

Councillor David Minnery
Performance Management Scrutiny Committee Chairman

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2014 - 2015**

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is an overview of the work of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2014 – 2015, plans for the forthcoming year and an insight into the new scrutiny process being developed in the light of the development of strategic commissioning bodies for the key public services in Shropshire.

2.0 What have we done?

2.1 The Committee has not been idle during the 2014 – 2015 year and has held six Committee meetings as well as sponsoring two successful Task and Finish Groups along the way.

2.2 The Committee's Work Programme has been heavily involved in the scrutiny of the progress being made in delivering the Council's Financial Strategy and, to facilitate this, the Committee held two meetings in November 2014. The two meetings allowed the Committee's own scrutiny of the process and also took into account the observations of the other Scrutiny Committees in order to provide a composite scrutiny comment to the December meeting of Cabinet.

2.3 The overarching scrutiny observations on the delivery of the Council's Business Plan and Financial Strategy and to be taken into account in future were:

- General satisfaction with the levels of savings identified as achieved and expected to be achieved, [based on the most recent reports and data available].
- Caution at the use of one-off savings to deliver the 2014/15 savings, recognising the implications for finding additional savings in future years to achieve on-going budgets.

- Recognition that ‘salami slicing’ from budgets was no longer possible and endorse the redesign of services. Specific mention was made about the need for a radical redesign of Transport.

Other areas of concern that were highlighted during this process included:

- a) Increasing demand on Children’s Social Care Services (especially Looked After Children) and Adult Social Care
- b) Implications for the Council arising from national legislative changes such as the Care Act.

2.4 The Committee considered this process to be valuable particularly the involvement of as many scrutiny Members as possible in the process. The involvement of Scrutiny Committees in this process exemplifies the merits in scrutiny being allowed sufficient time to enable it to have robust, meaningful input into the budget shaping process. The Committee intends to continue to play its role in the future budget shaping process, performance improvement and the assessment of changes to the Council’s service delivery.

2.5 In addition to the budget shaping process and continual monitoring of performance in the light of ongoing changes, the Committee’s future Work Programme is under rolling review but may also include consideration of the following issues:

- a) Mobile and Flexible working, to include the use of I.T. and telephony
- b) Use of the Council’s assets
- c) Commissioning – how to measure its impact and the delivery of outcomes
- d) Strategic commissioning

2.6 During the year the Committee established two successful Task and Finish Groups that reported their respective recommendations to Cabinet, namely:

- The Public Services Network Task and Finish Group
- The Discretionary Housing Payments Task and Finish Group.

3.0 What are our future plans?

3.1 Scrutiny recognises the need for robust and transparent scrutiny procedures to be incorporated into the overview and continued monitoring of ip&e, the services migrating to it and services being commissioned from other organisations.

3.2 The Committee understands that the ongoing Task and Finish Group to review the future role and remit of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements has yet to reach its final conclusions that could see many changes in the Council’s future scrutiny arrangements.

- 3.3 In the meantime the Committee will continue to monitor the Council's performance and appoint Task & Finish Groups as appropriate, although it recognises that change to a new structure is likely to occur before the end of 2015 and so has been reluctant to commission new Task & Finish Groups in order to avoid blocking new initiatives.
- 3.4 It is not appropriate in this report to go into detail about the possible shape of Scrutiny as we move forward, but I think that I can say that this intended change should not be seen as a criticism of the Scrutiny work done to date by this, or any other, Committee. However we do need to recognise that the move to a commissioning council will, of necessity, demand a new approach to service design that cuts across individual portfolio areas.
- 3.5 Members will know that most of the period covered by this report was under the leadership of a former Councillor. I assumed the Chair of the Committee just two months before the end of the year and I am concentrating my efforts on ensuring that the new structure adequately meets the demands of Scrutiny going forward. I look forward to presenting the proposals to Council in due course, and in the meantime welcome discussions with any Member on the way ahead.