

Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2013/2014

To be considered at the City Council meeting
24 June 2014

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Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/2014

Introduction by Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

The last year has seen many challenges facing local government and these have been felt as much in Coventry as anywhere else.

A quick glance at the scrutiny work programme for the year shows that it reflects the scale and breadth of the issues facing the city and I have been pleased to see how scrutiny has addressed them.

The scrutiny role is a challenging one. Scrutiny committees do not have any formal decision-making powers, but do have the authority to ask challenging questions of cabinet members, council officers and partner organisations to hold them to account for their plans and actions and to make recommendations about how to improve things for the people that live in, work in and visit Coventry.

This report summarises just a few examples of the work carried out by each of our scrutiny committees during the year. This has ranged from challenging the Council and partners about how we are responding to national economic challenges by supporting the creation of local jobs through business investment and procurement and helping local people affected by welfare reform, to reviewing the performance of organisations responsible for protecting and improving the health of local people, ensuring that the voice of the child is heard throughout our work with vulnerable children and responding to local concerns such as road safety.

I am pleased to present this review of scrutiny activity for the 2013/14 council year. I am grateful to all of the scrutiny chairs and committee members who have carried out this work and would like to take this opportunity to thank those local people, partners and officers who have made valuable contributions during the year.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Fletcher".

Councillor Colleen Fletcher
Chair, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 2013/14

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Remit

In 2013-2014 the Committee was responsible for overseeing the Scrutiny function (including call-ins), considering cross-cutting issues and for the portfolios of the Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and Governance) and the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities). It was also designated as the as being the Board for oversight of crime and community safety.

Membership

Councillors Councillors Abbott, Blundell, Clifford (Deputy Chair), Fletcher (Chair), T Khan, Sandy, Skipper, Thomas, Taylor.

Co-opted members for education matters: Mr R. Potter (Roman Catholic Church), Mrs S. Hanson (Church of England), Ms Kelly Jones (Primary Parent Governors) and 2 vacancies (Secondary Parent Governors and Other Faiths).

Activities and outcomes

At the start of the year, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee reviewed the priority issues that had been identified at initial meetings of the boards to ensure a balanced scrutiny work programme. This was particularly important in the context of changes to the remits of scrutiny boards, including a reduction from six to five.

No decisions made by Cabinet or Cabinet Members were called in for Scrutiny consideration during the year.

The Board also scrutinised a range of issues under its remit and papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 21.

Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Committee in 2013/14

Welfare Reform

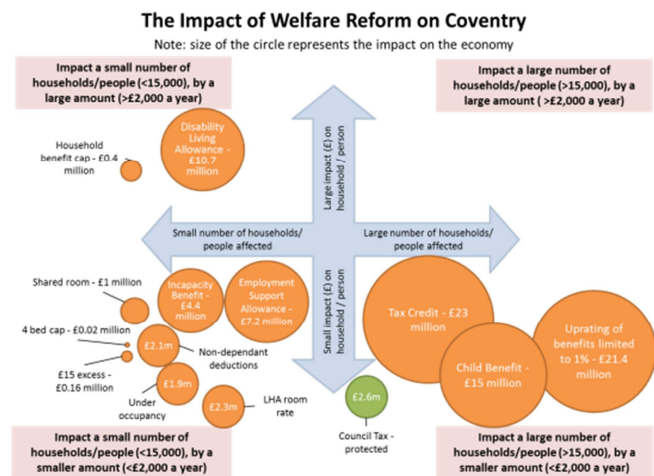


The government has introduced an unprecedented level of change through its programme of welfare reform and the Committee dedicated two of its meetings to reviewing the impacts on local people, communities and the city. Members heard evidence from Council officers and partners including Coventry Citizen's Advice Bureau, Coventry Law Centre, Department for Work and Pensions and

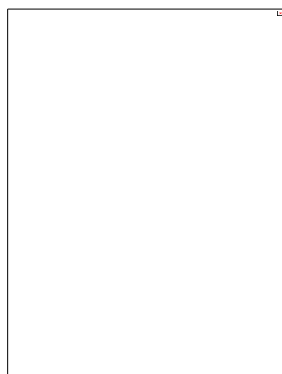
Whitefriars Housing about how local agencies are working together to address concerns and reviewed how the Council is administering Discretionary Housing Payments and the Community Support Grant Scheme.

Members welcomed the co-ordination of local activity taking place through the Coventry Partnership's Working Together on Welfare Reform Group and the in depth analysis of impacts that is helping plan for future need.

The Committee will continue to review the impacts of welfare reform in the next municipal year and in particular follow up actions and recommendations that they identified in relation to effect on people's wider health and wellbeing, impacts on disabled people, concerns relating to sanctions, the introduction of individual payments to households and the transition to Universal Credit.



Houses in Multiple Occupation



Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee set up a task and finish group to look at options for addressing residents' concerns about Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMOs). This was prompted by an increasing number of complaints made in the press and to councillors about these properties. Some of these concerns were directly linked to HiMOs, for example a high turnover of tenants, vacant properties at particular times of year and the quality and availability of family homes. Others such as parking issues and noise can occur in any type of housing.

Members on the Task and Finish Group, which included representatives of two residents groups, recognised that this is a complicated picture with lots of inter-related issues and no one easy solution. In addition, while shared houses may cause concerns for some people, they help meet a significant housing need for others unable to buy a property or rent on their own and these needs are increasing.

The Group were of the view that many of the concerns relating to shared housing stem from problems with absentee or less responsible landlords. They identified that additional work is required to further investigate issues related to the private rented sector, in particular to look at additional and selective licencing, landlords and letting agents.



The Group made three recommendations to Cabinet which were accepted about:

- carrying out further detailed investigation of the benefits of introducing an Article 4 Direction which would allow the council to manage HiMOs in neighbourhoods;
- exploring opportunities to work more closely with the universities and third sector organisations, particularly at the end of the academic year to promote re-use and recycling and reduce dumping; and
- better using existing enforcement powers across housing, environmental health and planning more effectively to manage issues caused by HiMOs and private rented sector houses, including waste and noise issues.

Crime and Community Safety

The Committee is the designated crime and disorder committee with specific responsibility for overseeing work in this area. Members of the Coventry Community Safety Partnership attended two meetings of the Committee during the year for consideration of issues including the introduction of the Police and Crime Board and a review of 2013/14 performance.

Recorded Crime has been decreasing from a **peak in 1999** to **lowest level across 2013**
(down by **40%** between the two periods)



Levels of Sexual offences and Domestic Violence across the same timeframe are relatively static; and making up ever increasing proportions of offences;
(9% of all offences were domestic in 2013)

The committee heard about the links between crime and wider social issues that affect community safety. They were pleased to hear that overall recorded crime has continued to fall but were concerned about the numbers of sexual offences and domestic violence. They questioned partners on how effectively local organisations are working together to address the links between some of the causes and reviewed the priorities being considered for the Coventry Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan for 2014/15. The committee identified a number of issues that they will be keen to follow up including the importance of preventative work and how best practice in this area can be spread as widely as possible and issues relating to data sharing, particularly including how agencies share information when an issue that may have multiple causes is presented.

These will be reflected in the Committee's work next year, along with a check on progress with other related issues the committee considered during the year which included the Alcohol Strategy and the commissioning of domestic violence and abuse services.

Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

Remit

In 2013/2014, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources).

Membership

Councillors Akhtar, Chater, Foster, Lakha, Miks, Sandy (Chair), Sawdon, Sehmi, Skipper

NB Councillor Thomas became a temporary member of the Board for two meetings during the period that Councillor Chater was made Acting Cabinet Member (Education).

Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised a range of issues under its remit and papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 21.

Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Board in 2013/2014

Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy

The Council's external spend amounts to some £300m per year and the delivery of an effective approach to procurement to maximise the outcomes from goods and services procured while reducing costs is a key priority. The Scrutiny Board reviewed progress against the Council's Procurement Strategy and challenged arrangements for monitoring, governance and compliance.

The Board was particularly keen to understand how the Council can use its buying power to deliver wider Council priorities. The Public Services (Social Value) Act requires public bodies in England and Wales to consider how procurement activity can improve the economic social and environmental well-being of the local area and the Board reviewed the draft Social Value Policy which was subject to public consultation. They explored how the policy could allow procurement activity to support local jobs and companies, including when subcontracting is involved and how it can address equality and diversity issues.

Procurement and access to public sector contracts in particular was also identified by representatives of the Chamber and Federation of Small Businesses at a meeting of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) which was scrutinising support to local small and medium sized enterprises. They made some positive comments about some of the approaches being taken by the City Council through its procurement activity such as improving access to tenders, breaking large contracts into smaller lots, not setting prohibitively high liability levels and the new e-tendering system operating across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. The Board was recommended that the City Council and sector partners explore how the good practice that Coventry has developed can be promoted across other public sector bodies.

Council Financial Position

The Council's financial position has remained a priority for Scrutiny and the Board has sought to ensure that the Council is managing its resources effectively in the context of the challenging financial climate.

The Board has reviewed progress against the Council transformation programme to ensure it is delivering the savings that have been built into the Council's budget and considered the progress of specific reviews.

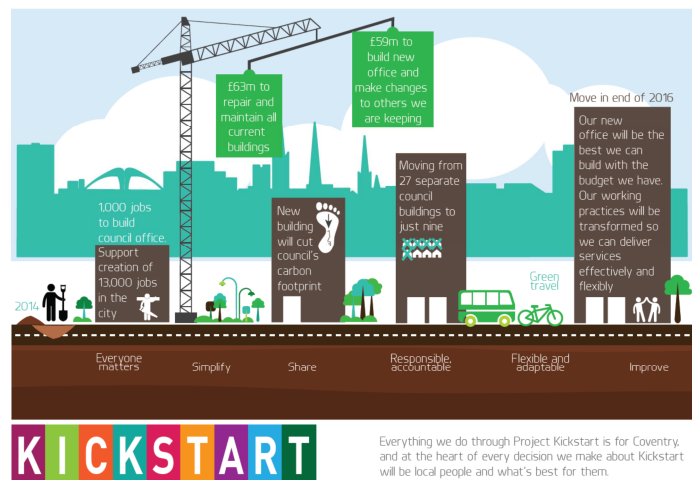


In considering the Council's Commercialisation and Income Maximisation Review, the Board looked at the revised charging policy to ensure that the Council was maximising income opportunities and using benchmarking information appropriately. They considered the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy prior to it being approved by Cabinet and Council and made recommendations about improving the management of financial risks.

At its final meeting of the year, the Board reviewed the Council's Capital Programme. They were particularly concerned that the government had made no allocation of Basic Need Funding for the two financial years 2015-2017 which supports additional school places, which has been identified as a priority need for the city. They wanted to understand the reasons for this, what is being done to challenge this and the impact on both the school and the Council's finances.

Kickstart

In June 2013 Full Council approved the Council rationalising its operational estate to start the Friargate business district in the City, with the aim of regenerating the City, transforming the Council and delivering savings. Between now and 2015 this will see the Council move from 27 buildings to nine and deliver financial savings while being the catalyst for transforming the way the Council works and deals with customers.



As well as oversight of the Council's finances, the Board scrutinises some of the key building blocks that are crucial to making the move successful including procurement, human resources, ICT and customer services.

During the year, the Board has particularly focussed on:

- the procurement arrangements for the new building to ensure that all opportunities are taken to promote employment for local people;
- plans being made to open the Council's single customer services centre in Broadgate House; the Board made recommendations, accepted by the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) that an equality impact analysis is carried out as soon as possible and that it addresses the needs of people with dementia as part of Coventry's aspiration to be a dementia friendly city;
- how the overall success of the Kickstart project is being tracked and the Board identified some of the measures that they would like to monitor on regeneration internal transformation and customers (including customer access to services; on-line systems that are fit for purpose, enabling people to do more for themselves and customer satisfaction).

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Remit

In 2013/2014, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolios of the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) and the Cabinet Member, (Education).

Membership

Councillors Abbott (Chair), Akhtar, Bains, Blundell, Clifford, Lakha, Lepoidevin, M. Mutton, Thomas.

Co-opted members for education matters: Mr R. Potter (Roman Catholic Church), Mrs S. Hanson (Church of England), Ms Kelly Jones (Primary Parent Governor) and 2 vacancies (Secondary Parent Governors and Other Faiths).

Activities and outcomes

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Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Board in 2013/2014

Adult Education and Employment

The Scrutiny Board asked the adult education service to report on the impact of increased fees on enrolment and how the service supports people into employment.



The Scrutiny Board congratulated the service for receiving a 'good' Ofsted result after its five day inspection in November 2013. The investigation identified some key strengths and noted the way that learners develop confidence, communication and interpersonal skills as part of the learning, which will enable them to progress onto further study or employment. The service shared their annual quality improvement plan, which includes targets to address the areas for improvement that were identified by Ofsted in order to become an 'outstanding' provider.

There was wide discussion of this topic, with the Board questioning officers on the type and distribution of the 27 learning venues across the city, the planned destinations of learners on completion of courses, and how changes to the participation age will affect the service.

The service reported that the increase in fees has had some discernible impact on enrolments. For some types of courses the number of fee paying learners has dropped to 33% of the previous year's enrolment; however it was noted that this is reflected nationally due to the change in eligibility rules by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The Board was particularly interested in the links between the adult education services and wider social and economic issues. There was discussion about how adult education classes relate to the relatively new practice of social prescribing, where the medical profession prescribes activities to patients instead of, or to complement, traditional treatments. The Board also recommended that the service explores the links it has with the Job Strategy, to ensure that there is a coherent way in Coventry of supporting people into employment. The Jobs Strategy and wider employment issues will continue to be a priority for the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) over the next municipal year.

Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review

On 26th September 2013, the Board considered the Serious Case Review (SCR) report into the tragic death of Daniel Pelka. Due to the nature of the case there was understandable and significant public and media interest in this issue throughout the municipal year.

The meeting was an opportunity for the Board to question the members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) about issues identified in the SCR. Discussions included, among other issues: the progress and changes already made to services following Daniel's death, information sharing, schools' safeguarding protocols, the voice of the child and quality assurance. It was recommended that the Board receive reports on progress in three and six months.

The two update reports outlined the progress made on the 15 recommendations from the SCR and the Scrutiny Board questioned all partners involved on their specific progress. The Board identified a number of recurring themes over the three meetings that considered this issue, including:

- the implementation of domestic violence notifications going directly to schools and nurseries in the city,
- safeguarding training for school staff and school governors,
- progress towards implementing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and issues relating to working across organisations and systems, and
- information sharing, particularly across health services, to ensure that each professional has the full information necessary in order to identify any safeguarding concerns as early as possible.

The Board made recommendations where it was felt that further action should be taken and will continue to monitor the progress on the issues raised at these meetings through the LSCB's annual reports and through the Council's Improvement Plan for children's services.

Voice of the Child Task and Finish Group

The voice of the child is an important central theme in children's social care and it is a constant priority of the Scrutiny Board. In 2013 the Voices of Care Council undertook a survey with children in care. In the under 12 age category 88% of those asked said that they did not feel that they were involved in the decisions made about them, and almost half of the respondents did not know or weren't sure

why they were in care. The results of the survey were discussed at the following Voices of Care meeting and the young people shared their views on the questions asked.

As a direct result of the issues raised at the Voices of Care meeting, the Scrutiny Board set up a Task and Finish Group to specifically consider the voice of the child. The group carried out a series of meetings with officers from different parts of the Council that are involved with how the voice of the child is heard. These meetings covered training, education, social workers, and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The chair of the group then took the initial findings back to the Voices of Care Council to get their feedback and input.

There were many examples of good practice found in terms of the voice of the child and the group were keen to ensure that these examples were highlighted and also shared within the Council.

A number of consistent themes came out in the meetings:

- increased demand on the services and the resulting capacity issue mean that social workers and IROs are dealing with caseloads that are too high,
- consistency of practice was a problem in the majority of services, and
- the voice of the child is sometimes considered as an additional stage of a process, as opposed to the central focus.

The group made 15 recommendations that covered social work practice, training, life story work and communication. The group reported back to the Scrutiny Board about their findings, and the recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) on 8th April. The Cabinet Member asked that the recommendations be incorporated into the single improvement plan that is being developed for children's services.

Education

The Board dedicated its December meeting to educational performance and held their meeting at Limbrick Wood Primary School.

The Board heard from the Coventry Teaching Schools' Network and Head Teachers from the Swan Alliance and Castle Phoenix Alliance and questioned them on how they were contributing to raising standards. They noted that there is no current national obligation for Teaching Schools to deliver any specific requirements in relation to children's safeguarding and asked for assurance that this is being addressed locally. A more detailed report to a future meeting confirmed that both of Coventry's alliances are taking a proactive lead in this area.

The Board also reviewed the recently published annual performance information for educational attainment, particularly looking at the progress being made by looked after children in Coventry. During the year, the Board also began to consider the significant challenges of increasing secondary school places in the city by 600 over the next 10 years, a subject to which it will return next year.

Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Remit

In 2013/2014, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and the Cabinet Member (Housing and Heritage).

Membership

Councillors F Abbott, M Auluck, D Galliers, M Hammon, K Maton, T Skipper (Chair), K Taylor, S Walsh and D Welsh

Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised a range of issues under its remit and papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 21.

Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Board in 2013/2014

Support for Business Investment in Coventry

The Board dedicated a whole meeting to issues relating to business support in Coventry. Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses gave presentations outlining the current local business support arrangements. The Council's Economy and Jobs Manager also contributed.

The Board was particularly interested in what is being done to encourage new business start-ups and the growth of existing businesses, as well as the constraints/barriers are to carrying out this work.

It was suggested that local authorities could become "enablers of growth" through their planning systems, ICT infrastructure and access to finance. The positive work being undertaken in the authority with regard to procurement and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was emphasised; the way the new e-tendering system operates across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire was particularly noted for the ways it is improving access to tenders, breaking large contracts into smaller lots and not setting prohibitively high liability levels aids SMEs to bid for contracts. The Board felt strongly that this good practice could be rolled out to other public sector employers such as the NHS and Police and asked for this to be explored.

Helping to build capacity and innovation in SMEs should be a priority for local authorities and partners and there is a role for both of the universities in this area.

Lack of skills held by employees in the workplace was recognised as a barrier to growth. Apprenticeships need to be encouraged especially for SMEs and the concern that SMEs feel that about spending time and money training up an apprentice only for them to go to a large employer once they have finished their apprenticeship needs addressing. These concerns have been picked up in the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Strategic Economic Plan and the Council's Jobs and Growth Strategy for Coventry 2014-2017.

City Centre

A leading expert on the retail industry and a co-author of the *Grimsey Review, An Alternative Future for the High Street* Eva Pascoe attended a board meeting to discuss the relevance to Coventry of the recommendations in the Grimsey Review.



Eva Pascoe from the Grimsey Team with Cllr Lynette Kelly (Cabinet Member Business, Enterprise and Employment), Cllr Tony Skipper (Chair of the Scrutiny Board) and David Cockcroft (Assistant Director City Centre and Development Services)

Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement District, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Local Data Company attended and helped inform a really useful discussion on where Coventry's city centre wants to be positioned in the future.

The Board recognised the challenges that are facing all city centres, the growth of on-line shopping resulting in large retailers withdrawing their presence from high streets being of particular relevance to Coventry as it has a higher than average number of voids. The City Centre Task Force also gave a presentation highlighting its work in this area.

City centres need to serve multiple purposes, incorporating retail, residential and leisure offers. The Board Members were keen for the Council to investigate ways of encouraging independent retailers to locate in the city centre and making it as easy as possible with flexible arrangements, short term tenancies and without the retailer incurring huge outlays in the process.

The discussion generated interesting ideas about how the Council can engage residents more in how the future of the city centre could look and this work will be picked up in future community involvement work.

The item generated a lot of press coverage and it was very positive to be able to showcase some of the work the Scrutiny Board has been undertaking.

Tourism Strategy

The Board held two meetings concerned with the need for a strategy to incorporate the promotion of business, conference and leisure tourism in the city. The initial meeting resulted in the Board Members recommending that the city needed a Tourism Strategy with a clear vision statement for Coventry.



Tourism cuts across many strategic themes such as regeneration, inward investment, culture and enterprise and so this is a key area of interest for Scrutiny Board members. *An Emerging Vision for Tourism Coventry 2014-2024* has been produced with the vision that “by 2024 Coventry will be internationally recognised as a compelling tourism destination of distinction; renowned for its quality and depth of its visitor experience across its diverse cultural, heritage, sport and events offer”.

The emerging strategy has a clear vision and distinct objectives which were welcomed by the Board.

The Board made recommendations around the need for the establishment of a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Coventry especially if we are serious about applying for City of Culture status. The establishment of a DMO will emphasise the fact that tourism is a major contributor to the local economy and the Board reiterated their desire for the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan to reflect a commitment to tourism in the sub-region.

Public Services, Energy and Environment Scrutiny Board (4)

Remit

In 2013/2014, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolios of the Cabinet Member (Energy and Environment) and the Cabinet Member (Public Services) including issues relating to energy, the environment, street services, waste management, highways and lighting.

Membership

Councillors Andrews, Auluck, Bains, Fletcher, Hammon, T Khan (Chair), McNicholas, Mulhall and Thay

Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised a range of issues under its remit and papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 21.

Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Board in 2013/2014

20 mph zones and limits



The City Council has experienced increasing demand for the introduction of 20 mph zones and limits around residential areas and schools. To date, the Council has considered petitions as individual requests but has no adopted policy for dealing with requests outside of the safety scheme process or for prioritising them.

In the light of the lack of a policy or framework against which to consider such requests, the Cabinet Member (Public Services) asked the Scrutiny Board to consider this matter and make recommendations on how to assess and prioritise requests for 20 mph zones and limits.

Between November 2013 and February 2014, a Task and Finish Group considered the need for a policy or framework against which requests for 20 mph zones or limits could be assessed. The Group reviewed information on the application of 20 mph restrictions in other local authority areas. They also devoted two of their meetings to hearing evidence from and asking questions of a number of organisations with an interest in the application and management of 20 mph zones and limits including: the 20's Plenty Campaign; Coventry Cycling Campaign; West Midlands Police; the Alliance of British Drivers; Centro; and Public Health.

The Task and Finish Group proposed a city wide approach to 20 mph restrictions and made recommendations about resourcing, objectives, prioritisation, monitoring and evaluation, consultation and engagement. The Cabinet Member (Public Services) accepted all nine of the recommendations and a detailed implementation plan is being drawn up for consideration early in 2014/15.

Flooding

Flooding has been a regular item in the news this year and has had a major impact in communities across the country. While Coventry does not share the same levels of risk in relation to extreme the events that have affected some areas, the impact of local flooding can nevertheless have significant impacts on individuals, households and local communities.

The Scrutiny Board has been keen to ensure that the city has effective arrangements in place to identify and reduce risks, while also having the appropriate plans to respond to any flooding incidents that do occur.



River Flooding, Butt Lane

The Board questioned Council Officers on a range of issues in relation Council plans on Flood Risk Management, Surface Water Management and the provision of sandbags during flooding. Members of the Board recognised progress made during the year including the recruitment of officers with responsibility for flood risk management and work with designated flood risk partners.

The Board made recommendations about the application of the sandbag policy, the need for further work in promoting the responsibilities of landowners in maintaining watercourses and the development of examples of actions and interventions for different situations to help local people understand what kind of responses they can expect.

Energy and the Environment

The Board examined a number of issues that affect the environment in the city. These included progress with the Heatline District Energy Network, the Council's Climate Change Strategy and the Switch and Save initiative.

The Council reviewed the priorities in the revised Climate Change Strategy and sought assurances about effective engagement with private sector landlords in relation to energy efficiency to help reduce fuel poverty, the effectiveness of planned actions in reducing flood risk, how climate change is being addressed in the school curriculum and the extent to which the Strategy's aim to develop a low carbon economy was contributing to the council's objective of creating jobs and growing the city's economy.



Councillors scrutinised the outcomes of the Coventry Switch and Save initiative, which had been run in the city following a successful bid to the Government's Cheaper Energy Together fund. Collective switching can take place when consumers get together to negotiate a group deal with their gas and electricity suppliers and Coventry's scheme was designed to enable as many Coventry residents as possible to achieve lower energy bills, with a specific focus on helping low income 'hard to reach' groups that might not ordinarily consider switching.

Tackling fuel poverty is a high priority for the Council and Councillors welcomed the efforts of staff and partner organisations to protect vulnerable people through this and other initiatives. However, they were particularly concerned at the costs of the national initiative which saw an investment of £231 for a saving of just £126 per switcher giving a very poor return on the £5m investment under Cheaper Energy Together. The Board asked the Chair to write to the Minister and Energy Regulator to express their concerns and set out how improvements could be made to any future initiatives.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)

Remit

In 2013/2014, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of health, adult social care and health inequalities, including the portfolio of the Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services).

Membership

Councillors Ali, J Clifford, C Fletcher, Hetherington, J Mutton, H Noonan, Sehmi, Thomas (Chair) and Williams
Co-opted Member Mr D Spurgeon

Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised a range of issues under its remit and papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 21.

Examples of Scrutiny work undertaken by the Board in 2013/2014

New Health Structures

Following the introduction of the Health and Social Care Act (2012) there has been considerable NHS organisational change both nationally and locally. The Board met with and scrutinised several of these new bodies over the course of the year.

The new Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, whose governance is led by local GPs, met with the Board on a number of occasions to discuss their establishment and developing plans to commission for improved health outcomes.

NHS England also attended a number of meetings to discuss their proposals for changes and improvements to primary care in the City. The Local Area Team of NHS England is responsible for commissioning all primary care in the City and a number of other specialist services.

The Board also welcomed a representative of the new patient and consumer champion for health and social care, Healthwatch to the Board from October. This body which replaces the predecessor Local Involvement Network used its statutory powers for the first time in March when it requested the Board's assistance in issues raised by patients requiring renal dialysis. This issue will hopefully be followed up by the new Board in 2014/15.

Winter Pressure

The Board was aware of reports that in the Winter of 2012/13 pressures on hospitals services at the University Hospital site reached critical levels. Pressure on Accident and Emergency Services was the topic most commonly discussed in the media however, whilst investigating this issue the Board found the actual causes were more widespread.



The Board formally requested that University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) present their plans for avoiding a repeat of these circumstances, aware that the Department of Health had provided acute trusts with additional central resources for this purpose. UHCW presented a thorough analysis of the problems they had experienced previously and a comprehensive set of proposals to better manage all resources within the hospital, rather than simply changes to Accident and Emergency. The chaos experienced in some other similar hospitals was not repeated in Coventry despite high demands for care.

Safeguarding

As well as receiving the Annual Report of the Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board in September, the Board also had the task of giving consideration to the Serious Case Review into the death of a vulnerable adult Mrs D died as a result of septicaemia following an accident, brief period of hospitalisation and a series of other interventions.

Serious Case Reviews are held in circumstances in which a number of different agencies failed to work together in the best interests of patients and the Scrutiny Board met with representatives of all of the agencies who took part in the Serious Case Review in December. The Board found that the recommendations in the Executive Summary were comprehensive and thorough. The Board will return at the appropriate time to this issue to ensure that the recommendations have been fully enacted.

Details of how to find out more about Scrutiny

Agendas, reports and minutes for all Scrutiny meetings are on the Council's website at

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/354/council_meetings

More information on Scrutiny at Coventry City Council is available on the Council's website at www.coventry.gov.uk/scrutiny or from:

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