UTOPIA stands for unscheduled treatment of patients in acute care. It was a project developed by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to improve the service received by patients experiencing the unscheduled care pathway at Cheltenham General Hospital and Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.



The task group was established because the Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that it was important to understand the principles and predicted outcomes underlying the UTOPIA project.

The task group spoke to a wide range of people including those people managing the project, those involved in delivering primary care, representatives from the Royal College of Nursing and the Great Western Ambulance Service. The task group also received information from GPs through email and letter.

Key findings and recommendations:

The task group published its final report at the Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2011. The recommendations made by the task group are as follows:

- That Gloucestershire Care Services provide six monthly update reports to the committee to demonstrate performance against expected outcomes.
- That NHS Gloucestershire continue to communicate to the general public the alternative to attendance at the emergency department.
- That the hospitals trust continues to work closely with GPs in order to ensure that GP concerns and issues are responded to.
- That the hospitals trust and Great Western Ambulance Service continue to work towards achieving a reduction in ambulance handover times.
- That the learning outcomes from the UTOPIA project are embedded into future projects undertaken by the hospitals trust.
- That follow up 'enter and view' visits are undertaken

by Gloucestershire LINK at the hospitals to monitor the unscheduled care pathway.

- That the outcome and response to these visits be shared with the committee.
- That the hospitals trust ensure that there are suitable ongoing communication channels available to staff to enable them to raise any concerns and put forward ideas for improving the care pathway process.
- That the hospitals trust submit performance reports to the committee on those indicators related to unscheduled care including a description of actions being taken to address concerns.
- That Great Western Ambulance Service submit six monthly performance reports on ambulance handover times. This report should include comparative data from across the GWAS region.

Task group membership

County councillors - Ron Allen, Terry Hale and Chris Pallet.

District councillors - Ray Apperley (Stroud), Shelia Jeffery (Cotswold) and Margaret Ogden (Tewkesbury).

10. What's coming up?

Scrutiny 2012-13



2012-13 will be another challenging year for overview and scrutiny.

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

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

Budget and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutinising the budget setting process including public consultation
- Performance monitoring
- 'Meeting the Challenge' programme
- Customer experience
- Procurement
- Asset management.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Home to school transport
- The role of the local education authority in relation to academies
- Adoption process
- Safeguarding.

Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Preparing for the police and crime panel
- Coroners' and mortuary programme
- Police contract
- Civil protection
- Private finance initiative for community fire stations and 'Skillzone'.

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Highways contract
- 'Big Community Offer' aspects of the transport asset management plan
- Waste management including the residual waste project
- Planning enforcement
- Flood risk management strategy.

Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- NHS cash release efficiency savings
- Health service reforms including the formation of GP consortia and health and wellbeing boards
- Gloucestershire Care Services
- Integration of the adult social care and health workforce.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

- Monitoring scrutiny task group recommendations after 6, 12 and 18 months
- Reviewing the overview and scrutiny structure in readiness for the new council in May 2013
- Monitoring the activities of Gloucestershire First, the county's economic development partnership
- Considering the impact of the Localism Bill.



11. Contacts



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“The Severn Estuary Scrutiny Task Group led by non-executive councillors is an excellent example of how the scrutiny process can reflect the views and concerns of local people. Evidence was taken from stakeholders on one day and the recommendations have resulted in the Environment Agency adopting a new approach.

The value of non-executives in undertaking this type of work should not be underestimated. This type of activity will become increasingly important as the localism agenda moves forward.”

Clr Will Windsor Clive,
Cabinet Member for Communities at Gloucestershire County Council
