

**Swindon Borough Council**

# **Scrutiny Committee**

**Annual Report**

**Municipal Year 2016 - 17**

## **Foreword by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee**

The delivery of public services is changing as a direct result of either financial limitations or political thinking. Economic uncertainty has hindered as well accelerated change however public expectancy of public services remains the same. Whilst the council is developing new ways of connecting/supplying public services they also wish to manage resident demand. Such development should not be to the detriment of those seeking services or deter those who do not have the ability to participate in the fastest new ways of working.

Ongoing pressures through Austerity require decisions with the potential to adversely affect those we are here to serve. To prevent this and to address the growing pressure on local governance more is being demanded of Overview and Scrutiny (O & S). In particular when service delivery stops being directly supplied by the council and introduces complexity into the supply line. Democratic accountability does not change even if delivery sits elsewhere. This has been highlighted by Council being cited for Senior School results even if the schools operate independently.

For O & S to remain a powerful check and balance for Council decisions we also have to scrutinise service delivery which sits outside of the traditional delivery model. It is also important that decisions are made in a transparent way which involves those responsible for the decisions as well as those implementing decisions.

To keep pace with this potentially fragmented form of service delivery the O & S process has adapted with the ability to pre-scrutinise reports with the potential to stop repeated wasted scrutiny time on the same report in different committees. In addition it has been requested that commissioned or outsourced service delivery will have O & S as part of the commission/contract. In the 2017/18 year there will be an opportunity to examine Commissioned/Contracted service delivery to see if they have produced the results intended.

Recent tragic events in Manchester and Grenfell highlight the role that members have in not only scrutinising decisions but also ensuring our services can respond to extraordinary demands. Members are expected to use hindsight and experience in the prevention of possible harm. We cannot afford through our new ways of working to have any disconnect between the council and the residents. We have to ensure whatever the model chosen to deliver services that direct accountability is still in place and there are no barriers to scrutiny.

I am grateful to all members and officers in the support of the O & Scrutiny role/activity. Apart from one or two indirect answers to questions asked the standard of responses and times has been maintained. The Overview role which mainly delivered through task groups is still providing findings that influence cabinet and Council decisions.

The report detail below shows the work we have undertaken.

**Bob Wright - Chair of Scrutiny Committee**

## **Introduction**

The Council has six Overview and Scrutiny bodies (a Scrutiny Committee and five Overview and Scrutiny Committees) that support the Council's decision-making and policy development processes and the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole.

The Scrutiny Committee also monitors the decisions of the Cabinet. It can 'call-in' a decision that has been made by the Cabinet whether or not it has been implemented. This enables it to consider whether the decision is appropriate. It may recommend either that the Cabinet or Cabinet Member reconsider the decision or that the matter be referred to the relevant Overview Committee for investigation.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees may be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions and help with the development of policy for both the Cabinet and the Council.

The specific roles and functions of the Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out in Article 6 of the Council's Constitution (attached to this report at Appendix 1).

This Annual Report is a record of the work of the Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the Municipal Year 2016/17.

## Scrutiny Committee

### Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Scrutiny Committee met on 13 occasions. The Committee comprised the following thirteen Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>
Claire Ellis (Vice-Chair)	Robert Wright (Chair)
Emma Faramarzi	Emma Bushell
Cathy Martyn	Mark Dempsey
Gemma McCracken	Des Moffatt
Kevin Parry	James Robbins
Vera Tomlinson	Chris Watts
Steve Weisinger	

### Leader of the Council's Annual Report to Scrutiny

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Leader of the Council reports to the first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in each Municipal Year on the Council's achievements in delivering against the Administration's specific priorities and targets in the preceding year and the challenges facing the Council in the coming year and beyond.

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Leader of the Council, Councillor David Renard, commented on a preceding year that he felt had proven quite successful from the Council's perspective. He was of a view that the most profound achievement in 2016/17 was the adoption of the Council's Vision, Four Priorities and Thirty Pledges, through the adoption of which the Council had established a strategic direction towards 2030 that is clear to the public, business partners and staff.

The Leader saw the following as specific tasks for the year ahead:

- Managing the Borough's finances in the medium term to take the necessary but challenging decisions that will ensure the long-term delivery of quality outcomes for the Borough. With the Vision and the continued sound financial management, there is a confidence that the pledges and priorities would help Swindon's economy continue to grow. By being an attractive place in which to do business, work, and live, the Council will support the private sector in generating the wealth on which all public services depend.
- The monitoring of the Council's performance by Members, residents, businesses and other interested groups through the performance dashboard, which would be available online and provide a high level of transparency and accountability.
- Supporting economic growth and wealth creation in the town to secure investment and expansion plans, and working with employers to provide a range of new skilled jobs.
- Managing budgets to help protecting vulnerable people, from safeguarding children to ensuring that vulnerable elderly residents have an adequate level of care to live independent lives as long as possible.
- Transformation and sound management of the Council, and delivery of £15m savings.

The Scrutiny Committee was given the opportunity to put questions to the Leader on the issues raised in his report and presentation and used this debate as the basis for establishing its work programme for the year.

## **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Committee, and each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is required to have a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year.

The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to consider during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and, where appropriate, external agencies/bodies to consider.

At the start of each Municipal Year, Scrutiny Committee receives a report setting out the details of the Annual Overview and Scrutiny work programme consultation exercise and suggesting topics for the Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2016/17. The Overview and Scrutiny process seeks to represent the voice and concerns of people across the Borough and the annual work programme seeks to ensure that Councillors have the opportunity to put forward suggestions for review by the Overview and Scrutiny function.

In establishing its work programme, in addition to selecting various topics and issues for inclusion in the work programme, the Scrutiny Committee has a number of “standard” items that also need to be incorporated, including:

- Lead Member Question & Answer Sessions - each Cabinet Member is expected to appear before the Scrutiny Committee to report on performance in relation to their portfolio responsibilities, performance and future plans and to answer members’ questions on issues raised.
- Review of Cabinet Decisions – The Scrutiny Committee is required to review the decisions taken by Cabinet.
- Leaders Report – the Scrutiny Committee receives an annual presentation and a six monthly update from the Leader of the Council on the Administration’s priorities for the year and performance against identified targets and objectives.

The work programme is necessarily flexible, to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

At its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Scrutiny Committee considered the 2016/17 Scrutiny work programme and agreed a rolling work programme for the Scrutiny Committee for 2016/17, taking into account the issues raised in the Leader of the Council’s presentation to this meeting and the outcomes of consultation exercise.

## **Consideration of Cabinet Decisions**

It is a primary function of the Scrutiny Committee to meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet and Cabinet Member decision making. In reviewing Cabinet decisions, the Scrutiny Committee has the following remit:

- To consider requests for “Call-in” as defined in the Council’s “Call-in” Procedure. (*Call-in is intended for use only in exceptional circumstances, when members have evidence to suggest that the decision was not made in accordance with due process, s set out in Article 13 of the Constitution.*)
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination.
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned.

During the course of the 2016/17 Municipal Year, the Scrutiny Committee met on 9 occasions to review decisions arising from meetings of the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee’s review of cabinet decisions is greatly facilitated by the support of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members who regularly attend Scrutiny Committee meetings to introduce matters relating to their individual portfolios and to respond to questions put by scrutiny members.

In 2016/17, no decisions were referred back to Cabinet, or were subject to call-in, but the full and open debate of decisions, alongside Cabinet Member Question and Answer sessions (see below) has proven invaluable in allowing the Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its constitutional imperative as the primary body for the monitoring and review of the Council’s decision-making processes.

## Cabinet Member Question and Answer Sessions

The Scrutiny Committee has, over a period of years, utilised question and answer sessions with Cabinet Members as its primary method of reviewing performance and ensuring that identified priorities are being successfully delivered. All Members of the Cabinet are required to come before the Scrutiny Committee at some time during the year to take part in a Question and Answer session that focusses on the full extent of their portfolio. Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to focus Question and Answer sessions with Cabinet Members on specific topics and/or services in order to avoid duplication.

During 2016/17, Scrutiny Committee conducted question and answer sessions with Cabinet Members on the following occasions:

Date of Meeting	Cabinet Member	Portfolio Responsibilities
22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2016	Cabinet Member for Adult’s Health and Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Services (older people with a learning disability, physical disabilities and mental health).</li> <li>• Adult Voluntary Sector Contracts.</li> <li>• Discharge duties under the Care Act 2014, Mental Health Act 1983, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and other relevant legislation.</li> <li>• Adult Safeguarding Board.</li> <li>• Public Health – Adults including Health Improvement and Sexual Health.</li> <li>• Supported Housing.</li> <li>• Learning Disability Partnership Board.</li> <li>• Maintaining links between the</li> </ul>

		<p>Council and partner organisations in the Health Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEQOL Client Lead Member.</li> <li>• Specific Strategic Projects.</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning and Development Framework Planning</li> <li>• The New Eastern Villages</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Planning</li> <li>• Building Control and Local Land Charges</li> <li>• Housing Strategy</li> <li>• Design –based consultancy</li> <li>• Superfast Broadband</li> <li>• Wichelstowe (Commercialisation)</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Museums, including Steam</li> <li>• Commercialisation of services</li> <li>• Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Community Heritage</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> <li>• FSL Ltd Client Lead Member</li> <li>• Strategic (Commercial Property Portfolio)</li> <li>• Adult Learning</li> <li>• Tertiary Education</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Specific Responsibility for Lydiard Park Project</li> <li>• Country Parks (securing sustainable uses)</li> <li>• Strategic Parking assets</li> </ul>
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	Cabinet Member for Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localities and Community Development</li> <li>• Capacity Building – Promoting and developing community-based alternatives to traditional public services</li> <li>• Leading Parish and Town Councils/Community Engagement implementation</li> <li>• Community Engagement Strategies</li> <li>• Community Assets – Libraries, Community Centres</li> <li>• Community Governance review</li> <li>• Leisure (residual services e.g. Highworth, County Ground etc., contact with GLL excluding</li> </ul>

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13 <sup>th</sup> February 2017	Cabinet Member for StreetSmart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Transport Network;</li> <li>• Traffic and Transport Forward Planning (including Local Transport Plan and Implementation of Local Transport Plan);</li> <li>• Highways Maintenance and Repair Works;</li> <li>• Street Lighting;</li> <li>• Public Transport (including Concessionary Fares, Specialist Transport, Council Transport and Fleet Management);</li> <li>• Streetsmart</li> <li>• Waste Disposal / Waste Minimisation and Recycling</li> <li>• Refuse Collection and Street Cleaning</li> <li>• Grounds, Open Spaces, Parks, Verge and Tree Maintenance</li> <li>• Envirocrime, Graffiti and Abandoned Vehicles</li> <li>• Public Toilets, Cemeteries and Crematoria Assets, Waterside Depot Management;</li> <li>• Building &amp; Engineering;</li> <li>• Building Services, cleaning, catering &amp; security services; and</li> <li>• IT Strategy, Delivery and Digital by Design</li> </ul>
13 <sup>th</sup> February 2017	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homlessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocations and Advice Services</li> <li>• Empty Homes</li> <li>• Estate and Tenancy Management</li> <li>• Housing Enabling and Strategic Services</li> <li>• Homeline Services</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Housing Right to Buy/Sales Services</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Wardens</li> <li>• Private Sector Housing Renovation Grants</li> <li>• Repair and Improvements to Council Housing Stock</li> <li>• Sheltered Accommodation</li> <li>• Police Authority/Police and Crime Commissioner liaison</li> <li>• Community Safety Partnership</li> </ul>



		<p>including young offenders and reducing anti-social behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and Public Protection Services Gypsies, Travellers and Unauthorised Encampments</li> <li>• Reducing Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse</li> <li>• Control Room Operations</li> <li>• Principal Member for consultation on Public Space Protection Orders</li> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Community Safety Partnership including young offenders and reducing anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Reducing Domestic Violence and Abuse</li> </ul>
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Management overview</li> <li>• Medium Term Resourcing Plan and future budget planning</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• HR, Personnel and Trade Union Relations</li> <li>• Schools HR</li> <li>• Council's Transformation Programme</li> <li>• Corporate Performance Management</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Customer Services</li> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Operational Buildings and Property</li> <li>• Revenue and Benefits Policy</li> <li>• Member Development</li> <li>• Commercial Investment Fund</li> </ul>
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	Cabinet Member for Children's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Family Services including Early Help, Youth Offending Team, Young Person Substance Misuse team, Targeted Mental Health, Education Welfare, Educational Psychology, Youth Engagement, Services for Disabled Children and the Troubled Families programme.</li> <li>• Children's Social Work Services including the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH),</li> </ul>

		<p>fostering and adoption services and the Corporate Parenting Board, Opal Team (Child sexual exploitation service).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Health Services including Health Visitors, School Nurses and Family Nurse Partnership, Paediatric Therapy Services, Speech and Language and Portage and Public Health services for children.</li> <li>• Local Safeguarding Children's Board.</li> <li>• Education Services including, Provision for Early Years, LA Maintained Schools, Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Education Other Than At School, Tuition Service, Championing Excellence and Promoting High Standards. This includes the Education Strategy Board; Schools' Forum, the Music Service, Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre, Governor Support services and Traded services to schools.</li> </ul>
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On each occasion, the Cabinet Member attending has submitted, and presented, a report to Scrutiny Committee which would be the focus of members' questions and observations. A standardised approach has been utilised for these reports which, at the Chair of Scrutiny's request, addresses performance and future planning issues by responding to the following questions:

- What have you done well?
- What would you do differently?
- What are the Challenges facing your portfolio

This approach has been very successful, both in allowing Scrutiny members to "dig deeper" into performance issues and suggest how performance might be improved upon and also to raise matters of particular concern which might otherwise not be prioritised.

The Committee functions, largely, in a non-politically motivated fashion and whilst debate can be boisterous, it has also paved the way for joint working and even, on occasion, all-party resolution of issues. The willing, and even enthusiastic, participation of Cabinet Members in the question and answer sessions, and their continuing provision of full and open responses to Scrutiny members' questions, often pursued further outside the scope of the meeting, is commendable and noteworthy.

## **Status of outstanding requests for information**

At regular intervals, the Committee receives reports advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information. These concern matters raised by the Committee, usually during the consideration of Cabinet minutes and/or Question and Answer sessions, where a Cabinet Member, or, occasionally, a senior officer, has agreed to take a particular action in response to a position taken by the Scrutiny Committee or when additional information has needed to be provided. This regular summary report has proven very successful, both in co-ordinating responsive action and ensuring that the required action is taken within an appropriate period of time. It is now very unusual for a matter raised at a Committee meeting to remain outstanding beyond the date of the subsequent meeting.

## **The Leader of the Council's Half-Year Update**

At the, roughly, half-point in each Municipal Year, the Leader of the Council is invited to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to outline how the Authority has performed in the first half of the Year, particularly in relation to the particular priorities and targets identified by him at the first Scrutiny Committee meeting of the year (see above). This mid-year presentation by the Leader affords Scrutiny Committee, and the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny committees, an opportunity to review work programmes to accommodate revised priorities and/or matters of urgency. This year, the Leader of the Council made his half-year update to the meeting to Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Councillor Renard introduced his report, commenting on the Council's achievements to that point in 2016/17 and highlighting the challenges for the remainder of the year. Following his presentation of the report, members were given the opportunity to put questions to the Leader of the Council. The following issues were raised by Scrutiny members:

- The role of large retail parks in Swindon can encourage growth in the number of small and medium size business locating to the town centre.
- Opportunities for the Council to work proactively with school Academy Trusts to promote Swindon schools in a positive light.
- The new secondary free school opening on a phased basis in Wichelstowe and its impact on surrounding schools.
- The ability of Councils to manage school places.
- The unsuccessful funding bid made by Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the Thamesdown Drive extension, the potential for future bids and examination of how other LEPs function.
- Town centre retail offer and reasons why other similar sized regional towns/cities retail centres were growing more rapidly than Swindon.
- The lessons that might be learned from previous decisions about selecting development partners, the need for due diligence and the potential to consider self-development.
- The need to improve and drive up education standards in Swindon schools.
- The number of subscribers to UK Broadband.
- The new Secondary School Learning Campus for the Eastern Villages and its impact on other schools in the area.
- The creation of new parishes being a new form of taxation on residents.
- To revive and re-invest in redundant industrial estates to encourage the production of goods and services.
- The financial cost to Swindon of the additional responsibility of providing shelter for those caught up in the refugee crises in Europe.
- Progress being made on the Bus Exchange.
- Bruce Street Bridges and the impact on new businesses.
- Measures to improve the image of Swindon and the role of new Parish Council's in achieving this.

- The continuing development of Higher Education provision within Swindon and the work to secure a new University.
- The need for information about the strategic framework and commitment that underpins the Council's Vision.

No changes were made to the Scrutiny Committee's work programme as a result of matters raised during the consideration of the Leader's half-year update.

## **Budget Setting Process - 2017-18**

The Scrutiny Committee has specific responsibility under its terms of reference, and under the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, to fulfil the Council's Budget Scrutiny Function. Responsible financial management underpins the Council's Vision priorities and pledges by ensuring best use is consistently made of all available resources as well as providing focus for its transformation work. The scrutiny of the budget function is an important element in ensuring the organisation understands the financial context within which it operates and develops plans to remain financially stable that will underpin the Council's ability to achieve its Vision, strategies, plans and priorities.

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Committee received a report that provided members with an opportunity to better understand the strategic context and framing for the direction of travel of the organisation to deliver the Vision for Swindon over the next four years, within the expected financial context, and the particular processes the Council has adopted to ensure it has a balanced budget for 2017-18 and a sustainable financial position moving forward. The report also afforded the Committee an opportunity to receive a current budget position statement from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, and the Interim Corporate Director Resources.

In furtherance of the Committee's budget scrutiny function, and in accordance with its specific responsibility as set out in the Council's Constitution (Article 6 and the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules refer), Scrutiny Committee members put questions to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, and the Interim Head of Finance, on the Council's budget position and the issues raised in the report relating to the financial context within which the budget proposals have been framed.

The Committee subsequently asked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services to speak with the Labour spokesperson for Resources about the 2017/18 budget proposals prior to final consideration by the Full Council.

## **Summary**

The Scrutiny Committee has, in 2016/17, completed a significant work programme that has put its members at the centre of the Council's decision-making process and the review of all aspects of the Council's service provision. Whether through its debate of cabinet decisions and its analysis of the Council's budget setting process or its assessment of the performance of individual Cabinet member portfolios via question and answer sessions, the Scrutiny Committee has fulfilled its function to provide quality assurance and effective challenge to the cabinet decision-making process, helping to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with Constitutional requirements. The Committee has approached its function enthusiastically and with a high level of commitment from its members.

## **StreetSmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17:

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Streetsmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions. The Committee comprised the following seventeen Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat Councillor</b>
Alan Bishop Wayne Crabbe Mary Friend Colin Lovell (Chair) Nick Martin Kevin Parry Timothy Swinyard Vera Tomlinson Steve Weisinger	John Ballman Matthew Courtliff Paul Dixon Jane-Milner Barry Chris Watts Peter Watts Julie Wright	David Wood

## Work Programmes

At the commencement of each Municipal Year, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to establish a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the municipal year. The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies/bodies to consider.

The work programme is developed taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses

It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and the Borough and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will be effective. Each year, a consultation exercise is undertaken with Partner Organisations, Councillors and the public to find out what issues are important and might be included in the work programme for the year. The results of that consultation exercise are reported to the first meeting of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Municipal Year to support members in identifying which issues will be included in the work programme for the year. As with the Scrutiny Committee, work programmes are sufficiently flexible to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

The Streetsmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its work programme at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 when it determined that the following issues

would be the subject of review:

- Highways Winter Programme Review.
- StreetSmart Waste Service Changes.
- Library Strategy.
- Review of Grass Cutting.
- Comparison of Parish Borough Council costs for Grounds Maintenance (oral update).
- StreetSmart six month service review.
- Update on Waste Service roll-out.
- Comparison of Parish Borough Council costs for Grounds Maintenance.
- Volunteering and Locality working update.
- Highways Incentive Fund.
- Highways six month service review.
- Highways post-winter service review.
- Update on Parishing (subject to Cabinet Decisions).

## **Library Strategy**

At its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the Committee received a report entitled “Securing a sustainable future for Swindon’s Library Service” previously considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 (Minute 25 of the Cabinet refers).

The Cabinet Member for Communities was unable to attend the meeting to present this report, and it was, instead, presented by the Council’s Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering.

After the presentation of the report, members were given the opportunity to put questions to the officers. Issues raised, included;:

- The process for purchasing library books and the discounts received by the Council through its purchasing arrangement.
- The libraries’ policy of not accepting donations of good condition second hand books.
- The feasibility of enhancing service provision via the introduction of a voluntary annual fee for library users, perhaps in return for an enhanced service, for those users.
- The introduction of a fee structure for specific library services such as the reservation service.
- Possible changes to some library services such as a click and collect service.
- The exploration and identification of further potential savings within the library service and whether there is scope for further savings without substantially reducing the number of libraries.
- The work of the Cabinet Member Advisory Group currently overseeing the consultation process and the development of the library service.
- The involvement of Ward Councillors in the libraries strategy consultation process and future shaping of the library service provision.
- The impact of library closures on local businesses.
- The need to engage smaller businesses as part of the library consultation process.
- The limited response rate to the consultation of users in the 19-35 age group.
- The engagement of educational establishments within the consultation.
- The comments of Justin Tomlinson, M.P. regarding the need for a coherent response to the consultation.
- The proposal on future library provision submitted by library staff as part of the consultation.

- Book stock replacement in libraries to be run by volunteers.
- The outcome of the previous library consultation exercises in Gorsehill.
- The limitations of the mobile library service.
- The option of using the central library for other uses and using this resource and the sale of properties used by services sharing that facility to protect branch libraries.
- The impact of the proposed strategy on access of vulnerable groups to computer facilities, especially those provided in areas of deprivation. (It was noted unemployed people needed to look for work every day and for many this was done through information technology in local libraries.)
- The effect the loss of computers in local libraries would have on education provision.
- The threat of greater isolation of vulnerable groups if local libraries were to close.
- The benefits of extending the library consultation process to tie in with the Corporate Governance Review, on the basis that any parishes created might wish to support the current library provision within their boundaries.
- The dual purpose use of library buildings to reduce direct costs to the library service (for example as Parish Council offices, other voluntary groups, public sector partners or businesses).
- The future use of automation in any future library service provision.
- The responsibilities of volunteers and the Council in respect of any future volunteer model of a library service.
- The likelihood that volunteers can be attracted to man libraries, given the limited responses for Council volunteers in other service areas.
- The value residents put on the provision of a local library service.

As a result of its consideration of this matter, the Committee established a Task Group comprising Councillors John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Mary Friend, Colin Lovell, Jane Milner-Barry, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts, David Wood and Julie Wright to review possible savings to the current library service budget.

At its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, the Committee considered a report of the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, setting out the recommendations of the aforementioned Libraries Task Group. The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Chris Watts, introduced the report, highlighting:

- The intensive work of the Task Group and officers in support of the review of the library service.
- That non-political approach adopted by the Task Group.
- The consideration of the proposals set out in the Libraries Review in the light of finding additional money to support additional branches of the service.
- The Task Group's assurance that all options for the library service had been considered, including a "Trust Model".

Councillor Mary Martin, the Cabinet Member for Communities, expressed her appreciation to the Task Group for its work and detailed consideration of the issues, and commented that it was very useful, from the perspective of finalising recommendations for Council, to have the Task Group approach the issue from a fresh perspective. Councillor Martin thanked the Task Group for their recommendations which she felt broadly reflected the direction of travel of her own work in reviewing the service.

The Committee supported the Task Group recommendations and commended these to the Cabinet Member for Communities for inclusion as part of the Libraries Strategy to be approved by the Cabinet. The Cabinet Member indicated that she was minded to include the recommendations within the strategy.

At its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Committee received an oral report from the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, setting out work undertaken following on from the November Committee meeting. He updated the Committee on:

- Work undertaken to retain the maximum number of libraries within the Borough following the Cabinet adoption of a Libraries Strategy in December 2016.
- Progress on the establishment of a core library service.
- Consideration of delivery models for non-core libraries.
- The forthcoming report to the February meeting of the Cabinet which would include an Options Appraisal study.
- Transitional funding arrangements for community bids to run non-core libraries.
- The closing dates for expressions of interest and business plans for organisations wishing to operate non-core libraries.

It should be noted that, on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the Cabinet considered a report on the future of the Library Service within the Borough which included the recommendations of the Libraries Task Group. The Cabinet approved the Library Strategy through the core provision of five core libraries and to support ward councillors, parishes partners and local community organisations to develop community led library services. It also approved transitional funding to support the implementation of the new service as part of the new service model.

At its meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Committee received a final report setting out the current position on the implementation of the Libraries Strategy. The Chair of the Task Group updated the Committee on work undertaken since the previous meeting, including the review of business plans submitted by groups interested in running library services, IT and professional support available for the new model service, and the financial support for the first year of the new library service.

Following the presentation of the report by the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, and an oral update from the Chair of the Libraries Working Group on its work since the previous meeting of the Committee, the Cabinet Member responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The submission of business plans by groups interested in providing community libraries.
- The allocation of hours for libraries both within and outside of core library service provision.
- Responses received from parish councils in respect of financial assistance to provide additional hours for local libraries.
- The availability of non-Council funding for the library service.

For Members' information, the Cabinet at its meeting in April 2017 determined that consultation be undertaken on the establishment of a Public Services mutual established as a charity to deliver Swindon's Library Strategy.

## **StreetSmart Waste and Recycling Changes 2016/17**

The Committee wished to scrutinise the upcoming changes to the Waste and Recycling Service and revised Policy and Waste Charter. At its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the Committee received a report that set out the upcoming changes to the waste and Recycling service from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, and (b) a revised Policy and Waste Charter.



The Head of StreetSmart introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, remarking on up-coming changes to the waste and recycling service, changes to the operation of the household recycling centre service, the revision of the Council's waste policy and the introduction of a revised policy and waste charter.

Issues raised by members during their debate of the report and presentations included:

- The revision of household waste collection and recycling routes to optimise and improve service provision.
- The revision of waste collection and recycling days for households and potential benefits that might accrue from waste collection and recycling being on different days.
- The publicising of changes to this service.
- The estimated savings from the proposed changes to service delivery.
- The proposed withdrawal of the recycling "bring" sites and how this would affect households without front garden storage areas for recycling and houses in multiple occupation. (It was noted that the Head of Streetsmart would liaise with ward councillors in respect of these issues and the blue bag waste service provision).
- The purchase and operation of new vehicles to facilitate the change of the household waste collection and recycling service.
- Consultation with employees and unions regarding the proposed changes.
- The earlier commencement times for collections of household waste.
- Whether the changes to the recycling centre would lead to fly-tipping and how this would be handled through education and prosecution.
- The benefits to crews of households pre-sorting recyclables in separate boxes.
- The range of materials that can currently be recycled by Public Power Solutions (PPS) and at the household recycling centre.
- The Waste Policy and Charter to be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee.
- The need, from a financial and operational basis, to avoid multiple journeys to areas using the blue bag waste collection service.
- The Diversity Impact Assessment produced as part of the change in service delivery.
- The need to clarify with the Council's customer service section that there is no cost for providing additional recycling boxes.
- The impact on service provision of Parish Councils providing grounds maintenance services.

The Committee noted the changes to the Waste and Recycling Service that were to take effect from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 and the revised Policy and Waste Charter.

## **StreetSmart Grass Cutting Review for 2016/17**

In response to members' wish to review StreetSmart Grass Cutting during 2016/17, the Committee received a report at its meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016 setting out the details of service provision during the year.

Councillor Keith Williams, the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, and the Head of StreetSmart presented the report, responding to matters raised by the Committee, including:

- The backlog of work within the 2016 season arising from abnormal grass growth over a two month period and plans to prevent similar problems in future years.

- Enquiries from Parish Councils to take over additional grass cutting and grounds maintenance responsibilities and the future provision of grass cutting services following the conclusion of the Corporate Governance Review.
- On-going discussions with Parish Council's on the frequency of work to green areas retained by Swindon Borough Council.
- The need to engage with ward councillors regarding safe and clean days organised through Swindon Borough Council.
- The use of Council staff on contracts with private companies, the apparent difference in standards and whether such work exasperated the backlog in work previously discussed (It was noted that the specification for work for private companies would be set out in the contract and such money went directly to the Council).
- Future work on highway land to maintain safety standards.

The Committee noted the report and accepted that each Parish Council would approach service delivery differently making future reviews more complicated.

## **StreetSmart Six Month Service Review**

At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, the Committee received a six monthly performance review of StreetSmart services. Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, provided a summary of the progress and performance of service areas within his portfolio including:

- Waterside Depot Management;
- StreetSmart
- Public Toilets:
- EnviroCrime:
- Waste Disposal/Waste Minimisation:
- Street Cleaning:
- Recycling:
- Refuse Collection – Domestic and Trade:
- Ground and Tree Maintenance and Open Spaces:
- Removal of Graffiti and Abandoned Vehicles:
- Parks (StreetSmart services only);
- Environmental Issues: Landscape and Countryside (including Community Forest):
- Playgrounds, including those that are not presently utilised:
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges.

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Williams responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- Improvements to the house recycling centre at Barnfield Road.
- The current range of services provided to the public at the household recycling centre at Barnfield Road.
- The work of the environmental crime team in dealing with fly tipping.
- Prosecutions undertaken against the perpetrators of fly tipping and the need to publicise the details of fly tippers where possible.
- Work by officers to educate the public and reduce instances of littering.
- The relative success of the changeover in recycling and household rubbish collections.
- The efficient replacement of damaged household recycling boxes and rubbish bins.
- The financial viability of the recycling process currently operated by the Council.

- Instructions to staff regarding what was and was not acceptable for collection and recycling.
- The insurance of volunteers who participate in “litter picks” organised by the Council or community groups.
- The maintenance of roundabouts and highway verges to ensure appropriate lines of vision are maintained.
- The potential closure of local recycling facilities.
- Proposals to transfer grounds maintenance to parish Councils and the feasibility of transferring the Council’s grass cutting fleet to parishes.

The Committee noted the presentation and also officer comments that any transfer of services to parish councils would involve a fluid situation in service provision.

## **Volunteering and Locality Working - Update**

At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, presented a review of the work of the Localities Team in respect of localities and volunteering,

Following the presentation, the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering, responded to members’ specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The number of registered volunteers and the number of hours work undertaken by volunteers.
- The role of volunteers in supporting home based adult social care and independent living.
- The type of evidence gathered by the Council to identify the benefits provided by volunteers in supporting Council service provision.
- The future development of a Community Strategy for Swindon, together with the role of volunteers within this strategy.
- Volunteer support for Swindon’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Future Council resources available to support Swindon’s voluntary sector.
- The future role of the Council’s Localities Team.
- Support available from the localities team to support shadow parish councils.

The Committee received the report noting that detailed work in respect of Volunteering and Locality Working had been delayed, with the agreement of the Committee, in order to allow the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering to concentrate on producing the Libraries Strategy. A report on Volunteering would be considered as part of the 2017/18 Work Programme.

## **Waste Services Update**

At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, the Committee considered an oral report by David Robinson (Waste Recycling Manager) in respect of changes to the Council’s Waste and Recycling Service. Mr Robinson highlighted the following issues:

- The changes to the waste collection and recycling service would affect approximately 55,000 households within the Borough.
- The changes had taken approximately a year to plan and would affect both routes undertaken by waste and recycling teams and collection days.

- The vehicle fleet for waste and recycling collection would be replaced by the end of December and would provide greater capacity and more fuel efficient vehicles.
- The new vehicle fleet also provided better information technology to optimise routes and provided real time data updates.
- The planned changes achieved savings of approximately £300,000 with the opportunity for further efficiencies in the future.
- There would be one fewer kerbside crew and one fewer waste crew under the new arrangements.
- The new arrangements allowed capacity for future housing developments over the next three years.
- The transition to the new system had so far been satisfactory with a high rate of collections on the scheduled days.

Following Mr Robinson's presentation, the Committee discussed in greater detail the following matters relating to the proposed changes to the Council's Waste and Recycling Services:

- The capacity of in-cab technology to record and report damaged or contaminated recycling boxes.
- Technology on the vehicle to prevent the overloading of vehicles which have a 26 tonne capacity.
- The smooth changeover of collection dates for waste and recycling.
- The continuation of the blue bag waste collection service and use of narrow trucks in some areas of the Borough.
- Refresher training for waste and recycling vehicle teams.
- Work undertaken to inform residents of changes to collection dates and times.
- The ability to use information technology to confirm that vehicles had visited areas within their routes.
- Future services improvements that might arise through increased use of information technology imbedded in vehicles.

The Committee noted the report.

## **Highway Street Lighting Proposals**

The Committee had requested as part of its work programme that an update on street lighting be presented to it and at its meeting in January 2017 considered a report of the Head of Highways and Transport, setting out the Council's proposals for the development of a street lighting LED business case and trials for dimming and part night lighting. Also included within the report was an outline of the business case for a LED replacement street lighting programme and the financial and environmental benefits such a programme could achieve. Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, Highways and Transport, and Mr Tim Price, Service Manager Highway Infrastructure, introduced the report commenting on:

- Financial pressure on the current street lighting budget.
- Public feedback received in respect of a street lighting trial held in West Swindon.
- Criteria for a proposed part night lighting trial involving residential and commercial locations which was subsequently withdrawn as a result of public concern.
- An upcoming LED light trial to assess efficiency savings.
- The Council's lamp post replacement programme.

Following the presentation of his report, the Cabinet Member responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The use of high pressure sodium lights to reduce electricity and maintenance costs.
- Consultees for the upcoming LED lighting trial.
- The marginal savings of using part night street lighting.
- The funding of a replacement street lighting programme should the LED street lighting trial show significant financial savings.
- The system of automated lighting times for street lighting, including the use of light sensors.
- The future introduction of a central management system for street lighting.
- The potential availability of funding for LED street lighting through a bid to the Government's Challenge Fund.
- The method used by electric suppliers for assessing the electric bill for street lighting and how this could in future be refined through the introduction of a smart network.
- Current and future use of green technology, such as solar power, in the provision of street lighting.

The Committee was advised of, and noted, a Cabinet Member Briefing Note dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016, setting out proposals to reduce street lighting energy consumption within the Borough, together with details provided at the meeting of street lighting trials being undertaken.

## **Highways Asset Management Incentive Fund**

At its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Committee received a report reviewing the Council's current approach to Highway Asset Management and its ongoing action plan in response to the Government's recent changes to highway maintenance grant funding linked to the Incentive Fund.

Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, Highways and Transport, and Mr Tim Price (Service Manager, Highway Infrastructure) explained the grant funding to highway infrastructure through the Government's Incentive Fund which was an evidence based self-assessment through twenty-two questions based upon of the following three bands:

1. Asset Management Policy;
2. Benchmarking and Efficiency Resilience;
3. Customer Questions and Operation Service Delivery.

It was noted that, based upon the assessment of the responses to the Incentive Fund Questions, and also a Department of Transport Audit, the Council would be placed into one of three bands which would determine the level of Government Grant during the Financial Year. The Council would make a submission to the Department of Transport on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.

Following the presentation of his report, Councillor Keith Williams responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The Council's current framework for maximising its grant funding within the highway department's current resources.
- The role of parish councils and partner organisations in the Council's return to the Department of Transport.
- Procurement systems with partner local authorities.
- Peer reviews and benchmarking as part of the department's work and its return to the Department of Transport.

- That the Council's Section 151 Officer was required to approve the accuracy of the Council's submission to the Department of Transport in respect of the Highway Asset management Incentive Fund.

The Committee noted a Cabinet Member Briefing Note dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 circulated with the Cabinet Member's report identifying a number of key documents used to underpin investment decisions in the Local Transport Plan Improvement Plan. The Briefing Note also set out details of the Council's submission to the Department of Transport in respect of the Highway Asset management Incentive Fund.

## **Highways Six Month Review**

In response to a request from the Committee for a review of Highways, Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, Highways and Transport, made an oral presentation to the Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in respect of the six month highways review and responded to members' specific questions and observations in respect of:

- Procurement work with Wiltshire Council to reduce street lighting costs.
- The re-establishment of the Road Safety Partnership with an emphasis on education and training.
- Current position of the Winter Maintenance Programme and salt stock levels.
- The recent incident at the Junction 16 M5 motorway roundabout when contractors ruptured a gas main and remedial action to repair it.
- The maintenance of rapid transport corridors within the Borough.
- Work on the Greenbridge Roundabout layout, including lane redesign.
- The Street Works Delivery Plan.
- Road closures for the forthcoming Swindon Half Marathon.
- Engagement with local residents in respect of the development of new plans for a Thamesdown Drive extension.
- The reopening of the public toilets at the central bus station following a number of incidents at the site.
- Development work on the M4 motorway Junction 15 Roundabout.
- On-going work on the Eastern Villages highways and water pipe design funded through the Department of Transport and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Continued work to minimise disruption, including the production of a newsletter, during highway and utility work.
- The Wichelstowe town centre and East Wichel parking strategies.
- Issues relating to the Fleming Way Road and pedestrianised area design.
- Parking issues in the North Star area, including the outlet centre.
- The promotion of road safety through school visits.
- Resurfacing of older roads and pothole repairs.
- Traffic flow issues at Bruce Street Bridges.
- The Council's three year highway inspection plan.

The Committee report was noted. For Members' information the public toilets at the central bus station have been re-opened since consideration of the presentation. The Cabinet Member and officers also took on board Member comments when considering changes to on road parking at Wichelstowe and the traffic flow at Bruce Street Bridges.

## **Highways Post-Winter Service Review**

The Committee received an oral update at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 from the Construction Services Manager, Highways and Transport, setting out the current position in respect of the Highways Winter Service.

The Construction Services Manager, Highways and Transport responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The current Winter Service Programme which continues until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.
- The current composition of the winter service vehicle fleet.
- The current routes covered by Council operated road gritting vehicles and the process for determining when they would be activated.
- The current salt stocks held by the Borough Council and timescales for replenishing these after a protracted period of freezing weather.
- Work to ensure the Council had enough trained staff to fully implement cold weather operations.

The Committee noted the current position of the Highways Services following the winter period.

## **Summary**

The StreetSmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a comprehensive and wide-ranging Work Programme for the 2016/17 year and it has achieved its aims as set out at the beginning of the year. It responded efficiently to Constitutional requirements by being an active participant in both the overview and scrutiny of the Council's Library Strategy. The Committee was commended by the Cabinet Member for Communities for its input into the strategy and for its work in assisting in the policy development. It challenged the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart Services and the Cabinet Member for Communities and assisted in addressing the challenges faced by the service throughout the year, all the while maintaining a high level of commitment from its members.

## **Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17:**

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Committee met on 5 occasions. The Committee comprised the following nine Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>
Claire Ellis (Chair)	Steve Allsopp
Alan Bishop	Steph Exell
Mary Friend	Julie Wright
Caryl Sydney-Smith	Robert Wright
Steve Weisinger	

### **Appointment of Co-optees**

The Council's Constitution allows that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be entitled to appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees. At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016, the Committee was invited to consider whether any non-voting co-opted members should be sought to support its work programme for the year.

The Committee agreed that Mr Mark Edwards be appointed as the Healthwatch Swindon and Michelle Howard be appointed as the Equalities Advisory Forum representative on the Committee. These appointments were for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2016/17.

### **Work Programme**

At the commencement of each Municipal Year, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to establish a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the municipal year. The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies/bodies to consider.

The work programme is developed taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses



It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and the Borough and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will be effective. Each year, a consultation exercise is undertaken with Partner Organisations, Councillors and the public to find out what issues are important and might be included in the work programme for the year. The results of that consultation exercise are reported to the first meeting of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Municipal Year to support members in identifying which issues will be included in the work programme for the year. As with the Scrutiny Committee, work programmes are sufficiently flexible to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

The Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Committee considered its work programme at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 when it determined that the following topics be included in the work Programme:

- a) Support for independent living for people with disabilities.
- b) Developing Council owned properties and how these met the future needs of the community.
- c) The quality of properties being rented out in Swindon.
- d) How the Council could ensure tenants' rights were protected when dealing with landlords, particularly regarding rent increases.
- e) How the Council was ensuring that landlords were paying the Council Tax on behalf of their tenants.

The Committee also agreed to receive a report on "Transforming Care" services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism who have mental health conditions or behaviours that are challenging.

In addition, the Committee determined that the Dementia Care Pathway Task Group continued with the work undertaken during the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

## **Performance for Adult's Social Care Commissioning**

It is a key purpose of the Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Committee to hold Providers of Health Services to account. To that end, any provider of Health Services in Swindon is required to provide information on the planning and provision of health services within the Borough and consult with the Committee on any planned substantial changes or developments to service provision.

At its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report providing an update on performance and key issues relating to the commissioning and performance of Adults Health and Social Care Services. The reports were presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a "snapshot" of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of the reports to each meeting of the Committee, the Director of Adult Services responded to Members' questions and comments on the issues raised. Over the course of the year, the following issues were discussed:

- The need for detailed information on how challenges were to be overcome and the specific resources required to ensure successful outcomes.
- The increase in domiciliary care within the community, particularly for those with English as an additional language and to its overall quality.
- The "Fix Me Hub" Centre providing a useful filter service to assess patient needs and redirecting them where necessary to the Emergency Department.
- The systems in place to help patients who are recurring attendees at the Emergency Department.
- The need for detailed information regarding the range of disabilities covered by the report relating to young people with disabilities seeking employment.
- The recruitment of social workers and assistant care managers.
- The review of the waiting list for assessments to be undertaken following the integration of SEQOL.
- Measures to address safeguarding issues for patients and staff.
- Support for hospital patients in quitting smoking for, at least, the duration of their stay.
- Implications for the community when introducing new models of adult social care provision.
- Collaborative work with NHS England and Avon and Wiltshire Partnership on smoking prevalence due to mental health issues.
- Financial support for delay discharge of care being given to Great Western Hospital to address out of borough cases.
- Organising employment for those with learning disabilities.
- Numbers of staff required to promote and help those in the community to manage their own resources through the personalisation programme.
- Financial implications for those carers helping relatives to live independent lives in the community.
- The difficulty of measuring the benefits of living within a family unit as opposed to independent living.
- The effects of alcohol on staff retention issues.
- The effect of savings made and to be made during the financial year on the budget position.
- Collaborative work being undertaken by the Employment and Training team with the new Disability Training Consultancy currently based in Swindon.
- Confirmation that figures for the number of hits to the "My care, my support" website were not currently being collated nationally or used for benchmarking.
- The promotion of the "My Care, my support" website to ensure access by the wider community.
- Progression planning work to raise aspiration of young people, particularly those transitioning to adulthood.
- The number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) young people being supported by the Learning Disability Service.
- Work undertaken by community navigators to help BME young people with disabilities enter the workplace.
- The Delayed Transfer of Care challenges.
- Abusive patients suffering from a range of issues including alcohol abuse and its effect on staff.
- The quality of life of those in domiciliary care.
- The waiting times for reviews of people with learning difficulties.

- The increase in funding rates for nursing home residents and how residents received this information.
- The percentage of spend on prevention within the Public Health Budget.
- The overall investment in older people services and that a percentage of this investment pertained to patient discharge from hospital.
- Shortages of nurses in nursing homes following the increase of patients being admitted into care.
- The strategy objectives to prevent catastrophic falls and the work undertaken with the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service to inform the public on the Falls Strategy.

As a result of the Committee's consideration of these regular updates, the Director of Adult Services and Director of Public Health was asked to report to a future meeting on the issues of (a) stress-related absences from work, (b) the actions being undertaken to address alcohol abuse and (c) the quality of life for those in domiciliary care.

Also in response to a request by the Committee, the Director of Adult Services and the Director of Public Health circulated a copy of the Fall Strategy, and information regarding (a) the percentage of spend on prevention within the Public Health Budget, and (b) the cost of patients being readmitted into hospital and how this affected budgets.

## **Overview of Housing Demand for People in Receipt of Adult Social Care Services**

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the Committee received a report by the Head of Housing and Community Safety providing an overview of housing demand for those receiving Adult Social Care services. The housing direction and focus as set out in the Housing Strategy 2015 – 2026 was noted.

The report advised that there was a strong evidence base of needs that reflected the current issues and to the work being undertaken to help those in the community within the limited resources available. The Committee noted the increase of homelessness in Swindon due to changes within the private rental sector, the work being undertaken to identify and address multi-occupancy, housing needs for those with learning disabilities and how the Department was assisting them.

The report further referred to the Adult Social Care programme and to the achievements over the past year. These included reviewing property designs to address the needs of those with learning disabilities, accommodation settings ensuring a better quality of life and a review of care packages to optimise service provision. Members noted the in-house temporary accommodation for homeless families and the bid being prepared with Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset for additional funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Housing and Community Safety responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- The high demand for housing in Swindon, the affordability of available properties and how allocation was structured.
- Housing those that are discharged from prison and the multi-agency support available to help them integrate into the community.
- The Council's safeguarding role to support the rough sleepers in Swindon.
- The Department's work with other agencies to conduct "Safe and Well" checks to ensure rented properties in Swindon were habitable and not multi-occupied.

- The transitional work undertaken to help those with learning disabilities move from living with parents or carers to independent living.
- How the Home Line Plus Service was helping those in need within the community attain independent living.
- The consultation process being undertaken at present regarding housing and multi-occupancy properties.
- The Planning Application Guidance that will be published for consultation in June 2017.
- Involvement of the Housing Department within the Planning application process.
- Government guidance for landlords on multi occupancy housing.
- That multi occupancy houses had to have carbon monoxide and smoke alarms fixed in the property.
- The number of available properties for homeless people.

In response to members' various comments and questions, the Housing Manager circulated information on the number of people with learning disabilities living with parents or carers. The Committee further requested that an updated report be submitted during the next Municipal Year.

## **Holding Providers of Health Services to account**

It is a key purpose of the Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Committee to hold Providers of Health Services to account. To that end, any provider of Health Services in Swindon is required to provide information on the planning and provision of health services within the Borough and consult with the Committee on any planned substantial changes or developments to service provision.

### **A. NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group**

At four of its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report of the NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) providing an update on performance and key issues relating to commissioning and performance. The reports were presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a "snapshot" of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of the reports to each meeting of the Committee, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the issues raised. Over the course of the year, the following issues were discussed:

- The challenges being faced within primary care.
- The need to recruit more General Practitioners following the population increase in Swindon and how this was being addressed.
- The percentage of saving needed as a percentage of the overall budget.
- How the Sustainable Transformation Plan was determined and would be implemented.
- The uptake of Personal Health Budgets by the community and confirmation that whilst there were no uptake targets, there was a desire for more people to utilise this service.
- An explanation of how the 26 local practices working with the Care Commissioning Group would be able to secure equipment and provide services to the community by working as a co-operative to become more cost effective.

- How joint working with NHS England addressed the demand for primary care services that was outstripping resources.
- How dietary changes by patients with diabetes had resulted in a decrease in the number of amputations and the work being undertaken to continue this trend.
- Surgeries' promotion of the Prescription Ordering Direct service.
- The time taken for SEQOL to undertake assessments, particularly for those patients towards end of life.
- Addressing the difficulties for patients calling surgeries and having to wait on the "triage line" for a considerable time.
- Confirmation that pharmacist were able to support GPs through the POD services. Members noted the collaborative working partnership between surgeries and pharmacists.
- The review of all community nurse caseloads following the transfer of services from SEQOL to GWH.
- Understanding the cultural shift for staff transferring from SEQOL to GWH and how this would impact staff.
- The training of staff delivering the POD service and reasons for the delay in implementing the service.
- The financial governance of SEQOL, the reasons for awarding the SEQOL contract to the Great Western Hospital and the future financial impact this would have on GWH.
- The number of providers that submitted a bid for the SEQOL contract and confirmation that the SEQOL budget would be ring-fenced for community health services.
- The Sustainability and Transformation Plans' influence on the obesity agenda and how an increase in the pace of change would help overall in promoting preventative care.
- The financial and working relationship between Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire with South Gloucestershire.
- Actions being taken to help those in the community who suffer from self-inflicted alcohol abuse as this has an impact on a range of services, particularly the police and ambulance services.
- Initiatives to target non communicable diseases through adopting a preventive approach. This was helped through whole family intervention where lifestyle choices could be adopted by all.
- The lack of public understanding and engagement in the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).
- The achievements of the STP to date.

In response to members' various comments and questions during the course of the year, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group circulated the following information:

- a) an update on the outcome of the Community Services procurement exercise,
- b) the range of early intervention work being undertaken,
- c) an update on the "not for profit scheme" being considered by the 26 surgeries,
- d) the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service.

## **B. Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Update**

At its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report of the Great Western Hospital Trust (GWH) providing an update on performance and key issues relating to commissioning and performance. The reports were presented in a standard format,

responding to each of the following questions with a “snapshot” of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of the reports to each meeting of the Committee, the Director of Strategy, Great Western Hospital (GWH) responded to Members’ questions and comments on the issues raised. Over the course of the year, the following issues were discussed:

- The governance of the Trust and how it reflected public and patient involvement.
- The possible impact of a Brexit vote on the recruitment of nurses.
- The initiatives being undertaken to reduce waiting times.
- The possible financial benefits of extended bus services versus dedicated car parking build costs.
- How malnutrition could be addressed through partnership working between Health agencies, the voluntary sector and community providers. Members noted that this was being addressed through the Sustainable Transformation Plan.
- The cost of nurses’ recruitment, their contracts, retention and the effect of the abolition of bursaries on recruitment.
- Confirmation that pressures on primary care affected the number of patients attending the Emergency Department.
- Overcoming communication issues for nursing staff whose first language is not English.
- Non-UK qualifications and the need to ensure uniformity of standards.
- Apprenticeships being promoted at GWH.
- Work being undertaken to retain nurses in Swindon, particularly after they had been trained.
- The effectiveness of Mental Health Liaison Service located in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department.
- The recruitment of a Help Care Assistant to help families and staff working in the Pediatric waiting room.
- GWH’s response to the volume of demand for beds by the A&E Department and the impact on routine procedures.
- The location and use of the Discharge Lounge by patients.
- The radiotherapy equipment on the new site would be the leading edge technology.
- Actions being undertaken to address increased birth rate in Swindon due to the rise in population.
- Prospective parents’ choice to request an amenity room for the childbirth.
- The care of alcohol dependent patients when admitted to the Accident and Emergency Department.
- Actions undertaken to address the reduction in applications received from European staff wishing to work in British hospitals.
- The number of patients transferred, admitted or discharged from hospital within the four hour target as compared to national data.
- The use of interpreters through Language Line to support those with English not as their first language.
- The expansion of Swindon and its impact on healthcare within the borough.
- Vocational courses for nurses being offered at Oxford Brookes and University of the West of England.
- The accreditation received by the Stem Cell Service in the field of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

- The short listing of Ms Kerry Wheeler, maternity support worker, for the College of Midwives' award.
- The number of patients admitted onto wards from urgent care centres.
- The expanding population of Swindon and primary care capacity to cover future community needs.
- Where the recuperation of patients could be undertaken.
- How budgets travelled with patients, particularly out of borough patients.
- Facilities available at Health Centres to alleviate pressures on the Emergency Department.
- The accountable care model with the possible expansion of "hot clinics".
- The number of patients admitted to hospital with complications due to pressure ulcers and how those undertaking independent living were assisted.

At the Committee's request, the Director of Strategy, Great Western Hospital (GWH), subsequently circulated information regarding the Trust's governance and also data on the number of patients admitted to wards from urgent care centres.

## **C. Avon & Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust**

At each of its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report of the Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) providing an update on performance and key issues relating to commissioning and performance. The reports were presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a "snapshot" of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of the reports to each meeting of the Committee, the Managing Director, Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust (AWP), responded to Members' questions and comments on the issues raised. Over the course of the year, the following issues were discussed:

- The actions being undertaken to promote understanding of mental health care, particularly prevention, intervention and the support of mental health patients. This included work being undertaken by the Early Intervention Team with schools.
- Confirmation that competencies were reviewed by universities as part of the Certificate in Mental Health courses being undertaken.
- The re-launch of the Section 136 consultation paper.
- Staffing challenges and what actions were being taken to address these.
- Ways to encourage staff to work and settle in Swindon.
- Dementia assessments for patients.
- The support offered to families when relatives were suffering from emotional disorders.
- The need for a local place of safety to cover the population size in Swindon.
- That Place of Safety was an early and preventative care pathway and the work being undertaken to achieve safety for the patient by utilising the triage and crises teams.
- The future of Sandlewood Court as part of a consolidation process providing the best service from resources available.
- The number of patients in Swindon detained under Section 136.
- The effect on Swindon patients if they had to undertake treatment out of borough.

- That 83% of patients that do not transfer to in-patient care and data reflected that Swindon patients would benefit from a local place of safety where assessments could be undertaken within timescales.
- Other suitable premises were unavailable in Swindon and no capital was available to purchase other buildings.
- The assessment time to review a patient.
- How patients were supported in the community after they were discharged and that only those needing to be admitted would be detained.
- Collaborative work being undertaken with Great Western Hospital (GWH) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) that included having a permanent psychiatric nurse located in the Emergency Department at GWH.
- The tripartite agreement between Swindon and Wiltshire CCG together with the Police Commissioner to look at preventative measures.
- Sandlewood Court was not suitable to be adapted into a Place of Safety.
- Delaying the completion of the consultation period until end of May.
- There would be no adverse impact on Swindon Borough Council as all relevant staffing would be provided by Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust.

At the Committee's request, the Managing Director, Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust, subsequently circulated information on the support offered to families when relatives were suffering from emotional disorders.

## **D. SEQOL**

At its meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Committee received a report providing updates on performance and key issues relating to SEQOL. The reports were presented in the standard format utilised by other providers, responding to each of the following questions with a "snapshot" of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of the report, a representative from SEQOL responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The admission of patients and ensuring their timely and safe discharge from the hospital.
- The recognition by the National Royal College of Nurses of the work initiated by SEQOL to help patients suspected with deep vein thrombosis and how this work was being implemented nationally.
- Acknowledging the Committee's support and suggestions on how SEQOL can liaise with planners when designing areas in Swindon to ensure Swindon became a Dementia Friendly town.

The Committee welcomed and noted the report submitted by SEQOL.

## **NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) - Learning Disability**

At its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the Committee received a report by the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), providing an update on the plans to transform care services for people with learning disabilities and / or autism who have



mental health conditions or escalating and challenging behaviour. The Committee was updated on the findings of the Winterbourne View Hospital and on the transformation work undertaken nationally in response to this case. The Committee heard that Swindon was in an excellent position with no cases being referred out of borough and that partnership work was being undertaken with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Following the presentation of the report, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The support available to ensure that keeping disabled people living in the community does not come at the expense of the whole family unit.
- The success of publishing the Swindon and Wiltshire Transforming Care Partnership Service Model Plan in "Easy Read" as this enabled the community to better understand the plan.
- The effectiveness of unannounced visits by staff and Councillors to care homes as a device for reviewing quality of care provision.
- Work undertaken to enable timely assessments and intervention by the NHS Swindon CCG.
- The CCG's processes for ensuring the BME community were accessing services and the recording of this information.
- Continuing health care costs and the time taken by patients to go through health care assessments.

At the Committee's request, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) subsequently circulated information on the health costs and the time taken for patients to go through the health care assessment process.

## **End of Life Care**

At its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the Committee received a report by the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), detailing the end of life care of patients in Swindon. The Committee was advised that in Swindon, there were higher levels of emergency hospitalisation in the final months of life than the national average despite there being higher levels of deaths at home than average. They were directed to the national guidance and the work undertaken by commissioners, particularly the "Conversation Project" undertaken with SEQOL and Great Western Hospital. This project allowed staff to engage with patients and carers earlier and involve them by having meaningful and effective conversations about end of life care. The Committee noted that the Clinical Commissioning Group had signed up to the "Dying Well Charter".

Following the presentation of the report, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The importance of documenting wishes and planning in advance to ensure that end of life care truly reflected ones' requests.
- The process undertaken to ensure relatives were fully informed and participating in decisions made.
- Confirmation that professionals work in the best interest of patients when they are near end of life.

The Committee welcomed the report on End of Life Care and noted the work being undertaken by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

## **Community Service Transfer**

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the Committee received a report by the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), detailing the transfer of Community Services from SEQOL to Swindon Community Services. The Committee noted the smooth transfer of the service and staff from SEQOL to the Local Authority and Great Western Hospital (GWH) that included the induction of staff and the recruitment process undertaken to implement the new management structure. A new Transition Board was set up as part of the commissioning process to scrutinise staff skills, service provision and delivery.

Following the presentation of the report the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- Work undertaken to minimise organisational cultural challenges following SEQOL staff integration.
- For the need to better advise the community of service delivery capabilities and providers.
- How patients records were transferred from SEQOL to the Local Authority and GWH.
- The annual review of care packages and the inclusion in this review of all those transferred over from SEQOL.

The Committee welcomed the report on the transfer of SEQOL's services to the Local Authority and Great Western Hospital (GWH).

## **Continuing Healthcare**

At its meeting in February 2017, the Committee received an update by the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), on Continuing Healthcare. It was noted that Continuing Healthcare was a package of ongoing care that was provided and funded by the NHS where an individual had been found to need primary health care. The report indicated that the Continuing Healthcare service was designed to meet the needs that had arisen as a result of disability, accident or illness.

Following the presentation of the report the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The work of the Care Home Selection and Swindon Hospice and how the criteria for each provision differ.
- Occasions when patients accessed out of borough services.
- Comparison of appeals and complaints with national figures.
- Patient service funding.

The Committee welcomed the report on Continuing Healthcare and noted the work being undertaken by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

## **IVF Policy**

At its meeting in February 2017, the Committee received an update by the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), on the consultation process being undertaken between 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017, regarding proposed changes to its current IVF policy. It was explained that Swindon CCG was responsible for funding IVF treatment and the consultation was being conducted to enable Swindon CCG to align its policy with Wiltshire and BaNES CCGs.

Following the presentation of the report the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- IVF treatment guidance issued by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence.
- The rise in health service tourism where patients opted to travel overseas for treatment.
- Consultation feedback to be utilised for Diversity Impact Assessment and both would be made available on the Swindon CCG website.

The Committee welcomed the update on the IVF policy and noted the report.

## **Transitions Programme**

At its meeting in February 2017, the Committee received an update by the Director of Adult Social Service on the Transitions Programme which was set up in September 2016 in response to Task Group investigations and a report presented to the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Following the presentation of the report the Director of Adult Services responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- Age range covered by the Transitions Programme.
- The collaborative work between the Transitions and Route of Employment Teams.
- The introduction of the Work Scheme to ensure successful work experiences for young people.
- Support provided for young people with learning disabilities.

At the Committee's request, the Director of Adult Social Services subsequently circulated information to members regarding the number of Black and Minority Ethnic young people being supported by the Transitions Team.

## **Prescription Ordering Direct Service**

At its meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), submitted a report updating the Committee on the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service. The report showed that this service was based on a call centre model and it empowered patients by allowing them to order repeat prescriptions. This call centre was manned by trained prescription clerks and supported by registered pharmacist from Swindon CCG. He advised that due to the rise in demand, the POD service availability had increased. Mr Clarke also made reference to the number of surgeries using the POD service and to an increase in the volume of calls.

Following the presentation of the report the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members' questions and comments on the

following:

- Patients were still able to request a repeat prescription through their surgery and the POD system was an additional service.
- The role of the pharmacist in reviewing patients' prescriptions and how extended services, such as blood pressure monitoring, could be offered.
- All Swindon surgeries were encouraged to adopt the Prescription Ordering Direct system.
- Assistance given to those patients whose first language is not English.

The Committee welcomed the update on the POD services and noted the report.

## **Dementia Task Group**

The Dementia Task Group was first established during the 2015/16 Municipal year and continued through 2016/17. The Task group was comprised of the following members, supported by the Consultant Lead for Dementia in Public Health and the Public Health Programme Support Officer.

Councillor Bob Wright (Chair of the Task Group)  
Councillor Julie Wright  
Councillor Alan Bishop  
Councillor Steph Exell  
Councillor Carol Sydney-Smith  
Steve Henderson, Equalities (GWH)  
Mark Edwards (Healthwatch)  
Moira Pinson (Volunteer – Healthwatch)

Dementia is a key priority for Councils in the context of an increasingly older population and likely demand on health and social care services. In the absence of a cure for dementia, supporting people to live successfully with dementia in terms of diagnosis, lifestyle, environment, co-morbidities and palliative care is crucial, together with promoting the evidence for what can prevent dementia for people in the future. It was the objective of the Task Group to learn more about dementia, and current support work in Swindon, in order to make recommendations about where resources and services would be best targeted.

The Dementia Task Group met on seven occasions during the year:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 08.09.2016 | Meeting of Dementia Task Group members to review the Terms of Reference for the group following Scrutiny Committee. Membership was extended to include Moya Pinson, a volunteer representative from Healthwatch. John Kirk attended the meeting as Chair of the Swindon Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) and discussed the work of the DAA and opportunities to make Swindon a dementia friendly community. |
| 13.10.16   | Meeting of Dementia Task Group included more detailed discussion on making Swindon Dementia Friendly and the initiatives and training available on dementia awareness. Links to loneliness and isolation were also discussed.   |
| 24.11.16   | Meeting of Dementia Task Group attended by Patrick Weir, Head of Localities, Richard Bell, Head of Planning and Cindy-Ann Carter, lead planner for inclusive design. The group discussed the role of the community in supporting people with  |

dementia and work of the Planning Department. Funding for a dementia friendly co-ordinator for Swindon had been agreed by the One Swindon Partnership.

- 19.01.17 Meeting of Dementia Task Group focused on delivery of a conference in March entitled 'Ageing Well in a Dementia Friendly Swindon' with Healthwatch. This followed on from the Dementia Summit organised by the Alzheimer's Society in November.
- 16.02.17 Meeting of Dementia Task Group with further discussion about the conference. Also attended by Karen McMahon, Head of Customer Services, who updated the group on customer service training and plans for future changes which should assist customers with a range of issues including dementia.
- 17.03.17 Dementia Conference held at Council Chamber. Attended by over 70 people including the Mayor, MPs, Dr Roger Bullock, John Kirk and many community representatives and local organisations. Feedback suggested everyone found it useful, people had time to spend with other organisations, everyone learnt something new and people found it interesting and inspiring.
- 05.04.17 Meeting of Dementia Task Group discussed the success and learning from the conference, the dementia strategy and update on the 12 priorities, and considered the draft report for Scrutiny Committee.

The group has also reviewed the NICE Guidance NG16: Dementia, disability and frailty in later life – mid-life approaches to delay or prevent onset.

The Task Group reported to the parent Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The Committee welcomed the report and was very appreciative of the hard work of the Task Group in undertaking this review to inform the development of future change and improvement for dementia patients.

In considering the report, the Committee was also cognisant of the scale of the review and the limited opportunities, so far, to influence change and improvements. The Committee agreed that a Cabinet Member Advisory Group be set up to review the recommendations during the next municipal year. With the support of the Cabinet Member of Adult's Health and Social Care, meetings are currently being undertaken and a report will be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

## Summary

Overview & Scrutiny within Swindon is based on the principle of being Member-led, thereby making the best use of the local knowledge and expertise that Councillors possess. This has been reflected in the work undertaken by the Adult's Health, Adult's Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2016/17 where it ensured the decisions and work the Council and its partners take reflect the opinions, wishes and interests of the Swindon residents. Over the year, the Committee reviewed and scrutinised reports submitted to ensure that there are robust arrangements in place across the local health and care provision. Through the diligent leadership of the Chair, good relationships developed between the Committee and internal and external stakeholders.

## Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17:

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Committee met on 5 occasions. The Committee comprised the following nine Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>
Gemma McCracken (Chair)	Fay Howard
Malcolm Davies	Teresa Page
Colin Lovel	Carol Shelley
Barbara Perry	Nadine Watts
Gary Sumner	

### Appointment of Co-optees

The Council's Constitution allows that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee can appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees. The Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee is also required by the Council's Constitution to appoint parent governor and diocese representatives to its membership. It may also choose to appoint additional co-opted members.

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Committee was invited to confirm appointments and to consider whether any non-voting co-opted members should be sought to support its work programme for the year.

The Committee agreed the appointment of Liz Townend as the Church of England Diocese representative and confirmed the appointment of the following non-voting representatives:

- (a) Alison Paul (Swindon Association of Special School Headteachers).
- (b) Gary Evans (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers).
- (c) Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers).
- (d) Steve Henderson (Equalities Advisory Forum).
- (e) Mark Edwards (Swindon Healthwatch).
- (f) Doug Morris (Swindon parent and Carers Group).
- (g) Elaine Poulter (Parent Governor).

The Committee also agreed that appointments of a Catholic Church Diocese representative and another Parent Governor Representatives be made to the Committee. The Committee was unable to fill these places over the Municipal Year.

### Work Programme

At the commencement of each Municipal Year, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to establish a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year. The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies/bodies to consider.

The work programme is developed taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses

It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and the Borough and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will be effective. Each year, a consultation exercise is undertaken with Partner Organisations, Councillors and the public to find out what issues are important and might be included in the work programme for the year. The results of that consultation exercise are reported to the first meeting of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Municipal Year to support members in identifying which issues will be included in the work programme for the year. As with the Scrutiny Committee, work programmes are sufficiently flexible to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

The Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its work programme at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 when it determined that the following topics be included in the work programme:

- A report on the Children's Services performance that included the latest indicators across Children's Services.
- A report from the Members of the Youth Forum and Youth Parliament on their work programme and achievements for the year. This would give the Committee an opportunity to identify any issues raised that Overview and Scrutiny Committee can assist with.
- A report on the work being undertaken by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), School Nursing and Targeted Mental Health Service (TaMHS).
- Performance reports from Commissioners and Providers.
- A report on work being undertaken regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence, Domestic Violence and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- A report that reflected the latest school standards figures in order that the Committee can effectively scrutinise the performance of schools within the Borough.
- A report on work being undertaken following the SEND Reforms that became law on 1st September 2014.
- A report on the Education Transport appeals process.
- A report on work being undertaken at the Salt Way Centre.
- A report on the Restorative Youth Services Work Programme 2016/17,
- A report on the 30 Hours Free Childcare provision.
- A report on the Young People's Participation in Education, Employment and Training.
- A report with the latest information regarding the recruitment of Social Workers.

## Children's Services Performance Report

It is a key purpose of the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to hold Providers of Health Services to account. To that end, any Commissioner of Children's Health and Social Care Services in Swindon is required to provide information on children's health and social care services within the Borough and consult with the Committee on any planned substantial changes or developments to service provision.

At three of its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report providing an update on performance and key issues relating to commissioning and performance of Children's Services. The reports were presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a "snapshot" of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of each of the reports, the Director of Children's Services responded to Members' questions and comments. Issues raised over the course of the year include:

- The reasons for the delay in completing statutory assessments and whether this was due to the system used by the department.
- Confirmation that the data cleansing exercise relating to statutory assessments would be complete in the next quarter.
- Whether social workers' long term sickness was stress related and how this was being managed by the department.
- The timeframe to upload all Early Help Record and Plans onto the IT system, ensuring stakeholders involved in supporting young people had easier access to records.
- The reasons for the reduction in the number of Early Help Record and Plans issued and confirmation that the need for special resource provision in Swindon was high.
- An update on the physical and emotional support offered to refugee children and young people arriving in Swindon.
- The reasons for the decrease in the Post 16 in-learning rate. These were due to the number of courses being offered in the Sixth Form, the change in academic accreditation and the number young people changing courses during the year.
- The formatting of the report to reflect comparative data necessary to enable accurate comparisons as not all areas provide national statistics.
- How Early Years Health and Targeted Mental Health for young people data compared to national statistics.
- The transition process following the closure of Children Centres.
- The actions being undertaken to address disabled young people who were not in employment, education or training.
- The reasons why some young people had a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan and if these were being terminated prematurely.
- The reason for an increase in legal costs as reflected in the Financial and Procurement Implications section of the report.
- The reason why only 65.8% of children on Child protections plans were visited within timescales and work being undertaken to address this. Members noted that this figure primarily reflected a delay in recording the data as visits were undertaken in a timely manner.



- The possible impact of the Court of Appeal's decision regarding "in term" holiday absences.
- The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children looking for placements, if there were any language barriers and the support being provided by the department.
- The number of families seeking help from the Early Help Services
- The Department of Communities and Local Government's monitoring of the Troubled Families Programme.
- The reasons for the increase in fixed term exclusions, how schools dealt with them and the support provided by the local authority.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs that were permanently excluded and whether they were in the right educational setting for them.
- The number of young people benefitting from long term stable placements.
- The number of newly qualified social workers and Swindon's current vacancy rate.
- The age range of looked after children that have an adoption decision granted to them and the actions being undertaken to promote adoption.
- The performance quartiles for 2014/15 as compared to 2015/16.
- The reasons for the decrease in 12 month health checks within the Health Child Programme.
- Free school meals and its correlation with the decrease in obesity figures.
- How other local authorities record and report the statutory assessment to be completed within 45 days.
- The screening of looked after children for substance misuse.
- The U-Turn service provided by the local authority for looked after children. Members noted that additional support was also available through other providers.
- The actions being taken to address the number of 16 and 17 year old young people, particularly those with disabilities, who were taking on employment without an element of training in it.
- The reduction of referrals through work being undertaken by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)res
- The make-up of the MASH team and the expertise all staff bring to their posts.
- An understanding of who represents parents at schools when an exclusion is being considered.
- The increase in the number of children in Swindon waiting to be adopted.

In response to members' various comments and questions on performance and key issues relating to commissioning and performance of Children's Services, officers circulated a varying range of additional information, including details of the new Family Service Provision that came into effect in September 2016; information regarding the correlation between free school meals and obesity figures; and data regarding the age of pupils who were permanently excluded.

## **Youth Participation - Update**

At three of its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report by the Director of Adult Services, updating the Committee on the performance and key issues relating to youth participation, Swindon's Members of Youth Parliament, Swindon Youth Council and the Young Inspectors and Thought Tank.

The reports highlighted the important work undertaken by the Youth Parliament. These included the Youth Parliament election process, the committed participation by school, the national Youth Parliament campaign, "Don't Hate – Educate", the re-instatement of young inspectors, the additional funding received from the Council, the Youth Parliament's focus on disability and how the new Participation Manager was undertaking outreach work with

Councillors. The Committee further noted that a “rap” song was created by Westrop and Nythe Schools, the results from “Tell Us Survey” following the introduction of the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) reforms indicated that young people had felt services and opportunities had improved in the last 12 months and that goals were achievable.

Following the presentation of each of the reports, the Project Manager, STEP (Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project), responded to Members’ questions and comments. Issues raised over the course of the year include:

- The review undertaken by the Youth Parliament of the Great Western Hospital website.
- How the Committee could support the Youth Parliament in their work.
- How the Young Inspectors scrutinize and review.
- The continued robust engagement between Youth Parliament members and schools.
- The results of the Emotional Health and Well-being Survey and the identification of bullying and mental health issues as major issues of concern.
- The inclusion of minority groups in the survey
- The availability of support for all young people in the community.
- The need to refrain from using acronyms when signposting pathways to access support.

With regard to the review of the work of the Youth Parliament, the elected members of the Youth Parliament met with the Cabinet Member, Children Services, Councillor Carol Shelley, the Chair of the Committee, and the Service Manager, Children’s Social Work Teams to discuss ways of bringing forward the Youth Parliament’s work programme. The elected members of the Youth Parliament also met with Highworth Town Council to discuss the work of the Youth Parliament and ways in which the Town Council might support that work. They also visited Great Western Hospital and met with the Director of Strategy to review ways in which the Youth Parliament might support the hospital’s services for children and young adults.

In response to members’ various comments and questions on youth participation, reports were submitted to subsequent meetings providing updates on the responses to the results of the Emotional Health and Well-being Survey and the Hospital School Questionnaire.

## **Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Update**

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report by the Director of Strategy, Great Western Hospital (GWH) providing an update on performance and key issues relating to the Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The report was presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a “snapshot” of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

The report included information regarding the challenges to maintain strong staffing levels and on the improvements within the Paediatric Emergency Department, Children’s Acute Unit and Paediatric Assessment Unit, Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU), Maternity Services and Children’s Outreach Nursing Services (CONS).

## **NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group**

At four of its five meetings during the year, the Committee received a report providing updates of performance and key issues relating to Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group. The report was presented in a standard format, responding to each of the following questions with a “snapshot” of performance and key issues in that particular time period:

- What are the challenges that your organisation is facing?
- What have you done well?

Following the presentation of each of the reports, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responded to Members’ questions and comments. Issues raised over the course of the year included:

- The use of the nationally recognised self-assessment tool in relation to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) health action plan and the score attained by the CCG.
- The termination of the SEQOL contract and confirmation that funding for the Children’s clinics was from a different budget.
- Confirmation that discussions were being undertaken with other providers to ensure continuity of services provided in Children’s clinics.
- Service user involvement.
- The recruitment of an occupational therapist and community speech and a language therapist.
- Delayed publication of the Children’s Services Review and whether funding opportunities had been missed as a result.
- Increased data gathering about children with special educational needs and disabilities in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- The later in life diagnosis of children with Autism the support available in these cases.
- The recruitment of an occupational therapist and community speech and a language therapist.
- Delayed publication of the Children’s Services Review and whether funding opportunities had been missed as a result.
- Increased data gathering about children with special educational needs and disabilities in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- The later in life diagnosis of children with Autism the support available in these cases.

In response to members’ various comments and questions on performance and key issues relating to Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group, the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) subsequently circulated information regarding the work being undertaken to improve Children’s Mental Health Pathways.

## **Education Standards and Performance Report**

The Committee received a report showing how well Swindon children and young people have achieved in their public assessments in primary and secondary schools. The report highlighted where there have been improvements in performance, measured against national averages, and also where a decline had occurred. It also provided information on attendance and behaviour which can be an indicator of pupil and school performance. The report sought to ensure that full information on how children and young people achieve was available in the public domain and was open to scrutiny.

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Education responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The publication of Key Stage 5 data by schools and colleges.
- The difference in remit between the Swindon Challenge Board and the Education Strategy Board and the success criteria for the Swindon Challenge Board.
- Methods of improving the quality of teaching and learning and how buddying up between teachers, recruiting the right staff and upskilling existing staff supports this.
- Future trends for Key Stage 1 and 2 data.
- The re-moderation of Year 6 exam data.
- Support for schools in improving progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- The ability of schools to support those children who do not have access to IT equipment at home.
- The effect of new schools opening in relation to established schools in Swindon.
- The degree of influence over academies and the relationship with them to improve standards.
- Collaborative working with out of borough schools to improve standards in Swindon schools.
- Proposals to improve the Council's engagement with staff at the new schools.

## **Children's Safeguarding Update**

At its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Committee received an update on work being undertaken regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence, Domestic Abuse and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The report set out both progress as well as challenges on the following Children's Safeguarding related work of the Council and its partners, namely, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence, Domestic Violence and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Following the presentation of the report, the Director of Children's Services responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- Lessons learnt from undertaking CSE work were transferrable to other areas of child exploitation risks.
- The new model for sharing police notifications.
- The collaborative work being undertaken by the police with schools.
- Expanding the work being undertaken to include other partner organisations.
- Assessing the work of a new project to provide a multi-agency support pathway for vulnerable women who lost a child to the care system in preventing a subsequent removal.
- The new data system being introduced for Looked After Children.

The Committee welcomed the report and noted that following a successful bid to One Swindon for funding, leaflets on CSE had been produced and circulated to children, taxi drivers, hotels, leisure centres, bus drivers, parents and professionals. A CSE e-learning course was available and additional training had been developed through the Children's Workforce Development Team to enhance practitioners' skills. The Committee further noted that the Multi-agency Risk Panel (MARF) saw an increase in the number of referrals for children who were criminally exploited. MARF assessed children who are at risk of CSE, criminal exploitation and missing and its work entailed liaising with the Police to support vulnerable children.

At the Committee's request, the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, included information on the number of "hits" on The Child Sexual Exploitation website (<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/cse>).

## **Restorative Youth Services Work Programme 2016/17**

At its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, in furtherance of its specific responsibility for the review of Local Authority services delivered to children and young people in Swindon, the Committee received a report that provided an overview of the work of Restorative Youth Services, including progress in relation to targets and challenges to future service delivery.

Following the presentation of the report, the Service Manager, Restorative Youth Services (RYS) responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The collaborative work being undertaken by the team with School Improvement Advisors located in schools where challenges were highlighted and support offered.
- Housing provision for 16 and 17 year old young people.
- The inclusion of support on "The Dock" website for young people with eating disorders and that this issue may be tied in to stress, alcohol or substance misuse.
- The external review of the YOT undertaken by the ex-YOT manager of West Berkshire on work associated with safeguarding and risk management.
- The reasons for the high number of referrals on the On Trak Youth Counselling Service and the actions being taken to address this.
- Actions being undertaken to address the factors behind the high re-offending rates.
- The rate of young people re-engaging with the Youth Offending Team.
- The anticipated effect on the Youth Offending teams' work as a result of the pending publication of the Government review into Youth Justice Provision.
- Delivery of the anti-crime programme in Swindon schools.

The Committee noted the report but also asked for the Restorative Youth Services to liaise with Youth Parliament regarding topics to be included in "The Dock". The Committee also received information on the number of and waiting time for referrals on the waiting list for the "On Trak" Counselling Service.

## **Education Transport Appeals**

At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the Committee received a report setting out the current financial and legislative position concerning home to school transport appeals. It was noted that the report contained information on recent changes to the Education Transport appeals policy that came into effect from September 2016. School Travel and Transport Guidance was issued by the Department for Education in February 2014 and July 2014 regarding how appeals were to be undertaken to ensure uniformity across all local authorities.

Following the presentation of the report, the Admissions Manager responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- How the Admissions and Transport Departments ensured parents were able to access information and complete the application for a transport appeal.
- The difference between the submission of an appeal from a mainstream setting and a Special Educational Needs (SEN) setting. Miss Mathis confirmed that whilst the process was the same, the SEN team would be involved in the process when an appeal was received from an SEN setting.

- The demarcation of the process between the Admissions and Transport Departments.
- How the Admissions and Transport Departments differentiated between the catchment areas for the Eastern Village, Wanborough and Ridgway schools.
- How the Admissions and Transport Departments consulted when a review of school places was undertaken
- Confirmation that consultation on the 18/19 Transport Policy would be undertaken in the near future.

In response to a query regarding transport appeals, the Admissions Manager circulated a copy of the leaflet sent out to parents when they submitted a transport appeal.

## **Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inspection**

At two of its five meetings, the Committee received reports updating the Committee on progress made in readiness for the new joint local area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) inspection. It was explained that from May 2016, all local areas in England were subject to a joint inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This was to judge the effectiveness of the areas in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The report had been structured to highlight the strengths and challenges of the work that had been undertaken, making specific reference to the recently updated self-assessment tool provided by the Council for disabled children. A joint improvement plan was created with Clinical Commission Group, Swindon, that will provide targeted support to children and young people who have special needs and / or disabilities.

Following the presentation of each of the reports, the Head of Education Services responded to Members' questions and comments. Issues raised over the course of the year include:

- The transference of children with Statements to Education Health and Care Plans and how this backlog was being addressed.
- The confirmation that schools undertook annual assessments and that the department relied on the schools to undertake these earlier in the scholastic year to ensure conversions were completed on time.
- The reasons for the high percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan in Swindon and how this data compared with statistical neighbours.
- The effect of staff illness on the work to be undertaken.
- The reasons for continued dialogue with parents to ensure they were able to access local provision.
- The difficulty in balancing input and outcome of assessments and how the framework underpinned the work being undertaken. This allowed parents to get support without the need for their child to undertake a formal assessment.
- An explanation of the models being used by other local authorities.
- The actions being undertaken to support young people with special educational needs who were over 18 years old.
- The progress made on the development of the single pathway provision services for young people aged 19 to 25.
- How academies were dealing with the increased number of fixed term exclusions in Swindon and the support being provided by the Local Authority.
- The alternative placement of excluded pupils.
- The number of schools actively engaging with the Parents Carer Forum.
- Parental involvement in inspections jointly undertaken by Health Department and the Local Authority.

- The use of the “early help” assessment tool and how this identified those needing a statutory assessment of special educational needs.
- The number of students undertaking internships who then went on to paid employment.
- Narrowing the attainment gap at Key Stage 3.
- Work being conducted at the North Swindon Learning Campus.

In response to a query at the Committee’s meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016 regarding the self-assessment processes, the Committee subsequently requested that officers submit a report regarding exclusions in Swindon during the next (2017/180 Municipal Year.

## **Provision at Saltway Centre**

At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Committee received a report updating the Committee on the services being provided for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities at the Salt Way Centre. The report was structured to reflect themes providing an overview of services and reflected how the department responded to the increasing demand for services and referred to the various sources funding the service.

Following the presentation of the report, the Integrated Service Manager responded to Members’ questions and comments on the following:

- An update on the joint CCG and Council review of the Community Health Services and when this was likely to be undertaken.
- The previous contribution level relating to short break services in contrast to the current charge level.
- How parents were utilising their fifteen hours of funded child care within the early years care sector and that this was in addition to the short break service allocated hours.
- How the hard to reach families were being targeted to ensure they benefit from short break services.
- The support provided for young people accessing 30 hours of child care and on the work being undertaken with Great Western Hospital in implementing this.
- The number of pupils accessing long term Speech and Language therapy.
- The process of diagnosing children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The work undertaken by the Multi-Agency Assessment team regarding child integration.

The Committee requested that the Integrated Service Manager update them on work being undertaken to target hard to reach families during the next Municipal Year.

## **Targeted Mental Health Services (TaMHS)**

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report on performance and key issues relating to Targeted Mental Health Services. The report encompassed work commissioned with a range of providers. It was noted that the report had been structured to highlight the improvements that had been made and areas where further work would be undertaken. The report highlighted the improvement of referral to assessment and assessment to treatment times and explained that funding from the Transformation Fund helped towards the recruitment of staff to undertake this work. Schools now bought the Early Help Teams’ services through the Traded Service process and this helped ensure staff capacity.

Following the presentation of the report, the Operational Manager, Early Help, responded to Members’ questions and comments on the following:

- The percentage of assessments undertaken within 28 weeks of referral.
- The main causes of inappropriate referrals and the actions being taken to address this.
- Follow up actions undertaken for young people missing assessments.
- The identification of links between young people on fixed term exclusions and the services utilised and how the availability of such information might be beneficial in determining appropriate care packages.
- The engagement of young people in care package assessments.
- The length of referral times as compared with the scholastic timetable and how this may have an adverse effect on educational attainment.
- The benefits of using technology to ensure appointments were not missed and how data sharing through technology could also be used by schools and service providers to the benefit of the child.

In response to the Committee's requests, the Operational Manager, Early Help, liaised with the Youth Parliament regarding work being undertaken by the Early Help Team, circulated a breakdown by age of the number of young people referred to the Team and further circulated the number of assessments fulfilled due to the young person being brought to the clinic at a future time.

## **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report providing an update on the position of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Swindon. The report highlighted the increase in referral rates for children and young people with moderate to severe mental health and confirmed this was in line with national trends. The Committee noted the work being undertaken with the Clinical Commissioning Group to stream line processes between CAMHS and Targeted Mental Health Services (TaMHS) to improve access to services and promote early intervention. A new service to help young people with eating disorder had been set up following investment from three CCGs that would see referral to assessments being undertaken within 4 weeks.

Following the presentation of the report, the Clinical Director, Oxford Health, responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The benefits of group therapy for young people, particularly those with eating disorder or who self-harm.
- The timescale to redesign the CAMHS and TaMHS services.
- How the services provided by the new Eating Disorders Clinics would help young people.
- The live-in facilities available within clinics for young people with eating disorders in Swindon.
- The support available for young people with an eating disorder when they transit into adulthood.

## **30 Hours Free Childcare**

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report regarding the work being undertaken as part of Swindon Borough Council's role as an Early Implementer of the government initiative to offer working families '30 Hours Free Childcare'. The report explained the work being undertaken by the Council in support of this initiative. Swindon's work as an



Early Implementer had been recognised by Caroline Dineage, MP, Minister for Early Years and Equalities, and that the scheme was being rolled out nationally in September 2017. It was noted that the number of children participating in the scheme had increased and uptake was now at 85 per cent of the available places. Participants taking part in the trial, including Great Western Hospital and Thames Water Utilities, and discussions were being undertaken with the Ministry of Defence staff take-up of this provision. It was further noted that a Capital bid was submitted to the Department for Education for a share of the £50m grant funding allocated to assist the delivery of the 30 Hour places by September 2017.

Following the presentation of each of the reports, the Strategic Planning Manager, responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- The inclusion of childminders in the scheme.
- The offer of weekend childcare.
- Reasons for the low take-up of the scheme at Great Western Hospital and if car parking problems at the Hospital were a contributing factor.
- How shift workers within the various participating groups were encouraged to take up the scheme.
- Marketing of the scheme to encourage take-up.
- The breakdown of how the £150K was being allocated. Members noted that the scheme was self-financing.
- Work of the Engagement Officer in assisting families where English was a second language.
- The current exclusion from the scheme of Teaching and Early Years staff.
- The scheme would be on offer to all families from September 2017. This includes Teaching and Early Years staff with children.
- The participation in the scheme by the large nursery chains.
- The criteria for the scheme and confirmation that these would not change once it was implemented nationally.
- How any subsequent criteria change would affect parents of children with special needs.
- The availability of funding for providers to support children with special needs and their carers.

In response to a specific query regarding the 30 Hours Free Childcare, the Strategic Planning Manager circulated a breakdown of where the 360 pupils accepting the 30 Hour places were attending and a list of the schools willing to develop additional provision.

### **Young People's Participation in Education, Employment and Training**

At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report detailing the actions taken to address the issues raised at the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016, regarding post-16 participation. The report reflected the Participation Strategy work being undertaken with Swindon schools, colleges, other providers and council services that work together to minimise the number of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Following the presentation of the report, the Strategic Needs Analysis Consultant, responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- How schools and colleges' operate and deliver outcomes for young people. This included information on the restructuring at colleges, new leads working on this area and the work of the pastoral teams.
- Youth Engagement workers based within localities and the referral work they undertake with providers to help those who were Not in Education, Employment or Training.
- Data relating to young people attending for one term only due to inappropriate course choice and the follow-up work being conducted to advise them and inform choices.
- The reasons why 223 young people were in the "unknown" category and the work being undertaken in relation to the new "NEET plus unknown" national indicator.
- Services provided by Job Centre Plus and the National Career Service and Level 3 providers to assist , young people in updating their curriculum vitae and prepare for further education or employment.
- The data accumulated over the past year indicating that young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) were achieving better outcomes.
- The number of internship being offered by colleges.
- The role of the virtual headteacher and the impact of her work in schools and colleges, particularly regarding care leavers.

Following the meeting, Committee members received information on the number of students who did not complete their first year in Further Education. Officers also circulated data on the number of care leavers aged 16 to 18 who were in education, employment or training and this information was reflected by age to show actual number of young people.

### **Recruitment of Social Workers**

At its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Committee received a report providing an update on a) the recruitment of social workers; b) Government Social Work accreditation; and c) Social Work Health Check and caseload issues. It was noted that social workers deliver statutory responsibilities as set out in the Children's Act 1989 and that the need to recruit social workers was still high. To address this, a microsite/ recruitment and induction process has been developed to provide information to potential candidates. Additionally, an academy approach to recruitment and development of newly qualified social workers had been established and this helped them reach the standards required for their year of practice. Career progression scheme and aspiring manager's programmes had also been introduced. The Committee was informed that caseload management aided the delivery of effective social work and that dedicated recruitment would help reduce the number of children per social worker.

Following the presentation of the report, the Director of Children's Services responded to Members' questions and comments on the following:

- Reliance on agency social workers to undertake the work.
- An update on the recruitment drive to employ new social workers.
- Engagement with other agencies to provide social services.
- The current number of vacancies, retention and turnover numbers of social workers.
- The recruitment of support staff to assist social workers in their work.
- Support through supervision being provided to social workers.
- The appraisal system for social workers.
- Review of work practices to reduce bureaucracy.
- An update on the graduate programme.

Following the meeting, the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, circulated information to Committee members on the number of agency social workers currently employed by the Council and also the number of staff appraisals undertaken.

## **Summary**

Over the previous year the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to focus on scrutinising the actions being taken to improve children's services. The Committee has scrutinised many issues over the year including school admissions, attendance and attainment, early year's provision and children's health. As members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, the Committee challenged the Council and other public services to make sure that they give young people in Swindon every chance to live happy, fulfilling and successful lives. Members of the Committee worked closely with internal and external stakeholders and used their experience of representing children and parents in their wards to recommend to them how they can ensure their services meet their needs.

# Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17:

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 5 occasions. The Committee comprised the following eleven Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>
Wayne Crabbe	Emma Bushell
Malcolm Davies	Mark Dempsey
Cathy Martyn (Chair)	Des Moffatt
Gary Sumner	Carol Shelley
Steve Weisinger	

## Work Programme

At the commencement of each Municipal Year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to establish a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the municipal year. The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies/bodies to consider.

The work programme is developed taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses

It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and the Borough and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will be effective. Each year, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Director for Economy, Regeneration and Skills considered the issues that they felt were important and might be included in the work programme for the year. The outcome of this meeting were reported to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Municipal Year to support members in identifying which issues will be included in the work programme for the year. As with the Scrutiny Committee, work programmes are sufficiently flexible to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

The Committee considered its work programme at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 when it determined that the following issues be included in its work programme for the year:

- Draft Economic Strategy – To consider the key elements of the Strategy and for Members to review how they wish the Strategy to evolve over the next 12 months.
- Forward Swindon Ltd – To receive updates on various town centre regeneration projects.
- Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) – To receive an update from the Director of the SWLEP
- A Sustainable Approach to Business rates – To consider the short term income and longer term sustainability of Business Rates
- Access to Higher Education – To consider how the Council ensures that more residents are able to progress to higher education.
- Apprenticeships and Higher Education – To consider how the Council encourages companies to provide meaningful apprenticeships resulting in jobs and how the Council engages with sixth form colleges.
- Swindon Museum and Art Gallery – To receive an update on progress with relocation proposals.

## **Draft Economic Strategy**

The Committee received a number of updates throughout the year on the draft Economic Strategy and how it was evolving. The reports provided an overview of the Draft Strategy, the delivery arrangements for the Strategy across the Council and Forward Swindon Limited (FSL) and outlined the role and priorities of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP).

The Committee considered the aims of the Economic Strategy and noted that a fifth aim had been added to the Strategy - 'To make Swindon a more inclusive place, with reduced worklessness and improving health and well-being outcomes'.

Issues raised by members during the Committee's consideration of the reports included:

- The opportunities presented in the Autumn Statement and the Industrial Strategy.
- The challenge of delivering the priorities for Swindon's economy and the detail needed to populate an action plan.
- Redevelopments in town centre areas and how this impacts the development of businesses, in particular the middle of the town centre.
- The retail offer available in the middle of the town centre and timescales for redevelopment.
- The level of business rates in the town centre.
- The growth of the economy to keep pace with the growth of the housing market.
- The need for an Inward Investment Officer.
- The Economic Strategy delivery plan and how it underpins the Strategy.
- How projects would be funded.
- How the Strategy will manage the tension between short term gain for lower skilled jobs and the long term gain of higher skilled jobs.
- The location for emerging low carbon businesses.
- The design of homes to incorporate car charging points.
- The themes of the Strategy and their outcomes.
- Housing offer available in Swindon for higher earners.
- Re-consideration of the priorities for the town to encourage economic growth.
- The links between the Economic Strategy and the Local Plan in relation to housing and highways developments.
- The proposed development of the Town Centre.

- The possibility of converting one-way roads to a two-way traffic model in the Town Centre.
- The use of technology to aid traffic flows.
- Transport planning for the Eastern Villages.

The Committee noted the reports they received and the progress being made on the draft Economic Strategy.

## **Forward Swindon Ltd**

At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017, the Committee received an update from the Chief Executive of Forward Swindon Ltd (FSL), about a number of regeneration projects for the town centre area of Swindon.

The Chief Executive spoke in detail about the various projects, listed below, and responded to questions and issues raised by the Committee in respect of each of these:

- Kimmerfields
- Kimmerfields 'enabling works'
- Corn Exchange
- Carriage Works/Bristol Street/GWR tunnel
- Carriage Works Phase 1 (units 3 and 5)
- Aspen House and Granville Street
- North Star
- Mechanics Institute
- Public realm improvements
- 1-3 Farringdon Road

The Committee noted the updates received on the various projects and Members were encouraged to visit Forward Swindon Ltd offices to gain a more in depth understanding of the projects of interest.

## **Swindon Borough Council Response to the EU Referendum**

At its meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 the Committee received a report in response to a request from Full Council for the Committee to consider the impact of the recent European Union referendum and subsequent exit of the UK from the European Union, and how this would affect the Swindon economy.

In order to fully engage with the request from Full Council, a Task Group was established. It met on two occasions and reviewed evidence suggesting that Swindon was particularly exposed to Brexit risks because of the type and nature of businesses in the town. The Task Group approved a list of companies to interview and a set of interview questions. The Economy Team, held a number of business engagement and growth interviews based on the work of the Task Group. The outcomes of the interviews were fed into the Economic strategy along with any relevant concerns raised by businesses to the local Government Association.

## **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

At its meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received an update report on the work of the Local Enterprise partnership (LEP), its achievements, priorities and challenges and how it is resourced.

The report covered the following areas of interest:

- How the SWLEP was established.
- The governance of the SWLEP.
- The achievements of the SWLEP.
- The challenges faced by the SWLEP.
- Resourcing the SWLEP.

Issues raised by members during the Committee's consideration of the report included:

- The value of the Great Stall Bridge transport scheme in comparison to other transport schemes.
- The success of SWLEP in securing central government funding during 2014/15 to support a range of capital projects across Swindon and Wiltshire in comparison with other LEP's.
- The composition of the SWLEP compared to its geographical area and potential areas of conflict for SWLEP Board members.
- The Town Centre Masterplan and whether it needed to be updated in order to aid the SWLEP with future funding bids.
- The possibility of linking Swindon to the Cambridge/Oxford innovation corridor.
- The bid for higher education and when notification of the outcome would be received.
- How the SWLEP engages with businesses and how that informs the Economic Strategy.
- The delivery timescales of the Swindon Rapid Transit and the Swindon Bus Exchange schemes.
- The role of the SWLEP Joint Task Group.

The Committee noted the report they received about the Local Enterprise Partnership.

## **Business Rates: A Sustainable Approach**

At its meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Committee received a report about the relationship between business rates and economic growth.

The report highlighted the different departmental perspectives on business rates growth through economic growth, and how this linked to decisions taken within planning.

Issues raised by members during the Committee's consideration of the report included:

- The need for new employment land when there are existing pockets of unused employment land readily available.
- The exclusion of office space from certain planning applications.
- The barriers to the delivery of projects at development sites.
- Access to commercial land at the Wichelstowe development.
- The Commercial Investment Fund, its allocation of investment into key assets, and potential returns generated.
- The variation in business rates for the town centre premises and those in retail parks.
- The support for national retail chains locating to district centres.
- The adoption of tighter timescales for approved planning applications

commencing to avoid parcels of land being left undeveloped.

The Committee noted the report they received about the sustainable approach to Business rates.

## **Update on Progress on Pledge 18, Apprenticeships, Pledge 19, Higher Education and the Post 16 Review**

At its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 the Committee received an update report on the following areas:

- Securing a range of options to access higher education (Pledge 19)
- Increasing the number of businesses employing young people as an apprentice from 15% to 20% (Pledge 19)
- Post 16 Review

The report advised that the work on skills and employment was driven by the Skills and Employment Strategy, which was overseen by the Skills and Employment Board. This Strategy was updated in December 2016 following work with the Board and its sub-groups. It was noted that the sub-groups had recently been reviewed and rationalised and there would now be three sub-groups: Skills for Growth, which included Apprenticeships, Skills for Inclusion and Higher Education.

Issues raised by members during the Committee's consideration of the report included:

- Funding for Higher Education by the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Plans for a higher education centre and associated funding issues.
- On-going discussions with Oxford Brookes University.
- Aspirations and leadership support for a University in Swindon.
- Information about higher education courses and the institutions delivering them.
- The economic benefits of a university located in a town and city.
- Website for school leavers with information about available further and higher education courses.
- Updates on the work of the Higher Education Sub-Group Task Groups.
- Information about work experience opportunities for students.
- The plans to increase level 4 and above apprenticeships.
- The promotion and plans for Jobfest 2017.
- In-house apprenticeship training.
- The mechanisms in place for schools to encourage 6<sup>th</sup> Formers to undertake apprenticeships.
- The findings of the Post 16 Review.

The Committee noted the report they received and asked for an update on the Higher Education Strategy at a future meeting.

## **Swindon Museum and Art Gallery**

At its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 the Committee received an update in relation to the programme to relocate the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery (SMAG) from its existing site at Bath Road to a proposed new location in the Town Centre.



SMAG Trust unveiled its architectural concept for the SMAG in December 2016, a statement building located in the town centre and due to be opened in 2021. The building would constitute the first phase in the development of the Cultural Quarter in the town centre and first step in Swindon achieving UK City of Culture status during the late 2020's. The Committee noted the requirement for substantial commitments to the capital costs, detailed business planning and on-going revenue models. It was noted that the Council had made a commitment to undertake a transfer of the running costs of the current SMAG to the new facility on an on-going basis.

Issues raised by members during the Committee's consideration of the report included:

- Consideration of locations for the SMAG, including the Carriage Works.
- Councillor invites to publicity events.
- Budgets for publicity material.
- Revenue costs for the new SMAG in comparison to current levels.
- The vision for the Carriageworks and the Mechanics Institute.
- Options available in the event of an unsuccessful National Lottery Fund bid.
- Potential public realm improvements to the proposed Cultural Quarter.
- Gathering public support for the SMAG proposals and wider development schemes.
- Promoting the benefits of the SMAG to all residents.
- Construction costs and the effects of inflation.
- Accessibility of artefacts and collections from the Science Museum and Earls Court for display purposes.
- A statement building for the town centre.

The Committee noted the report they received about the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

## **Summary**

The Growing the Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee has, in 2016/17, undertaken a varied and demanding work programme, successfully completing its objectives agreed at its first meeting of the municipal year. The Committee fully embraced the work required to influence policy development in relation to the Councils Economic Strategy 2016-2026 and how the UK's EU Referendum may influence the Strategy and have an impact on Swindon's economy. A piece of work that continued from the previous municipal year, with the establishment of a Task Group to consider the impact of the recent European Union referendum and subsequent exit of the UK from the European Union, and how this would affect the Swindon economy. The members have fully engaged with the work of the Committee demonstrating a high level of commitment to carrying out its function.

## Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Number of meetings and Membership of the Committee for 2016/17:

In the Municipal Year 2016/17, the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 6 occasions. The Committee comprised the following nine Borough Councillors:

<b>Conservative Councillors</b>	<b>Labour Councillors</b>
Emma Famarzi	Steve Allsopp
Maureen Penny,	Des Moffatt
Timothy Swinyard,	Chris Watts
Caryl Sydney-Smith,	Robert Wright
Nick Martin.	

### Work Programme

At the commencement of each Municipal Year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to establish a work programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the municipal year. The work programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies/bodies to consider.

The work programme is developed taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses

It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and the Borough and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny will be effective. Each year, a consultation exercise is undertaken with Partner Organisations, Councillors and the public to find out what issues are important and might be included in the work programme for the year. The results of that consultation exercise are reported to the first meeting of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Municipal Year to support members in identifying which issues will be included in the work programme for the year. As with the Scrutiny Committee, work programmes are sufficiently flexible to allow the Committee to respond to issues that might arise during the course of the year and, to that end, it is reviewed at every Committee meeting, or as often as the Committee sees fit, to ensure that it remains relevant and that members and officers have sufficient capacity to effectively achieve its objectives.

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its work programme at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016 when it determined that the following issues be included in its work programme for the year:

- Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services be requested to attend the meeting to discuss emerging risks within the Council's budget.
- Cabinet Members, to be advised by the Board Director Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Office, to attend to discuss areas of financial risk and ways to generate income within their portfolios.
- Performance Management
- Recruitment/Retention of Council staff and reducing agency costs with regard to Adult Care.
- To consider the development of a coherent strategy for maximising use of the Town Centre's Heritage Assets
- Digital Strategy
- The use of technology to drive down costs and to communicate with the Borough's residents.
- Financial implications of proposed Government changes to Business Rates
- Business Sponsorship on Council property/assets as a way to generate income

### **Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services Question and Answer session**

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, attended the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016. He reported on progress and performance in respect of each of the service areas within his portfolio of responsibility and, in particular, referenced the report submitted to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 presenting the 2016/17 revenue forecast out-turn as at the end of July 2016 concerning the first quarter's monitoring position for the capital programme, and the updated financial plan to 2020 that councils are required to submit to Government by 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

Councillor Holland responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- A possible "get-out" clause in the Efficiency Statement.
- That the principle of devolution should apply regardless of the physical structure of Local Government.
- Joined up working with the Police Authority.
- The standard of services that the Council provides in order to balance its budgets.
- The need to consider all possible options for the future delivery of the Libraries Service including outsourcing.
- Going Local, including Parishing.
- Difficulties in recruiting social workers.
- Legal costs due to planning application appeals.
- Alternative value for money options for areas due to rising demand.
- Whether the strong leader model or the elected mayor option for local governance is the cheapest.
- Problems with continuity of service associated with employing Social Workers through agencies.
- Whether the Council achieved value for money through its contracts with SEQOL.
- If the Council achieves value for money from internal and external providers of services.
- Any overspend associated with the decision to extend the Libraries consultation period.
- Income creation and commercialisation becoming a key priority for the Council.

- The total spend to date on the Wichelstowe project.

The departmental areas that fall under the Chief Executive's budget heading, the presentation and the performance report submitted by Councillor Holland were noted.

### **Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care**

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care, attended the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and presented to the Committee a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Adult Services (older people, people with a learning disability, physical disabilities and mental health)
- Adult Voluntary Sector Contracts
- Implementation of Care Act 2014
- Adult Local Safeguarding Board
- Public Health – adults
- Supported Housing
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Maintaining links between the Council and partner organisations in the Health Services
- SEQOL Client Lead member
- Health Improvement
- Sexual Health
- Specific Strategic projects

Councillor Ford, reported on specifically those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints. He referred to the changes with SEQOL and the work being undertaken by Enterprise Works where marketing their products would increase revenue. He emphasised that whilst the commercialisation of Enterprise works was being undertaken, the main focus was on ensuring that Enterprise Works would continue their work of supporting individuals moving into long term employment.

Councillor Ford with the Director of Adult Services responded to questions and observations on the following matters:

- Work being undertaken between the Clinical Commissioning Group, Great Western Hospital and the local authority regarding delay transfer of care and how this would affect the deployment of resources over the winter months.
- The challenge of bed pressures that was addressed through proactively working with other agencies.
- The proposal of selling products produced by Enterprise Works in the centre of Swindon.
- Marketing Enterprise Works by promoting their location and updating their website to reflect products available.
- The importance of retaining health navigators to promote healthy lifestyles and eating.
- Marketing of fast food outlets on local authority lamp posts and how these may impact the healthy eating message.

- The importance at taking into account the patients' wishes regarding their discharge from hospital.
  - Learning disabilities services' costs.
  - Dedicated accommodation being set up at Hawthorn Avenue and Pembroke Street.
  - Differences in performance between self-directed support and carers receiving direct payments for support. Members noted how the local authority was supporting carers and promoting self-directed support.
  - The importance of being able to support the community whilst adhering to data protection legislation.
- The presentation by Councillor Ford was noted and the Director of Strategy at Great Western Hospital, was asked to circulate to members of the Committee the early release and re-admission rate of patients.

### **Questions and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Streetsmart**

Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for StreetSmart, attended the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and reported on progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Waterside Depot Management
- Streetsmart
- Public Toilets,
- Envirocrime,
- Waste Disposal / Waste Minimisation
- Street Lighting [maintenance]
- Street Cleaning
- Recycling
- Refuse Collection – Domestic & Trade
- Ground & Tree Maintenance and open spaces
- Removal of graffiti and abandoned vehicles
- Parks (Streetsmart services only)
- Environmental Issues Landscape & Countryside (including Community Forest)
- Playgrounds, including those that are not presently utilised.
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Assets
- Building & Engineering
- Building Services, cleaning, catering & security services
- Gullies and drainage, minor road repairs, potholes
- Digital by Design
- IT Strategy and delivery

Councillor Williams, referred to specifically those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints. He referred to work being undertaken to maximise revenue, particularly by the EnviroCrime Team, the introduction of wake facilities and themed funerals at the Crematorium and the implementation of charges at the household waste recycle centre.

Councillor Williams, with the council's Head of Streetsmart, responded to members' questions and observations on the following matters:

- Corporate Social Responsibility for both Council and local businesses.
- Working with the community, particularly those with no access to transport, to discourage fly tipping.
- The use of cameras at particular sites to discourage fly tipping.
- Charging at the new weighbridge at Waterside Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) and confirmation that this site was only used for trade waste by commercial businesses.
- Refuse disposal and enforcement in the town centre.
- Raising community awareness that the Council was returning certain areas to a more natural environment to encourage the return of flora and fauna and that these areas were not fly tipping zones.
- The impact of the weaker sterling on disposing recycled material overseas.
- How Euro bins may reduce fly tipping and improve the local environment.
- Benefits of paying for green waste by direct debit.
- The importance of ensuring schools engage with the Enviro-Crime Team.
- Confirmation that a review of salt gritting operations in the borough would be taken in the New Year.

The presentation by Councillor Williams was noted and the Head of StreetSmart was requested to (a) liaise with the Director of Law and Democratic Services and update the Committee on the current Council position regarding Corporate Social Responsibility regulations, and (b) circulate information to the Committee regarding the following matters:

- 1) The statutory and non-statutory services that would be transferred to parish councils.
- 2) The recycling proposals and charging structure at Waterside.
- 3) The income generated from fishing rights.

### **Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills**

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, attended the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and reported on progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Economic Development
- Museums, including Steam
- Commercialisation of services
- Arts and Culture
- Community Heritage
- Regeneration
- Forward Swindon Limited Client Lead Member
- Strategic (Commercial Property Portfolio)
- Adult Learning
- Tertiary Education
- Skills
- Specific Responsibility for Lydiard Park Project
- Country Parks (securing sustainable uses)
- Strategic Parking assets

Councillor Perkins, referred to specifically those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results

and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Councillor Perkins referred to future investment to generate income and introduced Mrs Jan Willis, Interim Corporate Director Resources, who advised that the Commercial Investment Strategy was being submitted to Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016 for its consideration. She confirmed that the strategy reflected long term investment and, in line with the Government Framework, sought approval to create an Investment Strategy Board who would oversee capital investments. Mrs Willis advised that the strategy included a proposal to establish a commercial investment fund.

Councillor Perkins, supported by the Corporate Director, Economy, Regeneration and Skills, responded to questions and observations on the following matters:

- How capital funding was generated and was to be managed by the Investment Strategy Board in order to allow strategic acquisition and generate income streams. It was noted that acquisitions would include strategic land and an enhanced commercial property portfolio.
- Confirmation that sites for a second recycle centre were being considered.
- The role of Forward Swindon Limited (FSL) to help regenerate parts of Swindon, including Kimmerfield and Farringdon Road areas. Members noted FSL's proposed consultation regarding Aspen House.
- The importance of ensuring that workshop spaces for small to medium businesses were made available as part of Swindon's regeneration programme.
- Confirmation that projects would be monitored to ensure completion within timescales and budgets.
- How the Business Engagement and Retention Services help small to medium businesses start-up and how they provide on-going support, including assisting businesses to access local, national and European grants.
- The importance of increasing footfall in the Centre of Swindon and how regeneration of the town centre would help this.
- Ensuring small businesses in the town centre were encouraged and supported and were not stifled by larger businesses.
- The criteria for business rates on small to medium sized businesses and its effect on them.
- The Plasma gasification research being undertaken in Swindon and the commercialisation of this project.
- The development of the former Even Swindon Infant School site in Rodbourne Road and the traffic congestion implications of such development.
- Comparison between Coate Water Park and Lydiard Park car park charges and the amount of subsidy being allocated to Coate Water Park. Members noted that Stanton Park was also classified as a country park.
- Resurfacing of the free car parking site in Gorse Hill and how the community was using this as a long stay car parking area and how this was adversely affecting local businesses.
- Progress made in bringing a University to Swindon.
- Confirmation that the property portfolio included heritage sites were geographically located within one area in Swindon. These attractions include the Carriage Works, Mechanics Trusts, the Railway Village, the Health Hydro and the Platform.

Following the presentation by Councillor Perkins, which was noted, Forward Swindon Limited was requested to circulate information to the Committee regarding the number of businesses

they had helped to invest or move into Swindon over the past two years, and the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage, was requested to circulate to the Committee information regarding revenue generated by Coate Water Park parking charges and on discussions that had been undertaken with the University Technical College and Dyson regarding future collaborative work.

### **The use of technology to drive down costs and to communicate with the Borough's residents**

At its meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Committee received a report from the Chief Information Officer and the Head of Communications highlighting the changes in technology being implemented to reduce corporate costs. Mr Glyn Peach, the Chief Information Officer, outlined the direction currently being undertaken by the Information and Technology Department (IT) and Communications Department and highlighted opportunities for smarter ways to communicate with Borough residents. He commented on the migration of staff to Office 365 e-mail and to the predicted cost savings of "Hybrid Mail" as this would streamline printing and posting. Mr Phil Avery, the Head of Communications, drew attention to the growing suite of e-newsletters circulated by some of the borough services and confirmed this was proving to be a cost effective method to directly communicate with the public.

Mr Peach and Mr Avery responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The latest list of services being provided by Capita.
- Costs for the technological investment within the Streetsmart service.
- The use of technology to improve the waste collection service.
- The efficient ways of communicating with the public that included sending out letters and flyers through the "hybrid mail" facility.
- Secure storage of customer e-mail details collected at point of contact.
- The re-structuring of the Councils' internet social media pages to encourage two way communication with members of the public.
- Data exchange across government agencies, the Council, the NHS and Wiltshire Police.
- The Councils' broadband infrastructure and future cost savings to be made.
- The offer to help Councillors during the IT migration process to Office 365.
- Future take-up and use of the Members' hotline.
- The replacement of the Citizen Portal and how this helped public engagement through web chat.
- Community inclusion was considered by undertaking a Diversity Impact Assessment on the services being provided by the IT Department.
- The mix of social media platforms to be used including Facebook and Twitter.

The joint report was noted and the Chief Information Officer was requested to circulate information on the number of schools that no longer received IT services from the Council.

### **Swindon Borough Council Digital Strategy**

At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Committee received a report from the Chief information Officer on the Draft Council Digital Strategy. He explained that the strategy would provide guidance and design principles for the development of IT services in Swindon and would enable services to optimise the use of technology whilst reducing service costs.



The Chief information Officer responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- Portal maintenance and website outage particularly at weekends.
- Community inclusion was considered by undertaking a Diversity Impact Assessment on the draft Digital Strategy.
- Implementation of the strategy and that it was not a "top down" approach as user needs and feedback would drive the implementation.
- Jadu was the system platform as this allowed a digital connection to the community with a modern, secure Website, e-forms and case management.

The report was noted and the Chief Information Officer was requested to submit the Draft Council Digital Strategy to the Equalities Advisory Forum for their comments.

### **Measuring the Council's Performance - The Council's Performance Dashboard**

At its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Corporate Planning Lead attended and made a presentation on the detail of the Council's Performance Dashboard in monitoring corporate progress against the Council's Vision, and its priorities and pledges. The officer explained the differences between the current and previous Performance Dashboards and, in particular, emphasised the project related and conventional reporting elements of the new system, not present in the earlier model.

The Corporate Planning Lead responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- Format and structure of the Performance Dashboard.
- The pledges relating to health centres when these were part of the Clinical Commissioning Group's remit.
- The function of Peer review and how these might be best utilised to improve service delivery standards.
- Actions to address problems of fly tipping.
- The monitoring and enforcement of street cleaning standards after this function was devolved to Parishes.
- The number of Council officers volunteering to help the community and the areas they covered.
- Accessing performance data by members of the public.
- Opportunities available for community feedback on the Performance data.
- The role of the Internal Audit office in monitoring performance.

The report was noted and the Corporate Planning Lead was asked to obtain and circulate information on the specific measures taken by Milton Keynes Borough Council to improve its service delivery standards

### **Update on Business Rates**

At its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Committee received a report from the Interim Head of Finance regarding business rates. He advised that that the Council had very little influence on the amounts of business rates that were charged as the levels of rates was determined by National statute. The Committee heard that the Valuation Office Agency, who are part of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, assigned each business a rateable value. The Interim Head of Finance commented on the partial business rates retention scheme and explained that whilst local authorities would be able to keep a proportion of the growth in Business rates, they

would also bear the risk of having to contribute to any reductions in rates income. Members noted that the losses in income resulted not only from business units being demolished, but also from short period of empty exemptions. In response to a query regarding rates, the Interim Head of Finance explained that 2017 was a revaluation year and elaborated on the types of premises that were either exempt, had discounts or rate reliefs.

The Interim Head of Finance responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The balance between high and low rateable values and how this may attract or detract businesses coming to Swindon.
- Formulae for calculating business rates.
- The type of businesses needed in Swindon.
- Ways to promote and market Swindon.
- Resetting of the deprivation index.
- An explanation regarding the levy on growth.
- The discretionary relief for public conveniences from 2018.
- The provisions of the Local Government Finance Bill.

The report was noted

## **Summary**

The Resources and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a comprehensive and wide-ranging Work Programme for the 2016/17 year and it achieved its aims as set out at the beginning of the year. Through its work reviewing the Council's financial position and its question and answer sessions with Cabinet Members, it supported members in having a better understanding of the financial pressures facing the Council in the context within which the Council operates and develops plans to remain financially stable that will underpin its ability to achieve its Vision, strategies, plans and priorities and, with its work on the detail of the Corporate Dashboard, it was able to monitor the Council's corporate progress against its stated objectives. At its meetings, the Committee challenged the Council's Chief Officers on financial issues with regard to their individual areas of responsibility and assisted in addressing the financial challenges faced by the Council throughout the year, all the while maintaining a high level of commitment from its members.