



REPORT 7

**Draft for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
2nd September 2009**

Scrutiny Boards' Annual Report to the City Council 2008/2009

To be considered at the City Council meeting
on 15th September, 2009

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Foreword



In my role as the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, I am pleased to report that the Council's Scrutiny function continued to make progress during 2008/09.

This report provides an overview of Scrutiny activity during the past municipal year, demonstrating the useful work done by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and the Scrutiny Boards. The Audit Sub-Group of Scrutiny Board 1 (which reports separately to the Council on its work) has also continued to develop during its third year and will become a stand alone committee in 2009/10.

During the year, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has taken a stronger co-ordinating role in the development of Scrutiny, introducing an improvement plan and taking more oversight of the whole work programme. These developments have helped to ensure that the efforts of scrutiny are focussed on priority issues and we are continuing this approach into 2009/10 through the introduction of a more rigorous approach to scoping planned work. This will help us use our time as effectively as possible will challenge us to increase opportunities for more service users and local people to engage with the scrutiny process.

We have begun to take up some of the opportunities presented by national developments in scrutiny, receiving our first progress report on the Local Area Agreement, which is helping us to extend our role to some of the work that the Council carries out with our partners, and introducing arrangements for the Councillor Call for Action. These will be further extended during the year as we introduce arrangements for the scrutiny of crime and disorder issues which will broaden our work in a similar way to those already in place for health issues.

Our new improvement plan for the coming year will help us to take all of these issues forward and I am looking forward to working with my Scrutiny colleagues to continue developing Scrutiny in Coventry and ensure that it makes a real difference to the work of the Council, its partners and, of course, the people of Coventry.

Councillor Cliff Ridge
Chair, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Section A - Background

Scrutiny in Coventry

Scrutiny's role is to agree high-quality, relevant recommendations, that are supported by the Executive and partners and lead to measurable service improvements and/or tangible benefits for Coventry residents that would not otherwise have been achieved.

Good public scrutiny has four key features:

- It is relevant to the City Council's plans and priorities, and those of our partners
- It reflects the concerns of the public, and involves the public in what it is doing
- It is independent, open, takes the initiative and uses available resources well
- It leads to improvements in public services, and helps to secure better value for money from public expenditure

The Structure of Scrutiny

Scrutiny in Coventry is carried out by a Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, which has overall responsibility for the work of the scrutiny function, and four Scrutiny Boards, each with a remit relating to Cabinet Member Portfolios.

A chart showing the scrutiny structure in 2008/2009 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Scrutiny functions and powers

The Council's Constitution defines the functions and powers of Scrutiny as follows:

Functions

- Assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options
- Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options
- Question members of the Cabinet and/or other Committees/Forums and Chief Officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area
- Liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

Powers

- Review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet and/or other Committees/Forums and Council Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time
- Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
- Question members of the Cabinet and/or other Committees/Forums and Council Officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committee/Forum and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process
- Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Board and local people about their activities and performance
- Question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent)
- Conduct scrutiny of health related activity/services within the City

Coventry City Council Constitution, Part 2.6 Articles 2.6.7.1 and 2.6.7.2

The annual report is a requirement of the Constitution:

- "Scrutiny Boards must report annually to inform Council of their work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate".

Coventry City Council Constitution, Part 2.6 Article 2.6.7.5

Section B - the Work of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee



Members: Councillors Arrowsmith, Charley, Clifford, Crookes (Deputy Chair), Duggins, Maton, Mutton, Ridge (Chair)

Co-opted Members for education matters: Mrs. D. Beech, Mrs. S. Hanson, Mrs. R. Hickingbotham, Mr. R. Potter and Mrs. L. Wainscot and 1 vacancy

Councillor Cliff Ridge

1 Remit

In 2008/2009, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee continued to be responsible for the overall management of the Scrutiny function (including call-ins); consideration of cross-cutting issues; and oversight of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance).

2 Chair's Introduction

In 2008/2009 the Committee continued its Scrutiny development work. The Members' Support Services Survey for 2008/2009, carried out in February 2009 and completed by 44 Members (47 in 2007/2008), showed that:

- 70% of respondents considered that Scrutiny was very/fairly effective (an increase from 59% in 2007/2008).
- 86% considered that they were heavily engaged or engaged a fair amount with Scrutiny (an increase from 79% in 2007/2008)
- 49% were very/fairly satisfied with the level of public engagement in Scrutiny (an increase from 44% in 2007/2008)

These results provide evidence of improvement and reflect the progress shown in the Scrutiny Development Action Plan agreed by the Committee in April 2008 and included in last year's Annual Report.

However, the survey results show that there is still room for further development (particularly in the area of public involvement) and in May 2009 the Committee agreed a revised Action Plan, which contains actions aimed at this further improvement (attached as Appendix 2 to this report).

The number of call-ins was the same this year as last (9) and to some extent I am pleased that there wasn't an increase. However, I would have much preferred to see the number reduce, as I have tried to encourage the earlier involvement of Scrutiny in issues (particularly when major policy decisions are required), because I think this is a more effective way to work. During 2009/2010 I intend to propose some changes to call-in procedure, to try to make it more focussed. I do, however, acknowledge that call-ins provide a last resort for Members who feel that some decisions more detailed scrutiny.

3 Activity

As in recent years, although scheduled to meet weekly (to ensure that call-ins could be dealt with as quickly as possible) meetings were cancelled if there were no call-ins or if the amount of business did not warrant a meeting.

Issues considered by the Committee were as follows:-

Scrutiny Management issues:-

Call-ins – 9 were considered during the year (the same as in 2007/2008). One (relating to Belgrade Plaza Phase 3) was referred to Scrutiny Board 3 for detailed consideration.

Work Programmes - At the beginning of the year, the Committee considered all the Boards' work programmes, so that it could satisfy itself that time was being used efficiently and that work was not being duplicated.

Chairs' reports - the Committee continued to receive reports throughout the year from Scrutiny Board Chairs on the progress being made on their Boards' work programmes.

Urgent issues - the Committee received two reports on urgent issues: in both cases before the Cabinet considered them. This is the same number as in 2007/2008 and I am pleased that officers have maintained their improved performance on forward planning.

Annual reports on outside bodies - the Committee continued to receive these reports, which have provided information on the benefits of the Council continuing to make appointments.

Cross-cutting issues:-

Value for Money Partnership - the Committee had a number of concerns about the Partnership and held a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Value for Money to discuss these. The outcomes of this meeting are shown below.

Councillor Call for Action - the Committee considered how to implement the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 relating to this new initiative. It agreed a pilot process which would be reviewed in October 2009.

Government Consultation Documents - as required by the Council's Constitution, the Committee considered reports on responses to a number of consultation documents relating to Local Authority Business Growth Incentives, Members' and Employees' Codes of Conduct, Participatory Budgeting and the Policing White Paper.

Oversight of the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance)

The Committee held a meeting with the Cabinet Member, when it questioned him about the priorities set out in the Cabinet Members' Plans for the year.

Other issues – other issues considered by the Committee were:-

- the results of the Coventry Partnership Household Survey
- the Council's pre-budget situation
- progress in the use of new technology in Culture and Leisure and information on participation levels in activities following the introduction of the new pricing structure
- Grounds Maintenance joint working
- the Regional Spatial Strategy
- the Council's Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy
- Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust - foundation trust application

4 Recommendations

Value for Money Partnership - the Committee made recommendations to the Cabinet Member about strengthening Scrutiny engagement in the work of the Partnership, including a three-monthly Partnership progress report to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

Consultation Documents - the Committee recommended some amendments to the Government Consultation documents relating to Members' and Employees' Codes of Conduct.

5 Outcomes

Value for Money Partnership - the Cabinet Member accepted the Committee's recommendations.

Consultation Documents – the Cabinet accepted the Committee's recommendations.

Section C - the Work of Scrutiny Board 1



Members: Councillors Arrowsmith (Chair), Charley, Chater, Nellist, O'Neill, Skipper, Smith (Deputy Chair) and Townshend

Councillor David Arrowsmith

1 Remit

In 2008/2009, Scrutiny Board 1 was responsible for oversight of the portfolios of the Cabinet Members (Finance and Value for Money) and (Customer, Workforce and Legal Services) and for audit issues.

2 Chair's Introduction

In 2008/2009, the remit of Scrutiny Board 1 related mainly to the Council's support functions (such as Human Resources, Finance, Legal Services and Democratic Services). It also had responsibility for audit issues, although it delegated this to the Audit Sub-Group.

An outline of the Board's work over the last year is shown in the next few paragraphs. We are now looking forward to the challenge of scrutinising some different areas of work: in June 2009 the Council changed the Board's remit to include the Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Cabinet portfolio and to exclude the consideration of audit issues, which has now passed to a "stand-alone" Audit Committee reporting directly to the full Council.

3 Activity

Details of the issues considered during the year are as follows:-

Sickness absence – the Board once again gave its highest priority to helping to improve sickness absence levels, which continued to be disappointing. It considered various aspects on a number of occasions:-

- It held a meeting with the Director of Personnel for the West Midlands Police Force to learn about the Force's attendance incentive scheme, following which the Board set up a task and finish group to examine whether a similar scheme should be introduced in the City Council.
- It held informal meetings with the Head of Older Peoples' Services and the Head of Street Services to discuss why the levels of sickness absence in those service areas were particularly high and what action was being taken to improve them.

- It considered the quarterly monitoring reports made to Cabinet.
- It considered information provided by Whitefriars about how that organisation dealt with sickness absence. The Board noted that, although Whitefriars' level of sickness absence was relatively low, this was influenced by the overall "Whitefriars culture" which helps to maintain staff morale. The Board considered that it was easier to achieve this with a relatively small workforce than with a very large organisation like the City Council.

One-Stop Shops – the Board visited some of the Council's one-stops shops (including one based in Tile Hill Library) to see the service provided and talk to staff about their experiences. It then set up a task and finish group to consider options for the future of this service.

Workforce profile - the Board considered the Cabinet report giving information on the annual workforce profile, together with additional information relating to the situation in other authorities and more detailed statistics about Directorates. It asked for more information about unemployment issues and the employment of part-time employees, which was considered at its next meeting.

Contract with Tribal Resourcing for Advertising and Associated Services - the Board considered a position statement on this contract, which had recently been renewed. There had been problems in the past in recruiting senior staff and the Board was reassured that new processes had been put in place aimed at improving this area.

Use of Agency Workers (Contract with Commensura) – the Board considered a report showing that in 2007/2008 the use of agency workers had reduced, giving savings of £112,552, against a target of £90,000. However, the Board endorsed the view of the Management Board that the use of agency workers was still too high. It asked for additional information from each directorate (which it considered at a subsequent meeting) on the main reasons for the use of agency workers and the action taken to reduce this.

Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery and Enforcement - the Board was given a presentation on the improvements made to the arrangements for collecting Council Tax and Business Rates. This included an update on the operation of the guidelines for bailiffs and on joint working with local advice centres. The Board was pleased to see that the improvements had resulted in a better service for customers, particularly those in difficult circumstances, and improved collection rates.

Impact of the Banking Crisis - the Board asked for a briefing note on the current financial crisis and its effects on the Council. The Board were satisfied that the Council's Treasury Management work had been prudent in the past and that this was continuing for the future.

Progress reports – the Board considered progress reports on the following:-

- Housing Benefits Improvement Plan (quarterly reports)
- ICT Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Equality of Opportunity
- Legal Services Restructure

Audit Work - in June 2008/2009 the Board again appointed an Audit Sub-Group to carry out its audit responsibilities (relating to both internal and external audit issues). The Audit Sub-Group will report separately to the Council on its work. As mentioned above, from 2009/2010 audit work will be done by the Audit Committee.

4 Recommendations

Sickness absence – the task and finish group recommended that the Cabinet Member (Customer and Workforce Services) should not, for number of reasons, introduce an attendance incentive scheme. However, it also recommended that she set up a pilot scheme whereby staff in two service areas report in sick through a qualified and experienced nurse (employed by an outside specialist company), rather than through their manager or work base.

One-Stop Shops – the task and finish group made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet (as part of the consultation process on this issue) on the future provision of one-stop shops in the Stoke Aldermoor Neighbourhood Management office, Tile Hill and Bell Green Libraries and the Coventry Direct Express Bus.

Use of Agency Workers (Contract with Commensura) – the Board made recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Customer, Workforce and Legal Services) about ensuring that the use of agency workers was closely monitored.

5 Outcomes

Sickness absence – the Cabinet Member agreed the recommendations of the task and finish group and a pilot scheme is now being set up.

One-Stop Shops – the Cabinet's decisions on future provision agreed with those of the Board in relation to Stoke Aldermoor and the Coventry Direct Express Bus, but not with those in relation to the two libraries.

Use of Agency Workers (Contract with Commensura) – the Cabinet Member agreed with the Board's recommendations.

Section D – the Work of Scrutiny Board 2



Councillor Gary Crookes

Members: Councillors Andrews, Asif, Auluck, Crookes (Chair), Field (Deputy Chair), Kelsey, Lapsa, Mrs M. Mutton.

Co-opted Members for education matters: Mrs. D. Beech, Mrs. S. Hanson, Mrs R. Hickingbotham, Mr. R. Potter and Mrs. L. Wainscot

1 Remit

In 2008/2009, Scrutiny Board 2 was responsible for oversight of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People).

2 Chair's introduction

This was my first year as Chair of Scrutiny Board 2 and with the continuing importance of improving outcomes for children and young people, the Board's work has focused on an improvement and policy development agenda.

Both nationally and locally the profile of children's social care services has been very high. The tragic case of Baby Peter in Haringey has placed close attention on the safeguarding of children. At the beginning of the 2008/09 year I decided to instigate bi-annual Scrutiny Board meetings on the topic of Safeguarding in response to the outcomes of external assessment of safeguarding in Coventry. These meetings brought together the different agencies involved in safeguarding children and enabled the Board to gain a clear understanding of the challenges in this area. These will continue into the 2009/10 year.

We were very pleased to be asked to contribute to work on revising the Council's children's transport policy, however it has been a concern that this work has been delayed due to circumstances outside our control. Other work the department has suggested, for example on Performing Arts was completed more promptly.

3 Activity

Further details of the issues considered by the Board over the year are as follows:

As in previous years the Board utilised **the Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People) 2008/09 Portfolio Priorities** document to provide an overview of the major issues affecting the Directorate during the year. The **Performance Review of Local Area Agreement Indicators** also gave the Board an assessment of progress in delivering important educational and social care outcomes for Coventry's children and young people.

Safeguarding – the Board met with Coventry Safeguarding Children's Board to receive an introduction to issues around safeguarding and to receive a presentation of their 2008-2009 Business Plan and key achievements 2007-2008. A later meeting was held to specifically discuss inter-agency co-operation and progress a number of issues raised in external inspection reports.

Aiming High for Disabled Children is an important driver for improving social care and educational services for young people with learning and or physical disabilities. The Board received a full presentation on this agenda and the various steps being taken in Coventry to achieve better outcomes for our young people. In particular the Board chose to focus some further work on **transition for young people with additional support needs**. Later in the year the Board met with Connexions to question them on arrangements for personal advisor support for special needs pupils.

Corporate Parenting and Care Matters for Coventry – Scrutiny Board 2 has maintained an historic interest in promoting the interests of the City's looked after population. The Board held a dedicated meeting focusing on issues surrounding the care of these children including discussion on educational attainment, accommodation and wider support services. The Board was also pleased to meet with a senior executive from Northern Care to discuss the City Council contract with them and continuing progress in accommodating children locally.

The **Review of Service Provision for Children Looked After in Coventry** has resolved to establish a new assessment and intensive intervention centre for young people entering care in Coventry, to replace Wisteria Lodge. This has the Board's full support. Additionally the Board arranged visits to both City Council and Northern Care Children's Homes. These should become an annual round of visits.

Respect Yourself Strategy Update – the Board was briefed on the developing strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy in the City. An issue which continues to be a significant challenge to both the local authority and NHS Coventry.

Value for Money review of Children's Transport – In response to a request by the Cabinet Member the Board established a cross party Scrutiny Review Group to look into this issue. Budgets have for several years been overspent and officers are working with the Review Group on a revised policy for the City.

Planning for Growth in Pupil Places – the Board questioned officers on plans to accommodate the growing population of young people due in part to the newly arrived communities in the City.

Disestablishment of the Children and Families Education Service – The establishment of multi-disciplinary teams has necessitated a review of other childcare support activities. The Board scrutinised proposals to disestablish this service and made representations to Cabinet regarding consultation.

Snowline – The Board reviewed the initial operations of the Snowline programme utilised by schools to notify parents and the media of emergency school closures.

The Board concluded the year by offering advice to the Cabinet Member on the way the City Council supports **performing arts activities** for young people in the City.

4 Recommendations

In September, in response to a report back on the visit to The Grange, the Board referred concerns regarding repairs and maintenance issues and the responses and costing of Building Services to Scrutiny Board 3. This was subsequently investigated by Scrutiny Board 3 and explanations were provided for some of the costs incurred by the home.

The Board considered various proposals to improve the role of corporate Parenting within the Council. These were supported by the Board and Cabinet were advised accordingly together with some additional comments.

The Board requested that officers present regular reports to all councillors on the progress of the "Respect Yourself" strategy, which co-ordinates work in the City on teenage pregnancy.

The Board expressed concern that stakeholders, service users and parents had not been consulted adequately on the proposals to disestablish the Children and Families Education Service, and about proposals for future service provision.

Following consideration of the arrangements to support young people with moderate learning difficulties into employment the Board passed on to Connexions a number of concerns regarding the support for this client group.

In considering the reduced grant available to the Performing Arts Service the Board provided detailed feedback regarding the priority for available expenditure.

5 Outcomes

Building Schools for the Future – the Board and its Review Group continue to make a considerable contribution to the development of this project, acting as a wider member interface to the developing project, and advising officers accordingly.

Children's Transport Review - the Board's Review Group has worked with officers to unpick some of the issues contained in the Value for Money Report. Working with the support of City Services, Foster Carers representatives and social work staff the Board have made progress in developing a new policy for children's transport in the City. Members will be considering various options for re-focusing the Council's transport policies before reporting back to Scrutiny Board 2, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and Cabinet.

The Board continues to take an interest in the short breaks offered to children with moderate/complex physical and learning disabilities. Developing from this one of the major work programme items for the Board this year is the transition of young people receiving children's specialist services into adult services. The Board has received a very positive report from the Head of Children's Specialist Services and the Head of Adults' Services detailing the developing joint working in this area. In fact the Board has chosen to focus on the needs of young people with less severe needs who generally do not meet the eligibility criteria for adults' services. The Board meeting with Connexions reflected well on the work being undertaken to ensure that the needs of disabled young people are being met in the City.

In holding a special meeting to scrutinise the work of the **Coventry Safeguarding Children Board** the Board sought to focus on a priority area for Children's Services in the City and the Board brought together colleagues from West Midlands Police, Coventry Primary Care Trust and the voluntary sector to investigate the various efforts under way to protect Coventry's children and young people. The meeting provided a good opportunity for Members to see first hand the excellent partnership working being undertaken by the different agencies and question them on the various outcomes from this work.

The Board followed the initial meeting up by requested further detailed information be provided at the next Safeguarding meeting relating to Common Assessment Framework training, the introduction of a new Police ICT system and issues relating to interagency intervention thresholds.

The Boards comments on **Corporate Parenting** were endorsed by the Cabinet.

The **Respect Yourself Strategy** was seen as playing an effective role in co-ordinating work on teenage pregnancy in Coventry, both in the preventative agenda and in the support for teenage parents. The Board has asked for feedback from officers on a meeting with the National Support Team, and for the latest statistics when these are available.

Discussion at the January meeting of the Board centred on **Looked After Children (LAC)** and various current issues regarding their care and support. The Board was pleased by recent improvements in the educational achievements of LAC, and Members were very interested in the establishment of an assessment centre to replace Wisteria Lodge. The Board also met with Northern Care, the Council's long-term private sector provider of small family-sized accommodation for LAC. Northern Care were very open to dialogue with City Councillors about the care of the children accommodated with them and the Board will shortly be undertaking a series of visits to Northern Care homes which other Members can take part in if they wish.

Discussions on **Early Years** developments were complex and of particular importance given the current agenda of change and service re-configuration in this area. The Board have requested further information regarding the development of the Early Years Funding Formula, how the extended entitlement to 15 hours per week is to be managed and how the move from City Council provision to school managed services is to be introduced.

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee requested the Board to follow up on the implementation of changes to **youth service provision** in the City. This meeting explored the way young people had been involved in planning the shape of new service provision and gave an update on progress in this work.

The reduced provision of **Performing Arts subsidy** was discussed fully and the Board agreed with officers a revised series of priorities to emphasise the importance of work with children, particularly to progress in the use of an instrument and for example to develop to participate in the Youth Orchestra. The Board also recommended wider integration of other community or private sector activity in the City and the potential for sponsorship.

Section E – the Work of Scrutiny Board 3



Councillor Cliff Ridge

Members: Councillors Adalat, Andrews, Bains (Deputy Chair), Khan, Lucas, Mulhall, Reece, Ridge (Chair) and Waters

1 Remit

In 2008/9 Scrutiny Board 3 was responsible for scrutiny of the City Development, City Services and Climate Change, Housing & Sustainability Portfolios.

2 Chair's Introduction

Scrutiny Board 3 has continued to develop its role as a key part of the policy development process in the council over the last year. In line with my work as Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee I have been pleased to see the Board engaging in detailed pre-decision scrutiny on issues of significance to the City and importance to the City Council.

Significant time spent on issues such as the development of a Municipal Waste Strategy and the City Centre Masterplan enrich policy development, widen participation by elected Members and improve outcomes for Coventry. Transparency is improved and a better understanding of complex issues can be reached by earlier engagement, and the Board has built on its work in previous years by playing a leading role in conjunction with Cabinet Members on these key topics, as well as dealing with the many other issues which arise during the year.

3 Activity

Details of the issues considered during the year are as follows:-

Commercial Property issues appeared on a number of agendas during the year. The Board had a role in the scrutiny of the property disposal strategy during the 2007/08 year and monitored progress on the implementation of this. The Board established that further work would be appropriate on developing an asset management strategy and the establishment of a set of performance criteria, which will be undertaken during 2009/10.

Coventry Best4Business - A meeting was held with Coventry Best4Business, the Citywide Business Improvement District (BID) Company. At this meeting the Board explored concerns raised through a challenge which had been made with regards to the legality of the ballot which established the company. They also discussed with the BID Company their proposed timetable for delivering services to local businesses.

Municipal Waste Strategy - During 2008/09 the Council completed work on the new Municipal Waste Strategy. This Strategy sets the context of how the Council will manage the domestic waste produced by Coventry households, and included details of a new regime of recycling for Coventry homes.

Project Transform - Associated with the development of a Waste Strategy, the Council also entered into partnership arrangements with Warwickshire County Council and current partners Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to procure a replacement for the current Energy from Waste Plant located on London Road. Project Transform is intended to produce a new plant which will dispose of the City's waste and generate energy and potentially a district heating system whilst maintaining the highest environmental standards.

Empty Property Strategy - The Board considered several issues relating to the Council's housing responsibilities. Officers reported on the Empty Property Strategy as well as supplying Members with information regarding a bench-marking exercise carried out around support for the homeless. The Board also asked officers to report on performance targets for the delivery of affordable homes and net additional homes built in the City.

The **Local Development Framework Core Strategy** was also an issue of interest to the Board and a special session was held to enable Members to participate in discussions about this evolving Strategy, which will seek to establish the shape of development in the city over the coming years.

City Centre Master Plan - Following a major public consultation exercise the Council established a City Centre Master Plan, supported by the appointed architects, the Jerde Partnership. This sets the blueprint for the future re-development of the City Centre.

Car Parking Strategy - An important part of how the City Centre works is the availability of car parking and Scrutiny Board 3 supported officers in reviewing the priorities for a new Car Parking Strategy for the City Centre.

Traffic Management Act 2004 - The Board continued to monitor the implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004, including discussion on the development of a Network Management Plan, the Traffic Management Centre and the utilisation of parking enforcement powers under this legislation.

Parking on Grass Verges - Following on from concerns about parking on grass verges in some parts of the City the Board established a sub group to establish some new policy guidelines for the protection of grass verges and for establishing circumstances in which additional parking might be created.

Air Quality Management Area - As parts of efforts to improve environmental quality in Coventry the Board considered plans for the establishment of a citywide Air Quality Management Area, as opposed to previous policy that identified hot spots areas.

Climate Change Strategy - The Board reviewed the progress in the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy.

4 Recommendations

Eco-towns - Following consideration of a report regarding the government consultation on Eco-towns, the Board decided to make a detailed recommendation seeking to strengthen the Council's response. This centred on concerns that the development of Eco-towns would weaken wider regeneration and economic development activity. The Board held that Government should focus investment on existing urban areas where an amount of infrastructure was already in place rather than diffusing investment and creating other problems like congestion by developing the Eco-town model. Cabinet agreed the suggested response of the Scrutiny Board.

Draft Municipal Waste Strategy – Following a special meeting to consider the Draft Municipal Waste Strategy, the Board chose to make recommendations to Cabinet expressing strong support for the Strategy, although they sought to make improvements to the public consultation exercise which was due to commence. The Board felt that the summary document would benefit from the addition of some comparative data showing the levels of recycling performance by our European partners. Cabinet agreed the Board's suggested amendments.

Project Transform - Members considered the proposed submission of an Outline Business Case for PFI credits to procure a replacement Energy from Waste facility for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. In concluding a considerable amount of scrutiny work the Board chose to unanimously support the proposed submission, being mindful that exact site location, technology choice and a number of other detailed issues would be the subject of further work by 'Project Transform' which would be reported to the Board.

'Transforming Lives' - Members considered a retrospective response to the Government consultation paper "Transforming Lives" which the Board endorsed and advised Cabinet accordingly.

Parking Strategy - The Board has recently taken part in the development of the Parking Strategy and forwarded comments to officers following deliberations their meeting. These will be followed up when a formal proposal for Cabinet is prepared later in the municipal year.

Belgrade Plaza – following consideration of a call-in regarding a decision by the Cabinet Member (City Development) on an issue relating to the Belgrade Plaza development, the Board made a number of recommendations regarding the application of a development agreement and various mitigations that might be put in place should a student development go ahead.

City Centre Masterplan - Members recommended that a cross-party working group be established to drive the plan forward.

5 Outcomes

Empty Property Strategy - The Board has invested considerable time to Housing issues, considering reports on the Empty Property Strategy, Homelessness Benchmarking and Coventry Homefinder. The various efforts of Housing Officers in seeking to ensure a satisfactory supply of affordable housing in the City have been supported, as have efforts to become involved in the private sector by intervening to bring Empty Homes back into use. Following consideration of the most recent report

on Homefinder, Members agreed various amendments to the scheme, however in response to a number of queries regarding the housing needs of young people asked for a further meeting to be convened with social housing organisations and Children's Services to follow up these concerns.

Schools Road Safety Audit - Work on a road safety audit outside Coventry Primary schools has continued from the last municipal year. As a result of the Board's work, safety features outside each school have been mapped and various schools were found to require additional features to be introduced to ensure young people are protected. The Board has been delighted to see this work carried out by City Services officers in a timely fashion.

Waste Strategy - Reducing waste, increasing recycling and the various efforts to make Coventry's Waste Strategy as effective as possible has been a recurring theme over recent months. The Board has concluded a number of site visits, viewing potential technologies and gaining ideas of how the development of a new energy from waste plant in the City might progress. The Board has provided a considerable amount of feedback to Waste Services officers, supporting them in this important area of policy development.

Coventry Best4Business - In response to concerns raised locally about the Coventry Citywide BID, the Board met with the organisation's Chief Executive. The Board concluded that the ballot and the process around establishing the BID had been properly arranged.

City Centre Master Plan - Whilst the publication of the Jerde Partnership Master plan has rightly dominated the headlines the Board has been concerned with more modest but equally important policy work. The Car Parking Strategy has to be successful to ensure that the maximum benefit is obtained from a thriving City Centre. Retail, Leisure, Housing and Commercial uses all compete in the City Centre and have conflicting priorities. The Board hope to assist City Development officers further in the continuing development of this policy. In order to ensure that a policy is effective it is also important that the Council has a robust and efficient parking enforcement function. The Board has engaged with City Services officers on ensuring that the development of this operational area is successful.

Traffic Management Act 2004 - In considering the implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004 the Board noticed that there were a number of pieces of work still to be completed for the Council to draw down all of the powers in this legislation. It requested some further information regarding the Network Management Plan and an update on the delivery of the Urban Traffic Management Control Centre.

Air Quality Management - The Board has broadly supported the concept of a citywide Air Quality Management Area, and is awaiting formal consultation on a proposal to this effect and further analysis of the recent efforts to improve air quality in specific locations in the City.

Climate Change Strategy - The Board considered a progress report on the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy, which prompted much debate and also acted to inform future work programme items. In particular, the Board requested further information regarding the Council's own efforts to promote green travel to staff.

Municipal Waste Strategy - The key issues from the consultation on the Municipal Waste Strategy for the City generated a number of debates, most specific of which was regarding co-mingling or kerbside sorting of waste. A number of groups had submitted criticism of the Council's plan for co-mingling recyclates. The Board concluded after a thorough discussion with officers that the Council's plan for co-mingling was sound, given the potential increase in recycling levels this might achieve.

Local Area Agreement - The Board carefully scrutinised two targets contained within the Local Area Agreement. These related to the current difficulties in the housing market, and whilst one (affordable housing units delivered) was showing green, i.e. on course to be achieved, both were actually a cause for concern due to the slow down in the housing market. The Board has requested further information from housing officers on the work being undertaken to secure the occupation of several completed, but unsold, developments in the City.

Core Strategy - Following a request from the Cabinet Member (City Development) the Board decided to set up a Core Strategy Consultation Group to assist officers in developing the Core Strategy document, prior to it being considered by Council.

Belgrade Plaza - Following consideration of the Belgrade Plaza call-in, City Development agreed with the Board that Development Agreements for major developments in the City would be discussed with the Scrutiny Board in the development stage, to enable a discussion on what might be included, to protect the emphasis of developments agreed by the Council.

Ironmonger Row / City Centre Masterplanning / Car Parking Strategy – Development of the City Centre continues to be an area of policy development work in which the Board engages. In particular, plans to develop Ironmonger Row have been improved and encouraged by the Board. In general the Board continues to work with City Development officers in acting as a sounding Board for the development of key policy to move the City forward.

Traffic Management / Urban Traffic Management Control - Plans to introduce Bus Lane Camera Enforcement have been scrutinised and improved by the Board, and Members have made specific commitments to engage in further policy development work in this important area.

Government Consultations – The Board continue to engage in responses to important Government consultation documents. In a number of instances the Board input has been important in improving Council responses to consultation such as the revisions to the Licensing Act, the Planning White Paper and plans to provide incentives for recycling.

Section F – the Work of Scrutiny Board 4



Members: Councillors Adalat (Deputy Chair). Clifford (Chair), Gazey, O'Boyle, Ruane, Sweet, Waters and Waters.

Co-opted Member (Coventry LINK): D. Spurgeon.

Councillor Joe Clifford

1 Remit

In 2007/2008 Scrutiny Board 4 was responsible for oversight of the portfolios of the Cabinet Members (Community Services), (Culture, Leisure and Libraries) and (Neighbourhoods and Community Safety) and for external Health scrutiny.

2 Chair's Introduction

The Scrutiny Board has continued to make solid progress during 2008/09.

The Board once again took its place at the heart of many important issues relating to health service policy and service development. Examples of this include the establishment of three new general practices in areas with high health needs, and the exciting new development of a City Centre Health Facility. The Board has established a review of the experiences of people with physical and sensory impairments in hospital and after discharge, to be completed in conjunction with our NHS partners, building on the significant progress made in previous years. I would like to take this opportunity, as I have done before, to pay particular thanks to the user researchers, and colleagues at NHS Coventry and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, for making these reviews happen.

The Board's scope during 2008/09 was very wide, and it proved challenging to cover all the issues and service areas that everyone might see as important. It was again difficult for the Board to engage fully in work across all three of the Cabinet Member portfolios within its remit, given the amount of external health scrutiny the Board was required to undertake. The list of topics covered shows that the Board looked at a range of issues relating to all three. Writing this as I do following the last Annual Meeting of the Council I am pleased that it has been recognised that the remit of the Board was simply too broad to do justice to all the issues last year. Whilst I would prefer there to be an additional scrutiny board to cope with the full range of work required of scrutiny, I am pleased that Scrutiny Board 4's remit has been refined to concentrate on adult social care and health scrutiny.

With changes in the support to the Board during this year there were some constraints on capacity for the Board, however I am pleased with the progress we continue to make. With the impending applications for Foundation Trust Status by all of the Trusts serving Coventry and a series of new developments in local health care this looks like being a very exciting year.

3 Activity

Scrutiny Board 4 retains its responsibility for the overview and scrutiny of health services in accordance with section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006.

The Board held twelve public meetings. These included question and answer sessions with Cabinet Members (Community Safety; Culture, Leisure and Libraries; Neighbourhoods and Community Safety), the Director of Public Health, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust (NHS Coventry), University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW), Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT), and West Midlands Strategic Health Authority (NHS West Midlands).

The Board considered the following issues:

Culture, Leisure and Libraries:

- Audit Commission Inspection Report on Cultural Services in Coventry
- Review of Library Opening Hours in Coventry
- Update on Library ICT issues
- Green Space Strategy
- Allesley Park Walled Garden
- Physical Activity Strategy

Adult Social Care:

- Cabinet Member (Community Services) portfolio priorities and question and answer session.
- Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board (Annual Report)
- Report of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) – Independence, Wellbeing and Choice
- The development of services for Older People
- Proposals for increasing charges for non-residential adult social care services
- Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

Neighbourhood Working and Community Safety:

- Neighbourhood Wardens Review and operational improvements
- Council Support to Community Associations and Community Centres
- The future of drug and alcohol treatment services
- Ward Forums review
- Coventry Community Safety Plan 2008-11
- Coventry Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Health Services:

- The experiences of older people with physical and sensory impairment in hospital and after discharge (this issue also falls within the Adult Social Care portfolio)
- Dementia
- The financial position of University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
- Proposals for three new General Practices in Coventry
- Annual Report of the Joint Director of Public Health
- Coventry Local Area Agreement (LAA) Health Indicators (includes Adult Social Care)
- Relocation of Learning Disability and Mental Health Services from Coventry & Warwick Hospital

Officers and members participated in the County Council and Unitary Councils Network, the Regional Health Scrutiny Chairs Network, the West Midlands Local Government Association, the Centre for Public Scrutiny, Democratic Health Network, Coventry and Warwickshire Overview and Scrutiny Officers Network, and the Socialist Health Association.

4 Recommendations

Library Opening Hours - After careful consideration of the proposals to amend Library Opening Hours the Board accepted that the proposed changes to library opening hours were likely to produce savings of the order required and made recommendations about evening opening hours and community use and improving the serviceability and replacement programme for public access terminals. The Board also complimented the consultation process and recommended that Cabinet use the consultation as a model of good practice to inform subsequent service development proposals.

Neighbourhood Wardens Review and Operational Changes - The Board agreed recommendations related to the consultation process and the overall number of wardens recommended to be trained. This item was included in the Boards agenda on a number of occasions, and eventually resulted in a call-in to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

Review of Allesley Hall Walled Garden - The Board made recommendations to the Cabinet Member regarding the process for making decisions about sites such as this, and the overall objectives of the Council in leasing this site out to community groups. This issue was subject to a call-in to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee following consideration by the Cabinet Member.

Proposals for three new General Practices in Coventry - The Board concluded that the consultation was adequate and that the proposals were in the interest of health services in Coventry, although unusually the Board divided on the report. Recommendations related to:

- Training and provider standards
- Co-location of pharmacy services
- The locations of the new practices
- Joint working between primary and secondary care.

Consultation Response to Proposals for Increasing Charges for Non-residential Social Care Services

In making representations to Cabinet on these proposed charge increases the Board:

- Did not support the introduction of increased charges
- Noted that some charges were being increased by as much as 40%
- Questioned whether the consultation process was flawed by the results of the review being pre-determined by City Council financial decisions taken before the end of the consultation period.

5 Outcomes

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) - Coventry's LINK is hosted by Voluntary Action Coventry and the Board has begun to develop a close working relationship with them to better assist in overview and scrutiny of local NHS Services. To ensure that the LINK and the Council are able to communicate well the Board invited the LINK to nominate a representative to sit on the Board as a co-opted member and Mr David Spurgeon has contributed fully to the work of the Board and this continuing co-operation.

Proposals for new three general practices in Coventry - As a result of the Board's recommendations, NHS Coventry has: confirmed the training and qualification standards required from service providers; provided additional information about the location of new practices; and taken positive steps to ensure close working between the new practices and the acute sector.

Neighbourhood Wardens Service Improvements - As a result of the Board's recommendations, Cabinet deferred consideration of the proposals to allow time for consultation with stakeholders.

Dementia - As a result of a dementia seminar held on 2 October, work is underway to improve planning and provision of services for people with dementia in Coventry, and it is likely that this issue will form part of the Board's 2009/10 work plan.

Increased profile - Officers from the Council and PCT have been invited to speak at conferences and seminars organised by The Local Government Chronicle, NHS East Midlands, and The National Pharmacy Association to share good practice from the review of older people's experiences in hospital and after discharge and other work with others involved in scrutiny.

Review of Library Opening Hours – Following the Board's raising of IT support for public access terminals in libraries, prompt management action was taken to improve availability. Further in relation to library opening hours, the Cabinet took account of the recommendations made by the Board, noting that those connected with ICT would be addressed separately by officers and reported back to the Board at later date.

Allesley Hall Walled Garden - The Cabinet Member agreed the Board's recommendations relating to the Council's procedures and adopted one of the four options identified by the Board relating to the future use of the Walled Garden.

CSCI Report - The Board decided to monitor the key areas for improvement identified in the associated action plan.

Relocation of Learning Disability and Mental Health Services from Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital - The Board held a special meeting to discuss with the Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust their plans to relocate some psychological therapy and learning disability services from the Cov & Warwick site. In response to concerns raised at the Learning Disability Partnership Board and by service users the Board questioned these plans and the revised proposals.

The new arrangements were seen to still retain an element of patient choice in regards to where care was accessed, and that eventually these services would be available in the new City Centre health facility. The Board concluded that rationale for the temporary movement of the service was sound and that the eventual relocation to the new health facility would be welcome.

Section G – Support for Scrutiny

1 Budget

- 1.1 The Scrutiny budget (which is held by the Head of Performance and Scrutiny and meets the cost of such things as securing expert advice, paying travel expenses for witnesses to attend meetings, refreshments, publications and conference fees) was £17,344 in 2008/2009, of which £14,626 was spent.
- 1.2 The budget in 2009/2010 is £10,106.

2 Officer Support

- 2.1 The main support for Scrutiny continued to be provided by the three Scrutiny Co-ordinators. Jonathan Jardine left the authority in December 2008 and Victoria Cook took up the vacant post in March 2009.
- 2.2 This was the first full year that the new Performance and Scrutiny Team was in place, combining the Scrutiny Co-ordination Group with Performance and Programme Officers. This was introduced to help improve forward planning and enable Scrutiny Co-ordinators to support earlier Scrutiny engagement in policy development. The Assistant Chief Executive Jos Parry provides Management Board support for Scrutiny and the Head of Performance and Scrutiny Adrian West manages the service.
- 2.3 Support from officers across directorates continued to develop during the year and working arrangements have been strengthened, but this progress needs to be maintained during the coming year.

Section H – Future Development of Scrutiny

1. 1 In 2009/10, the legislative changes introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 to strengthen and broaden local government Overview and Scrutiny will be implemented guidance on how they should be implemented.
- 1.2 The main impacts of these changes are:
 - the requirement for Executives to respond publicly and in writing to Overview and Scrutiny reports;
 - the requirement for external partners to supply information to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in relation to their work in achieving the targets in a Local Area Agreement, and for those partners to "have regard to [an overview and scrutiny] report or recommendation in exercising their functions" in relation to the Local Area Agreement;
 - the requirement for local authorities to designate a crime and disorder scrutiny committee; and
 - enabling individual councillors to place items on the agendas of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to use the process to ensure that the Council responds to matters of concern to local communities (known as the "Councillor call for Action").
- 1.3 Government is also considering further changes to strengthen and broaden overview and scrutiny which we will obviously respond to as required.
1. 4 The introduction of these new areas of work are reflected in the action plan and work programmes agreed by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for 2009/10.
1. 5 The plan sets out a series of actions, many of which have already been introduced. These focus on:
 - Planning and preparing for Scrutiny work/meetings and improving the use of time;
 - Improving support, training and development to everyone involved in Scrutiny;
 - Encouraging more people to get involved in Scrutiny;
 - Measuring the effectiveness of Scrutiny;
 - Improving communications about scrutiny; and
 - Implementing the requirements of recent legislation.
- 1.6 The plan is attached to this report at appendix 2.

Section I – Further Information

If you wish to have a copy of any of the documents referred to in this report, or any other information, please contact any of the following people:

Head of Performance and Scrutiny

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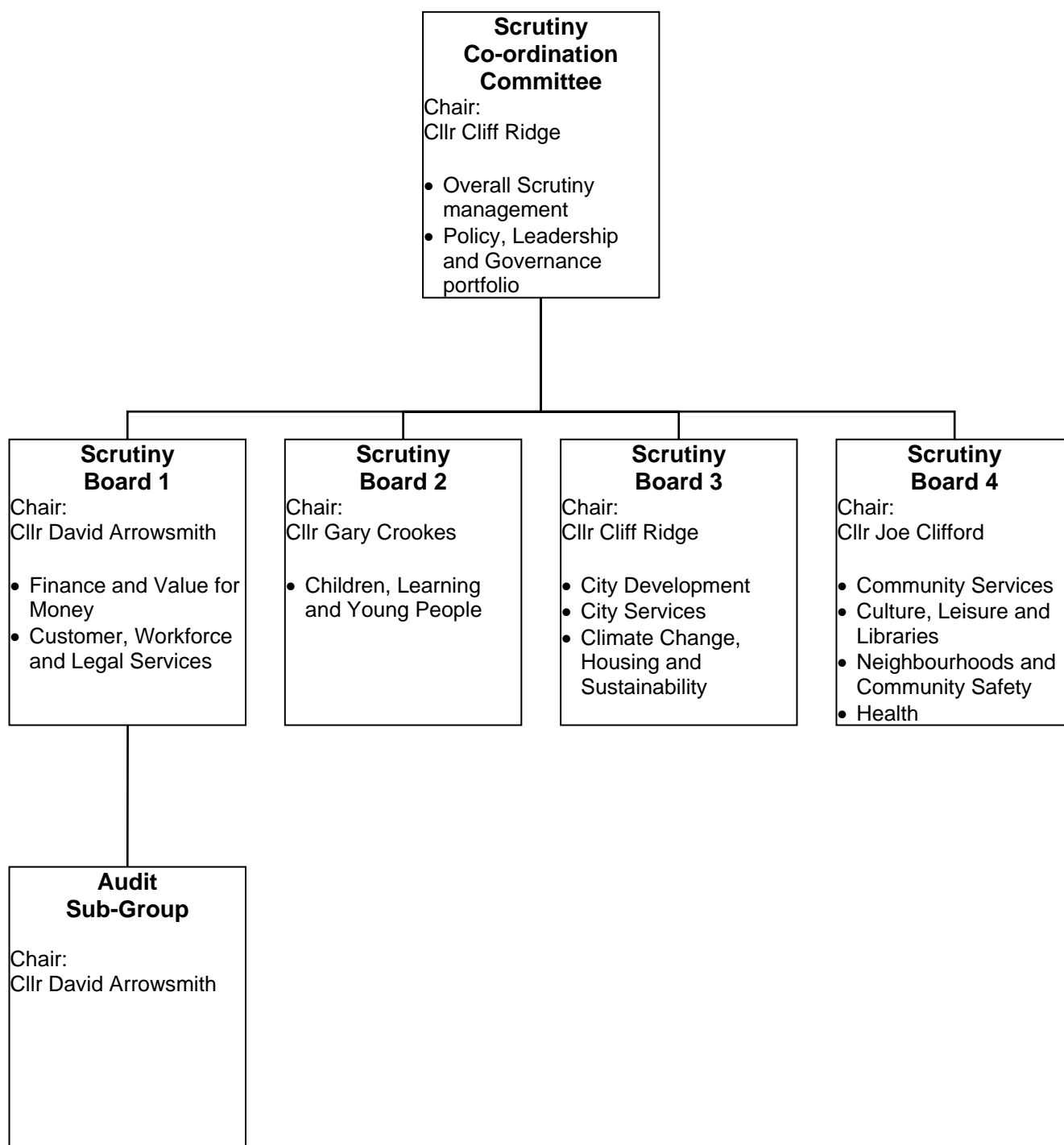
Scrutiny Co-ordinators

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Scrutiny Structure 2008/09



Scrutiny Development: Issues and Actions for 2009/2010 Municipal Year

Vision for Scrutiny: Scrutiny's role is to agree high-quality, relevant recommendations, that are supported by the Executive and partners and lead to measurable service improvements and/or tangible benefits for Coventry residents that would not otherwise have been achieved.

The Issue	Possible Action	Lead Members /Officers	Timescale
<p>1. Planning and Preparing for Scrutiny work/meetings To make the best use of time, proper preparation needs to be carried out. Being clear about the purpose of the piece of work being done and making sure that the right information is prepared is particularly important.</p>	<p>Be more rigorous in applying a structured approach for dealing with Scrutiny work streams (a framework for each piece of work that sets out purpose, expected outcomes etc.)</p>	<p>Chairs/ Scrutiny Co-ordinators</p>	<p>Throughout the year</p>
<p>2. Improving time spent on Scrutiny activity/ in meetings Scrutiny does most of its work through committee style meetings. There are other ways of working that could help make the best use of time and achieve the best outcomes. When a piece of work is being planned we should consider the most appropriate way of working to achieve the outcome.</p>	<p>Be more rigorous in considering the best methods of addressing issues – formal meetings, time limited groups, site visits, engagement of experts/service users/members of the public, use of public and private meetings etc.</p>	<p>Chairs/ Scrutiny Co-ordinators</p>	<p>Throughout year</p>
<p>3. Improving support, training and development to everyone involved in Scrutiny Lots of people from Members, officers, partner organisations and members of the public get involved in Scrutiny. To help make sure that everyone contributes effectively and gets the most out of the experience, we need to provide a range of development and support activities.</p>	<p>Develop Scrutiny Training and Development Plan. To include: Review input to officer induction Review input to Democratic Process training in Corporate Training Plan Review Scrutiny content in Member 1-1's</p>	<p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny Head of Performance and Scrutiny Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Within 12 months Within 12 months Within 12 months</p>

<p>4. Encouraging more people to get involved in Scrutiny If Scrutiny is to have a bigger impact on service users and local residents, we need to increase the opportunities for them to engage with the process.</p>	Use information from the Household Survey and other consultation evidence to shape scrutiny work programme and activity	Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Throughout year
	Use information from Member casework, Ward Forums, Neighbourhood Management etc. to shape Scrutiny work	Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Throughout year
	Whenever relevant, invite members of the public/special interest groups to take part in Scrutiny meetings e.g. by giving information and explaining their views and experiences	Chair/ Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Throughout year
	Involve experts on relevant issues to help inform Scrutiny activity and support decision-making.	Chair/ Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Throughout year
<p>5. Measure the Effectiveness of Scrutiny To help review how much Scrutiny is achieving its objective and to ensure that it is continuously improving, Scrutiny needs its own evaluation process.</p>	Develop mechanisms/criteria for measuring the effectiveness of Scrutiny	Head of Performance and Scrutiny	By December 2009
	Introduce/reintroduce a tracking system for recommendations made by Scrutiny and how they are dealt with (links with issue 7.)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny	By December 2009
<p>6. Communication Planning and improving communications about Scrutiny will help address all of the issues identified above.</p>	Develop a communications plan for Scrutiny (particularly focussing on good practice and positive outcomes) that targets key stakeholders including Elected Members, officers, partners organisations	Head of Performance and Scrutiny	By April 2010

The Issue	Possible Action	Lead Member/Officer	Timescale
<p>7. Implementing requirements of recent and forthcoming legislation (LGPIH, Police and Justice Acts, Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill</p> <p>Making sure arrangements are in place to meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the requirement for Executives to respond to Overview and Scrutiny reports; • the requirement for some external partners to supply information to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and for those partners involved in delivering Local Area Agreement Targets to have regard to the report or recommendations produced by those committees. • the provision for individual councillors to place items on the agendas of Overview and Scrutiny Committees ("Councillor Call for Action") • the provision for a designated Crime and Disorder Committee (Scrutiny Board 1) to scrutinise the Coventry Community Safety Partnership • The requirement to establish a petitions procedure 	<p>Identify and agree process (links with issue 5)</p> <p>Identify and agree process when guidance is published</p> <p>Evaluate pilot arrangements approved in April 2009 and decide how to progress further</p> <p>Identify and agree how this might best be done</p> <p>Identify and agree process when guidance is published</p>	<p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p> <p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p> <p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p> <p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p> <p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Dependant on government timetable</p> <p>Dependant on government timetable</p> <p>By November/ December 2010</p> <p>By September 2009</p> <p>Dependant on government timetable</p>
<p>8. Call-in Procedure (new issue)</p> <p>Propose revisions to reflect recent developments and ensure that all relevant information can be provided for Members</p>	<p>Revise form to require more explicit reasons</p> <p>Propose relevant changes to the Constitution</p>	<p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny /Head of Democratic Services</p> <p>Head of Performance and Scrutiny /Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>By June 2009</p> <p>By October 2010</p>

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