

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD**

14th July 2014

**JOINT WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES (WRS) SCRUTINY TASK
GROUP – FINAL REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor (at the time of the investigation)
Portfolio Holder Consulted	The Portfolio Holder was consulted by the group during the review as an expert witness. However, he has not been consulted about the group's recommendations.
Relevant Head of Service	Steve Jordan, Head of Regulatory Services
Ward(s) Affected	All wards

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations from the joint scrutiny investigation undertaken by the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group and hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee that

- (a) the 12 recommendations of the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group be endorsed; and
(b) to RESOLVE that the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 The Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group was originally proposed in summer 2012 by Wychavon District Council. Terms of reference for the review were developed and by early 2013 the lead Overview and Scrutiny Committee at each local authority in the county had agreed to participate in the exercise. Bromsgrove District Council, as the host authority for the shared service, also hosted this joint scrutiny exercise.
- 3.2 The first meeting of the group took place in September 2013 and Members subsequently met 15 times during the course of the review.

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- 3.3 At the end of the review the group proposed 12 recommendations which are designed to address some of the main challenges for the service that Members identified during the course of the review.

Report Route

- 3.4 Members will be aware that under normal circumstances, the Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and approve recommendations from Task Groups which are then referred directly to the Cabinet for approval. The initial decision making body for Worcestershire Regulatory Services is the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee, to which two representatives from each partner authority are appointed annually. The Overview and Scrutiny Board is therefore being asked to consider whether to endorse the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations and to refer their conclusions to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.
- 3.5 The Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee has the power to make some decisions on behalf of all partners, though in other cases, particularly where a decision requires a change to policy, recommendations may be referred to Executive Committees at participating Councils. The report is not due to be considered by the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee until 2nd October 2014. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Task Group's findings will be considered by Cabinet until after that date.
- 3.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees at each Council in Worcestershire have considered the Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group's final report at meetings during June and July 2014.
- 3.7 The Scrutiny Task Group recognised that some Overview and Scrutiny Committees may wish to suggest alterations to the report and/or to reject some of the recommendations whilst endorsing others. It has therefore been agreed, that in cases where Overview and Scrutiny Committees wish to make suggestions, highlight concerns or differing opinions these will be attached as addendums to the group's final report and will then be presented to the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee.

Financial Implications

- 3.8 There are a number of financial implications to the group's recommendations as detailed in the report. There is also a specific chapter in the report dedicated to financial considerations.
- 3.9 The group has highlighted the fact that financial pressures are having a significant impact on the shared services. These pressures and the suggestions proposed by the group to ensure that effective services remain available to residents living in Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove District, should be considered carefully when responding to this report.

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Legal Implications

- 3.10 There are a number of legal implications to the group's recommendations which are detailed in the main report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.11 The group's recommendations have a number of service and operational implications which are detailed in the report.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 A number of the group's recommendations have an indirect impact on the service received by customers. However, a number of the group's proposals, particularly those relating to the future business model for the service and communications, have direct implications for the customer. These implications are detailed within the main report.
- 3.13 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The group is suggesting in their report that if action is not taken to implement their recommendations and to enact change within the shared service there is a risk that the partnership will become unsustainable and the future role of Regulatory Services within the County and District will become uncertain.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group Final Report

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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