



OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY
ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17



1. INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to this annual report which outlines the key work programmes carried out during 2016/2017 by our Scrutiny Team here in Sandwell. If the concept of scrutiny is new to you then hopefully this report will encourage you to find out more – you will find details of how you can do this at the end of this statement. For those that have contributed towards, or been involved in, the reviews conducted during the year, we would like to extend our thanks. We also hope that the findings/outcomes summarised here will emphasise the **'potential for improvement in public services'** that good scrutiny can help to deliver.

This report also outlines some of the **major changes** that are occurring or being legislated for across all of our services including the Education White Paper 'Education Excellence Everywhere'; West Midlands Police 2020 'Changing the Face of Policing'; Sustainability & Transformation Plans; Better Care Fund Policy Framework; Housing & Planning Act 2016; ongoing Welfare Reform changes. Also, apart from **'continuing budgetary pressures'**, one of the main challenges facing Sandwell Council (now and going forward) is the setting up of the Children's Trust.

In some instances, the detail of much of this potential change is not yet defined, and remains fluid. What is clear, however, is that scrutiny will need to continue to develop and react - creating new partnerships and ways of working to meet these changes. A major channel for this will be the Council's award-winning **'Facing the Future'** Project, and **'Long Term Vision for Sandwell'**. Looking beyond our boundaries, we have to be flexible and adapt to developments with 'Shared Services, and relationships with the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee; and also remain at the forefront of the West Midlands Scrutiny Network, and re-establishment of Joint Health Scrutiny arrangements.

Sandwell Council's relative **'political stability'** has helped us to withstand some of the pressures being faced by many of our peers. For Sandwell Scrutiny to have impact, however, it will be essential for us to continue to ensure that **'openness and accountability'** applies to processes and decisions

that impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities.

As well as being a **'critical friend'**, it is essential that we maintain 'Good' scrutiny – **'holding to account'** the Executive and partners. We will do this by always remaining focused, objective, logical, challenging; and by basing our recommendations on sound evidence. To maintain **'transparency, and openness'** going forward, we also need to look for newer and more innovative ways of **'giving the public a voice'**.

Good outcomes come from recommendations that are aimed at bringing about changes and improvements to services that are **'specific, measurable, affordable, relevant and timely'**. The reviews covered in this report reflect these key principles.

Key to 'Good scrutiny' is the extensive research, comparative analysis, search for good practice; and wide-ranging knowledge and appreciation of the whole spectrum of local government and wider public services within an ever-changing landscape. It follows that, as Scrutiny Chairs and Members, we rely heavily on an extensive amount of support from our **'hard-working and committed Officers'** in the Scrutiny Unit. I therefore wish to place on record our grateful thanks for their work and support.

Moving forward (and key to our success) we will **'Prioritise and Focus'** and we will encourage the Council's Officers, Members and Partners to **'Foster a positive organisational culture which values Challenge'**.

I hope you find this Annual Report informative and helpful, and should you want to know more, contribute ideas or provide evidence for consideration by Scrutiny, please contact us at scrutiny_unit@sandwell.gov.uk.



Councillor Peter Hughes
Chair of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

2. REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Council appointed seven Scrutiny Boards for 2016-17 to discharge the functions conferred by section 12 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the subsequent legislation.

Scrutiny works with Council services, partner organisations and the Executive to create a culture where transparency, involvement and accountability are welcomed and where challenge is seen as essential and a positive part of improving outcomes for the residents and businesses in Sandwell. Scrutiny, whenever possible, involves the people that decisions will impact on, the service users, the businesses, the partners and the employees.

Overview and scrutiny is a key aspect of this Council's governance framework and an integral part of decision making, it informs policy making, reviews delivery, monitors performance and shapes services to deliver Sandwell priorities:

- **Great People**
- **Great Place**
- **Great Prospects**
- **Great Performance**

Scrutiny is a member led function; the topics identified in the work programme are agreed by the Boards following a period of consultation with officers, partners and the public.

The work programme is reviewed regularly to ensure items are timely and relevant. Emerging items and topics requested by Cabinet Members for scrutiny can be added to the work programme throughout the year.

With fewer resources in local government, decisions are critical and may impact on how we deliver services; scrutiny should add challenge on several levels. Scrutiny is more important than ever to monitor performance matters, to ensure the best use of resources is being made, to monitor progress of implementing actions and to review and challenge when things are not going to plan.

3. SCRUTINY BOARD MEETINGS & MEMBERSHIP

Looking back at 2016-17, 36 Scrutiny Board meetings were held and over 60 topics were considered at Board Meetings as shown in Appendix 1.

Overview and scrutiny made recommendations to make a difference to Council services and the way we carry out our business; to people and their employment prospects; to the environment and to help raise awareness and challenge decisions that affect residents and businesses in Sandwell.

More information and background to the topics can be viewed on the Council's committee management information system here. The Scrutiny function has been conducted through the following Boards:

i) Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board

MEMBERSHIP:

Chairs of the six Scrutiny Boards






REMIT:



Budget strategy; budget monitoring; examination of budget setting and outturn reports and scrutiny of the treasury management function. The Board is also responsible for scrutinising departmental Business Plans, and all Council functions and activities not covered by the terms of reference of the other Scrutiny Boards, including the corporate core; information and communication technology; corporate information management; organisational development; human resources and performance management.

ii) 6 Portfolio-focused Scrutiny Boards

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Joyce Underhill	 Cllr Liam Preece	 Cllr Jackie Taylor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Peter Allen Cllr Lorraine Ashman Cllr Elaine Giles Cllr Laura Hickey Cllr Sue Phillips Cllr Liam Preece Cllr Jackie Taylor Cllr Joyce Underhill Cllr Caroline White 	Children's Social Care, Children and Family Services and Education.

Housing Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Peter Hughes	 Cllr Joy Edis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Joy Edis Cllr Steven Frear Cllr Peter Hughes Cllr Liam Preece Cllr Barbara Price Cllr Farut Shaeen Cllr Chris Tranter 	Housing Strategy and Housing Services.

Community Safety, Highway and Environment Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Maria Crompton	 Cllr Lorraine Ashman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Keith Allcock Cllr Lorraine Ashman Cllr Maria Crompton Cllr Susan Downing Cllr Carol Goult Cllr Peter Hughes Cllr Caroline White 	Street Scene, Crime and Disorder, Environment and Community Services and sustainability within the Borough.

Jobs Economy and Enterprise

Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Stephen Jones	 Cllr Mohinder Singh Tagger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Peter Allen Cllr Lorraine Ashman Cllr Elaine Giles Cllr Laura Hickey Cllr Sue Phillips Cllr Liam Preece Cllr Jackie Taylor Cllr Joyce Underhill Cllr Caroline White 	Regeneration within the Borough, management of town centres, skills, work and enterprise.

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Yvonne Davies	 Cllr Ann Jarvis	 Cllr Bob Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Yvonne Davies Cllr Susan Downing Cllr Joy Edis Cllr Sandra Hevican Cllr Ann Jarvis Cllr Stephen Jones Cllr Bob Lloyd Cllr Danny Millard Cllr Farut Shaeen Cllr Caroline White 	Health and Public Health - includes holding Health & Well Being Board to account. Services for older/vulnerable adults & local safeguarding arrangements for adults.

Leisure Culture and the Third Sector

Chair	Vice-Chair	Membership	Remit
 Cllr Zahoor Ahmed	 Cllr Sandra Hevican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Elaine Giles Cllr Steven Frear Cllr Sandra Hevican Cllr Laura Hickey Cllr Bob Lloyd Cllr Sue Phillips 	Leisure opportunities, libraries and museums, green spaces, voluntary sector support, community development and neighbourhood services.

4. MAINTAINING OVERVIEW

Scrutiny powers are provided through a legislative framework for enhancing both the democratic accountability of public services at a local level and the crucial leadership role for councillors as champions of their communities.

During 2016-17 Boards considered:

- Annual Adults' and Children's Safeguarding Reports;
- Budget Consultation and Outturn Reports;
- Crime Reduction, Drugs and Alcohol Reports;
- Health Reports

5. CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS WORK STREAMS

In addition to the Boards work programme (as shown in Appendix 1), several of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs developed work streams to provide in depth investigation of the following topics:

- Aids and Adaptations
- Childhood Obesity
- Domestic Abuse
- Drugs and Alcohol in young people
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Housing Allocations – Town Workshops
- Impact of Housing & Planning Act 2016 and Welfare Reform Changes on Housing Provision
- Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers

The work streams used a variety of methods to gather evidence; some formed small groups, some took the form of localised workshops, whilst others worked alone. The work carried out through these work streams focused on specific areas of work that fell under the Board's remit, and regular updates were reported back to the Boards. A number of work streams also developed recommendations which were considered by the relevant Board(s) and subsequently referred and considered by the Cabinet or relevant Director.

At various points throughout this report, examples are given of the types of work undertaken in the form of Case Studies, including the following:

CASE STUDY: FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines FGM as all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons (WHO, 1996).

In Sandwell, the Council is devoting resources to tackling FGM, in early 2017 an analyst was commissioned through the Safer Sandwell Partnership to develop a Problem Profile for Sandwell and the Council, the mapping profile will provide a clearer picture of where to focus on supporting community engagement work and incentivising community champions.

The Council and partner organisations are developing a 'Sandwell Stopping FGM Group'. The groups terms of reference and action plan are aligned to the work and priorities of the West Midlands Regional Task Force and is chaired by a representative from Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group, who is also a member of West Midlands Police's Regional Task Force.

Much of this work is in its infancy, scrutiny focussed on seeking assurances in relation to the effectiveness of the existing work and allowing it to embed and has therefore recommended that a further report be submitted on progress with the work in 2017-18.



6. SHAPING POLICY THROUGH CONSULTATION

Early consideration of a topic or problem gives Scrutiny the opportunity to find out what the issues are; and to discuss and consider the options arising following any relevant or preliminary consultation process. Ultimately, Scrutiny can call for more information to ensure that the Council is:

- fulfilling its' duty to improve or rectify issues that have been uncovered;
- using the public responses to consultation to shape its services and to develop policy for future service provision.

CASE STUDY: BUDGET AND CORPORATE - VISIONING

The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board received details of the 'Ten ambitions' that had been developed with the focus on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's People and 'Place'

The Board reviewed the consultation process for visioning (which had been undertaken with our partners and the community) and made suggestions and recommendations to help to shape the ten ambitions which will inform the Council's new outcome based long term vision for Sandwell.

The Board made suggestions to strengthen and broaden the engagement process to enable more transparency and reach a wider audience. In relation to the proposed ambitions, it was felt that the 10 ambitions were highly aspirational, but commented that it was important to clearly define how the Council will set out to achieve them.

Several suggestions were made to improve the ambitions for 'Place' relating to environmental aims and green energy (making Sandwell a more pleasant place as well as affordable); commitments to using local labour to develop ambitions; and promoting the commercial survival of its' 6 Town (and local) centres.

CASE STUDY 2: DEVELOPING A LONG-TERM VISION FOR SANDWELL

In the case of Health Scrutiny, before any consultation is commenced, Members are required to scrutinise the processes of consultation in order to ensure that the right people and organisations have been included in the consultation.

7. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Developing policies and commissioning services with our key strategic partners promotes an environment to develop policies and services for the people and communities in Sandwell. There are numerous examples across all of the Scrutiny Boards, where Partnership working and input is an integral part of the scrutiny process.

During 2016-17, the local Clinical Commissioning Group, local hospitals and other relevant health bodies regularly attended and contributed to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board work programme.

The Community Safety, Highways & Environment Scrutiny Board (CSHESB) worked with West Midlands Police, Trading Standards and Community Safety Team on issues that would add value to the

Council's scorecard priority 'Great People – in your neighbourhood'. The Chair of the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board updated the Board on the West Midlands Police Change programme WMP2020.

In addition, such areas as early intervention, early help, troubled families and targeted youth support are all examples of partnership working, and training, which have been led by Sandwell MBC. In scrutinising these areas, that Board welcomed the focus of early intervention (through joint working), and commended the role of intelligence sharing and collaborative working, for example in achieving success in reducing re-offending in Sandwell.

A Vice-Chair's Working Group of this Board focused on Domestic Abuse:

CASE STUDY: DOMESTIC ABUSE ADVOCATES

The Working Group's spotlight on Domestic Abuse Advocates focused on whether proposed funding cuts would have an adverse effect on support for people who are subject, to or at risk of, Domestic Violence or abuse.

Initially, the CSHE Scrutiny Board made an interim recommendation to Cabinet to continue funding for 5 Domestic Abuse Advisors until the impact assessment had been fully considered. Following the impact assessment, Cabinet approved funding for 3 posts for one year. The Working Group then reviewed the outcomes of the Council's impact assessment and reduction of funding for the posts.

This resulted in 3 further recommendations to Cabinet regarding future funding of Advocates; and better utilisation of the support that the Advocates give to families and individuals in safeguarding matters. The Group concluded that early prevention/support in such cases can prevent escalation to more serious abuse and longer term implications for victims and their families which, in turn, may have serious implications and place further resource pressure on both the Council and partner organisations.

During 2017-18, the relevant Scrutiny Board will continue to monitor this area to ensure that the work of the Domestic Abuse Advisors is fully evaluated and reviewed.

CASE STUDY 3: DOMESTIC ABUSE ADVOCATES

8. SCRUTINISING AT A LOCAL LEVEL

Since 2014, the delivery of Neighbourhood Services in Sandwell has been redesigned to develop a new model for Neighbourhood Working, with a clear focus on each of Sandwell's 6 towns. This model is supported by 6 Town Teams consisting of a Lead Member, Manager, officers and members, with a remit to respond to local issues irrespective of tenure, provide support to deal with Sandwell's biggest challenges, deliver on priorities, manage local budgets and work with Partners to deliver effective solutions for residents in Sandwell.

In recognition of this, rather than considering housing issues remotely (and centrally) in Oldbury, the Housing Scrutiny Board made a conscious decision to carry out their scrutiny of Housing demand & supply issues at a localised level.

CASE STUDY: TOWN WORKSHOPS ON HOUSING SUPPLY & DEMAND

During 2016/17, the Housing Scrutiny Board commenced their work into housing supply and demand by moving their workshops out to the 6 towns in Sandwell to find out issues relating to housing in the locality. Involved in the workshops, to discuss a range of housing issues in that specific town, were relevant Scrutiny Board members, other local ward members, neighbourhood staff, and officers from Allocations/Housing Options and Private Sector Housing. Issues raised included the following key themes: -

- Age restrictions on certain blocks/property-types - causing delays in letting properties and resultant rental losses;
- Waiting List 5-year residency rule – causing negative impact on demand and resultant rental losses;
- Lack of large family houses, 2 bedroom houses, and bungalows across the borough;
- Need/demand for appropriate extra-care type accommodation for the elderly and people with specialist needs;
- Increasing number of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in certain areas, and private sector quality issues.

The Workshops will continue during 2017/18, but the Board has received feedback (from those that have taken place) and made recommendations relating to tenants in rent arrears as a result of the 'Bedroom Tax' but who continue to under-occupy Council properties, despite being offered opportunities to move.

The work carried out through these Workshops and the Housing Scrutiny Board supports the scorecard priority of 'Great Place – Homes that meet people's current and future needs'.

CASE STUDY 4: TOWN WORKSHOPS ON HOUSING

9. SITE VISITS

Site visits offer a unique insight into the subject matter and provide councillors with an opportunity to meet with staff, service users, and partners. Site visits can also provide an opportunity to consult with people from a range of backgrounds and age groups who may have an opinion about the services they use and offer a different perspective to the discussion to be held which will inform and can influence decision makers.

During 2016/17 the Jobs, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (JEESB) investigated the 'Improving Skills and Preparing for work' agenda, which contributed towards the scorecard priority of investing in business, people and jobs. The Board discussed future plans relating to the West Midlands Combined Authority Programme for Skills, Employment & Productivity, and the 8 priority actions outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan. As part of the Board's evidence gathering, Board members visited Sandwell College to gain insight of the mechanisms underway to prepare young people for work.

CASE STUDY: PREPARING FOR WORK - VISIT TO SANDWELL COLLEGE

The Jobs, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board visited the Construction Industries Section of Sandwell College to tour the facilities, meet staff and students. Members held a meeting at the College with partners and officers instrumental in developing Supported Internships, Learning the Disability Supported Employment Programme and Supported Apprenticeship initiatives in Sandwell.

The Board learnt that the cost of (life-time) support for a young person with learning difficulties (and claiming benefits) could reach up to £1 million! Also, although 40% of young people with learning disabilities want a job, currently only 7% are successful in securing one. The Board highlighted the importance of increasing the number of education providers offering opportunities for young people with learning difficulties in Sandwell.

The Board identified that Supported Internships could help to change the way employers view an individual with learning disability, and help change the lives of those individuals. Westminster School was seen as leading the way for their students in securing offers of Supported Internships - with several local employers committing to the programme including McDonalds, Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust, the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, DPD Parcel Delivery Company and Interserve Plc.

Westminster School had also met with the DfE and DWP to discuss a Supported Apprenticeships pilot with Severn Trent and Interserve Plc. Although participation rates for disabled apprentices had improved and more disabled people were employed than ever before, there was still work to be done in both areas.

The Board encouraged the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Economic Investment to support the positive partnership work between Sandwell College and Westminster School.

CASE STUDY 5: PREPARING FOR WORK - VISIT TO SANDWELL COLLEGE

10. RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET ARISING FROM OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

One of a number of visits made by the Community Safety, Highways & Environment Scrutiny Board (CSHESB) was a site visit to the Council's CCTV Centre at Roway Lane. The CCTV control room opened in 2010 and has been operational 24 hours a day, every day since, staffed by a team of 24 trained and licensed Security Industry Associates (SIA). The Board made several observations regarding the benefits of this excellent, in-house facility, and the site visit led to referrals and recommendations for consideration by other Scrutiny Boards, and the Cabinet.

CASE STUDY: KEEPING SAFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY - VISIT TO COUNCIL'S CCTV CONTROL CENTRE

The Board found that this 'state of the art' facility produced several key potential benefits, as follows:

- reduction of crime and ASB;
- sustaining council tenancies and reduction in turnover of properties;
- protection of Council assets [high rise blocks];
- Social Value - making the community safer & stronger, reducing fear of crime, and reducing the cost of criminal activity

Marked improvements had been identified in terms of security, community safety, reduction in vandalism, and void loss etc. where the Council's high rise stock had benefited from the installation of CCTV and intercom equipment.

The Board noted that the Control Room was future-proofed (in terms of capacity) to monitor several additional CCTV/intercom schemes; and that these additional services could be provided within current resources. Board members were therefore in favour of officers investigating further income generation by way of service expansion. Though a large capital investment may well be required (in terms of initial installation costs) Members felt that the potential benefits to Sandwell residents outweighed the initial cost.

When considering the budget outturn reports for 2016/17 during the Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Board, the Scrutiny Chairs identified a £3.2 million that there was a surplus in the Housing Revenue Account. They therefore felt that it would be beneficial to utilise this underspend to fund the expansion of CCTV/Concierge services to the remaining Council high-rise blocks. This was subsequently recommended to, and approved by, Cabinet. As a result, external assistance has already been engaged to scope out the expansion of the CCTV/Concierge Service across 27 blocks, and to prepare the tender documents for the installation work.

This is a concrete example of Scrutiny leading to direct service improvements to the benefit of our tenants and residents, and of the Council 'investing to save' as part of its 'Facing the Future' Programme.

CASE STUDY 6: KEEPING SAFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY -
VISIT TO COUNCIL'S CCTV CONTROL CENTRE

11. SHAPING SERVICES

Maintaining overview of longer term programmes and service re-structuring is crucial to ensuring that the checks and balances are being carried out to keep projects on time, in budget, and relevant. A major example of this for Sandwell over the past few months, and moving forward, is the development and setting up of the Children's Trust (see Case Study below). This will also be a top priority for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board in 2017-18, and the Board will continue to scrutinise key milestones.

CASE STUDY: SANDWELL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES - RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

As part of its' overview of the Children's Services OFSTED Improvement Plan, members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board (CSSB) talked to Social Workers and support staff in their workplace to hear their concerns and how this might impact on recruiting to and retaining social workers in Sandwell. This highlighted issues with working conditions, training, technology, caseloads, social worker roles and management.

On the 6 October 2016, the Government formally announced its decision to impose a Trust to run Sandwell's Children's Social Care Services. This gave added focus to the work of the CSSB's Vice-Chair Working Group, in investigating the risk to the recruitment and retention of social workers, especially leading up to, and during transition, of the Service to a newly-formed Children's Trust. It also focused on the need to re-assure staff and ensure the stability of the service.

The Working Group's approach was 'Risk & Reassurance, and its work aligned to the strategic risk that had been identified relating to staff and industrial relations, and also complemented the work being conducted by Officers tasked to deliver the Children's Trust. The Vice-Chair and Working Group Members met with HR Officers, Social Care staff, and Senior Managers in order to identify the following:

- the current workforce development strategy;
- statistics relating to social worker turnover, sickness, demographics, and the trends for recruitment and retention;
- the roll-out of new IT/software & appropriate training schedule;
- Best Practice elsewhere;
- the main messages arising from staff surveys;
- the need to strengthen communication, positive external messages, and internal reassurance.

The evidence and findings from this Scrutiny work helped to inform the Director of Children's Services, as work was getting underway to develop the Children's Social Care Trust. It also helped to ensure that both work streams were working in unison, and that there was no duplication of effort. The work carried out by the Board supports the scorecard priority of 'Great People – Our Children, Sandwell's future'.

It is part of the role for all Scrutiny Boards to:

- keep watch over major programmes;
- maintain overview of services implementing (often major) legislative and organisational change;
- monitoring services carrying out Improvement Action Plans, following internal/external audit inspection or peer reviews.

During 2016/17, an example of this (detailed below) conducted by the Leisure, Culture & Third Sector Scrutiny Board (LCTSSB) which received an overview report on Sandwell's Community History & Archives Service (CHAS).

CASE STUDY: LEISURE AND CULTURE – RE- LOCATION OF THE COMMUNITY HISTORY ARCHIVES (CHAS)

CHAS maintains both archives (which are unique documents) and printed materials (such as books and magazines) that relate to Sandwell. As a service, CHAS has three key purposes: to collect, preserve and make available the documentary history of the Sandwell Borough. CHAS has been based at Smethwick Library since 1992, making material available both in person, or more increasingly – by accessing information electronically – through the online database.

CHAS annually receives approximately 60,000 visits (both in person and online), It is formally recognised as a "Place of Deposit" by the National Archives, and is subject to an inspection regime by that body. This inspection regime has been scaled back and replaced with a new self- accreditation process instead. As a "Place of Deposit" storing public records, CHAS needs to complete this accreditation by the end of 2017.

The Board noted that Sandwell will not achieve full accreditation, as the current storage facilities do not meet the National Archives' specified standards for records' repositories. In the longer-term, if the Council fails to make arrangements to store the archives in conditions that meet the standard, then this may then result in the Council being required to transfer certain elements of the archived material (i.e. the public records part) to another agency (or provider) that does meet the standard.

Scrutiny found that although the facilities do not meet the standard, it recognised that CHAS has taken steps to make improvements and has maintained high customer satisfaction ratings. In the last inspection, carried out in 2009, the National Archives praised the progress made by CHAS, but reiterated the need to re-locate the archives to more suitable premises. The Board highlighted the importance of retaining Sandwell's historic documents locally to enable easy access by the community and noted that acquiring and fitting out a suitable replacement premises for CHAS would require resources to be identified. An application to the Heritage Lottery could assist with this.

On 22nd February 2017, the Board recommended to Cabinet that strenuous efforts should be made to identify suitable alternative premises for this service. This work supports the scorecard priority 'Great Prospects – something for everyone to get the best use of our community facilities'.

CASE STUDY 8: LEISURE AND CULTURE – RE-LOCATION OF THE COMMUNITY HISTORY ARCHIVES

12. PAN-SCRUTINY POLICY REVIEW OF SERVICES - SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

During 2015-17 the 6 Scrutiny Chairs collectively carried out a review of the services and support for care leavers; with evidence gathering commencing during the 2015-16 municipal year. Desk top research collated a range of information and existing policy which was shared with members. Meetings with care leavers, individuals and groups also took place to gather primary data to inform the review group. Sources of evidence were as follows:

- Care Leavers Forum;
- Personal Advisors;
- Care Leavers;
- Existing data, including the New Belongings Survey;
- Interviews with the Leaving Care Services Manager and participation officers;
- Foster Carers' job descriptions;
- Foster Carers' Handbook and local authorities' handbooks.

In July 2016, the Government announced its cross-Governmental Care Leavers Strategy 'Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence'.

This document "sets out a vision for the further reform of support for care leavers based on innovation, system reform, and the embedding of corporate parenting responsibility across society."

In light of this and the need for the Council to be ready to support the aspirations of the Government's strategy to maximise the benefit for our current and future care leavers, the review re-focused on issues addressed by the new Government Strategy.

The final report of the Pan-Scrutiny Review Group was considered by Children's Services and Education

The Government strategy is clear that Corporate Parenting in local authorities must be recognised across all departments and identified five key outcomes:

1. All young people leaving care should be better prepared and supported to live independently.
2. Improved access to education, employment and training.
3. Care leavers should experience stability in their lives, and feel safe and secure.
4. Improved access to health support.
5. Care leavers should achieve financial stability.

Scrutiny Board resulting in 7 recommendations being submitted to Cabinet. The recommendations relate to areas for improvement including independent living skills; local information; pathway plans; hand-over from social workers to personal advisors and housing and isolation.

The findings and recommendations of the review group were approved by Cabinet at its' meeting on 19th April 2017 and can be viewed on the Councils committee management information system.

13. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Scrutiny members are provided with training and development opportunities in order to:

- strengthen their own skills and knowledge,
- ensure that scrutiny in Sandwell continues to deliver robust challenge;
- achieve outcomes that contribute to the Council's scorecard priorities;
- ensure that our partnership arrangements and partner organisations are effectively scrutinised in line with statutory guidance.

During 2016/17, Scrutiny Boards received information about new initiatives and emerging legislation that Scrutiny Members felt would be useful for a wider audience. As a result, several recommendations were made to arrange training and awareness sessions for elected members and/or officers relating to the following:

- Artemis Training: Childhood Obesity
- Artemis Training: Female Genital Mutilation
- 'See Something Do Something' Campaign
- Scams and Doorstep Crime
- Hate Crime
- The Children's Trust
- Scrutiny in the West Midlands Combined Authority
- Overview of the Housing Revenue Account

A number of these sessions have been included in the Members Training Programme for 2017-18.

The Community Safety, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Board made recommendations to raise awareness of members, officers and public and to communicate information about the following:

- West Midlands Police 'Active Citizens campaign', to share local information and reporting mechanisms;
- Scambassadors campaign against scams and rogue traders;
- Council Portal to report and record all instances of flytipping.

14. SUMMARY OF SCRUTINY YEAR

Scrutiny has gathered momentum through the 2016-17 year with:

- 28 recommendations being referred to Cabinet;
- 94 other recommendations to Directors and partners requesting further information or for items to be added to the work programme for 2017-18.

Scrutiny Boards	Meetings held	Ch/VC	Agenda items	Site visits	Work shops	Reccs
Budget & Corporate	5	0	10	0	1	10
Children's Services & Education	6	3	10	0	1	25
Community Safety Highways &	5	3	8	3	0	24
Health & Adult Social Care	6	3	10	0	0	22
Housing	5	2	10	0	6	16
Jobs Economy & Enterprise	5	0	14	1	0	12
Leisure, Culture & the Third Sector	5	0	12	0	0	13
TOTAL	37	11	76	4	8	122

For further information about scrutiny visit our scrutiny webpage.