

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st October 2014

JOINT WRS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – UPDATE REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Councillor Fisher was present at the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee when the decisions were made about the scrutiny group's recommendations.
Relevant Head of Service	Steve Jordan, Head of Regulatory Services
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides an update on the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee's response to the recommendations that were made by the Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Service (WRS) Scrutiny Task Group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that
the report be noted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 The Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group was launched in September 2013 at the instigation of Wychavon District Council. Every local authority in Worcestershire agreed to participate in the review and two representatives, a lead and substitute member, were appointed per Council. Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed Councillor Alan Mason as the Council's lead representative and Councillor Gay Hopkins as substitute.
- 3.2 The review concluded in June 2014. The group's recommendations were subsequently presented for the consideration of every Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the county in June and July. All of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the county except for Wyre Forest District Council's Committee endorsed all of the group's recommendations.
- 3.3 The Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group's final report was presented for the consideration of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee on 2nd October. This Joint Committee has delegated powers to make some decisions

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about WRS on behalf of partner authorities, though the Committee is required to forward any recommendations that would require significant policy and budget changes or alterations to the partnership agreement onto the Executive Committees at partner authorities. Significant changes can only proceed if every partner agrees to the proposals.

- 3.4 During the course of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee Members endorsed six of the recommendations that had been made by the scrutiny Task Group. As these did not require significant changes the decision on these six proposals should be regarded as final. (The six recommendations are listed in the appendix to this report).
- 3.5 Four of the recommendations required more significant changes, particularly to the governance of WRS. The Joint Committee was mindful of the fact that any such changes to the governance of the partnership would need to be managed carefully, particularly as the service is currently considering the potential to enter into a strategic partnership with an external organisation. For these reasons the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee has requested that Officers representing each Council on the partnership's Management Board consider these proposals in further detail and bring forward alternative suggestions suitable for all partners that would address the main concerns raised by the Task Group.
- 3.6 The Joint Committee noted that two of the recommendations that had been proposed by the group required no further action from the Joint Committee. This included the group's sixth recommendation which proposed a new budget model for the partnership. As the Joint Committee had already agreed a new budget model in June 2014 which was similar to the scrutiny group's proposals, and which had been forwarded to partner authorities for approval, it was agreed that no further action was required on this proposal. The group's twelfth recommendation required action from Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review the joint scrutiny protocol and therefore no further approval was required from a decision making body.

Financial Implications

- 3.7 There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no direct legal implications relating to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 There was a delay in presenting the group's findings for the consideration of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee. This delay occurred because the report needed first to have been presented for the consideration of every Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the county, which took place in June and July 2014. As

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the Joint Committee only meets on a quarterly basis the October meeting was the first opportunity for the Scrutiny Members to present their findings.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.10 No direct customer or equality and diversity implications have been identified for this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No risks have been identified.

APPENDIX

5. Outcome of Presentation to Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee

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