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Foreword

In common with other local authorities, Worcestershire County Council is navigating a very challenging period financially. To address this, the Council is being reshaped as an Excellent Commissioning Authority, which will contain only a small proportion of services in-house, with the majority being commissioned to provide 'the right service from the right provider at the right price for the taxpayer'.

There is no doubt that a drastic approach is needed. Public funding for council services has been dropping steadily and will continue to fall until at least 2017. Worcestershire County Council is now accustomed to planning and implementing change to ensure the best services possible with the resources available. The Notice of Motion from which this Scrutiny originated afforded an excellent opportunity to review Commissioning processes and establish whether these are fit for purpose. In other words, to determine whether Worcestershire County Council's Commissioning provides the right service from the right provider at the right price for the taxpayer, done in the right way.

The Scrutiny exercise leading to this report presented a steep learning curve, since Members outside of Cabinet have tended to have little or no direct involvement with Commissioning. Through several discussions with a wide range of internal and external personnel, we have learned a good deal about the process from people who are best placed to speak about it knowledgeably.

On behalf of the Commissioning Scrutiny Task Members, I would like to thank all those who contributed to this exercise, both within and external to the County Council, for kindly sharing their experience and expertise. Task Group Members deserve thanks for their commitment to the research and constructive debate, and we are of course grateful to Suzanne O'Leary and Angela Wright of the Overview and Scrutiny team for their attention and diligence in supporting the investigation and production of this report.

During the course of this Scrutiny, the County Council's new Future Operating Model has been announced (presented to Cabinet on 6 February 2014 as FutureFit: a Future Operating Model). This new model requires further and faster change for the Council, and with this in mind, this Scrutiny report is not an end in itself, but rather a step on the path, since positive progression requires strong monitoring and performance review to ensure movement is happening in the right direction and at the right speed. The recommendations here suggest review and revision of a process that is already working well, but could be improved in terms of information and advice, thus making available more joined-up support and engagement.

I commend this report and its recommendations.

Cllr Kit Taylor
Vice Chairman: Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board
February 2014
i. Worcestershire County Council is moving towards being a commissioning authority which will maintain only a core of employees responsible for contract management and other corporate activities. This means that across the organisation we need to apply a consistent and joined up process to source the right service from the right provider at the right price for the taxpayer.

ii. For councils, the commissioning process is driven by the needs of residents and having an absolute focus on outcomes for communities. It provides an opportunity to 'Act Local', by helping people join together to do things for themselves. To work it needs people to use their time, ideas and skills to make things better for themselves and their local community. We are also being open as to who delivers services across all providers in the local economy by supporting our priority of ensuring Worcestershire is 'Open for Business'. The most recent External Peer Review noted that benefits are being delivered by Worcestershire's commissioning, but recommended the programme increases pace.

iii. In a Notice of Motion agreed by Council on 13 September 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board was asked to establish a Task and Finish Group to examine what mechanisms are in place within the Council's commissioning processes relating to transparency, accountability, sound contract management, and flexibility in ever-changing circumstances, all within the context of achieving value for money.

iv. The Task Group set out to examine the nature of the commissioning process and the role of the local Member, with a focus on governance, transparency and accountability. Also explored as part of this scrutiny were whether staff undertaking commissioning exercises possess the necessary skills, how such skills can be developed, the robustness of the commissioning process, and whether commissioning is always the right approach. The review also included an overview of commissioning processes in other local authorities.

Methodology

v. The Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group comprised cross-party members of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and other panels, who volunteered to participate in this exercise. Members met on several occasions to discuss Commissioning with officers involved in the process, former officers now providing services independently of the County Council, the Executive Director of Co-operative Futures, and Worcestershire County Council's Leader and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning.
vi. An information gathering exercise was conducted via email over the period September to December 2013. Of the 6 authorities initially approached, 3 provided Scrutiny Members with detailed information concerning their own commissioning processes. This was followed up with a visit to Shropshire Council to meet with senior officers and Members to discuss their commissioning approach in more detail. A schedule of the Task Group's activity is included as Appendix 1.

vii. Other research for this scrutiny covered a wide range of local and national reports and documents. Evidence and supporting documents available to the Task Group are listed in Appendix 2, with information about scrutiny into commissioning carried out by other authorities as Appendix 3. Many documents are available to view online and can be accessed by clicking the link for the relevant item within the list. Limited copies of some documents not available online may be obtained from the Scrutiny Team on request.

Summary of findings

A summary of findings is below. More information is provided in Findings in detail later in this document, arranged for clarity under the same headings.

Transparency

a. Transparency of information for officers and Members suffers by being out of date, incomplete, and spread across a range of sources

b. Officers have a strong knowledge and understanding of the services and areas they are commissioning

c. Transparency for residents, for example, information on consultations about projects such as Future Lives is generally clear, although engagement may be restricted for those unable to access these online

d. Perception differs as to what does, and does not, qualify as Commissioning

e. The figure of 64% of staff who understand Commissioning, as reported in the Viewpoint staff survey results, is subjective as it records perceptions of understanding without clarifying what is understood

f. Detailed information for Members about Commissioning projects is mostly limited to briefings, and information about scheduling of meetings and events is often unclear and less than transparent

g. Information in the Commissioning toolkit and County Council website is comprehensive in scope, but coverage is sparse and frequently out of date, giving the impression that keeping officers, Members and the public informed about Commissioning is not considered a priority
h. There is a need to promote more visibly what engagement is taking/ has taken place with regard to Commissioning.

**Accountability**

i. Accountability for County Council activities rests with the Council and Executive

j. Information concerning governance of Commissioning is unclear owing to inconsistencies in communication of the approval process

k. It is not explicitly stated where accountability lies in the Commissioning process. A visible audit trail is required, together with a single point of contact for final responsibility

l. Accountability can be more complex when a service is contracted out since tracking down who to speak with in the event of an issue may not be as clear

m. More evidence is required that the process is customer-driven

n. With the exception of Positive Activities there has been little reference to consultation or engagement with residents in discussions or papers seen by Task Group Members – there is a strong focus on delivery and outcomes, but nothing of the views of service users

o. Approaches to engaging Members with Commissioning vary, with much involvement limited to briefing sessions, although this approach is in no way unique to Worcestershire County Council

p. Scrutiny can play a valuable role in accountability, assisting the core executive to ensure all concerns and issues have been explored, and maximising clarity and understanding to support good quality decisions made by the right people.

**Sound contract management**

q. It is intended that Elected Members will participate in monitoring performance of commissioned services

r. There seems to be no consistency or uniformity in contract monitoring or auditing of commissioned services across Worcestershire

s. At the commencement of this Scrutiny exercise there was little awareness amongst Task Group Members that participation in contract monitoring was expected of them

t. Scrutiny can play a valuable role from the earliest possible stage in helping to make the link between strategic commissioning and operational management, through being built into contract specification, procurement and management in order to open out decisions and issues which might otherwise have been hidden from the public
u. The contract monitoring process is designed to be developmental and supportive rather than punitive

v. Wording of documents is crucial to support Members who may not have been involved in the Commissioning process leading to the contract, and will need to develop awareness of the service, provider and expectations within a very short time

w. Pitfalls and risk could be much reduced with the involvement of Members and Scrutiny as an essential, rather than optional, component of contract monitoring.

Flexibility in ever-changing circumstances

x. There is an ongoing need for the Council to adapt and evolve to ensure the services it provides and commissions are relevant to the needs of residents and businesses in Worcestershire

y. A programme of Training for officers is underway, to include a 1 day Commercial Skills for Commissioning course for Worcestershire County Council managers. Whilst such training is a positive development, a single day’s training is insufficient for officers to gain a clear understanding of, for example, assessing bids for services

z. It has also been proposed that Members will receive the Commercial Skills for Commissioning training, but five months on, no sessions have been arranged

aa. In order to ensure officers and Members can continue to act and respond flexibly, training should be supplemented with follow-up sessions and monitoring to ensure skills are applied appropriately and with confidence

bb. The most recent Peer Review feedback for Worcestershire County Council’s Commissioning reported that Commissioning is progressing well, but progress needs to be quicker

cc. The Review phase of the Commissioning Cycle should ensure flexibility in picking up and resolving issues with services

dd. There would be significant practical challenges for Worcestershire in moving from a Commissioning to a Co-operative approach, although this does not rule out commissioning a Co-operative organisation as a service provider.

...all within the context of achieving value for money

ee. The County Council has a great many demands to be met with limited resources, and a commitment to provide services to meet demand which afford the highest possible quality and benefit

ff. The aim is to create socially responsive projects which will have a wide reaching impact across the County
gg. Good planning is critical to ensuring value for money, to ensure contracts are robust and flexible over time and costly errors are avoided

hh. A small number of services previously run by the County Council are now provided by independent businesses comprising former Council staff. We spoke with representatives from Positive Behaviours and Malvern Outdoor Elements, who both reported generally positive outcomes

ii. Evaluation and review of how things are being done can uncover ways to achieve the same outcome which are quicker, cheaper, and provide better value for money.

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**Recommendations**

**Transparency**

R1. We recommend that all Commissioning and Future Fit information on SID and the County Council website, including the toolkit and Councillor Portal, be reviewed and updated with a view to presenting a joined-up resource that is comprehensive, informative and up-to-date. This needs to be linked to the Forward Plan for an ‘at a glance’ guide to where projects are in terms of key decisions.

R2. Members should be more actively encouraged to participate in Commissioning through attending briefings and engaging in other related activity. Given the importance of Commissioning to the County Council, the Task Group felt strongly that all members should recognise their responsibility to equip themselves to participate fully in commissioning, and should attend any briefings or training. We therefore recommend that group leaders strongly encourage members to attend commissioning training.

R3. Commissioning information and links on the Councillor Portal need to be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that information is up-to-date and relevant. For example, the Commissioning Sessions for Councillors link should facilitate access to the most up-to-date programme of briefings, rather than information on a single event that will be out of date as soon as this has taken place.

R4. It would be beneficial for a timeline for each project to be made available, showing not only which stage of the process each project is at, but also noting the work yet to be completed, for example, consultation dates and approval process stages with estimated dates for these. It would be assumed that projects already work to detailed timelines so the task of making this open to public view should not be too onerous. Such work could be more explicitly built in to the project scope report (Needs Assessment Scope) at the Evaluate stage of the Commissioning process – for example, including engagement with Members and residents to discuss the potential project and its impact, determining what services are actually required and how these can be delivered with the resources available.

R5. We are pleased to note that increasing the frequency of Commissioning Briefings is under consideration, and suggest also that briefings be repeated and/or
podcast, with slides or notes made available as soon as possible following the meetings, in order to afford Members more opportunities to attend, or to 'catch up' online. In the case of mandatory sessions, Group Leaders should be notified of non-attendance in order that the need to attend can be emphasised with the relevant Members.

R6. To improve communication of meetings and events scheduling for Members, ensuring opportunities to be involved are not missed, it would be appropriate for such communications to be centralised through the Member Support Unit. We recommend that the online Councillor Diary is supplemented by a list of upcoming meetings sent out regularly by email, using subject headings that are unambiguous. Updates for changes at short notice can be sent as required.

R7. We recommend that the present Commissioning homepage on SID be replaced with a new 'Hub' page comprising links to tools, resources and information about projects. Links from this page could include, for example:

- Revised Commissioning Toolkit
- Roadmap – updated with embedded links to find out more about projects
- Training opportunities for officers and Members, e.g. Commercial Skills
- Latest News
- Case studies
- Future Fit
- A clear guide to Governance and accountability
- Thinking of Going into Business? – to include staff spin-offs and support in setting up your own business
- Commissioning Projects – link to a page listing all the projects planned, underway and completed, each link affording access to information about projects including updated progress reports
- Forward Plan
- Putting residents first – this could include links to the Consultation Toolkit and information on making consultation accessible (presently 'hidden' on SID in Marketing and Communications: Useful Information: Corporate Consultation), plus the Consultation Portal (presently accessible under Resources in the Commissioning Toolkit)
- Support and Advice – linking to the Programmes and Projects team page – to improve accessibility, this page could be reorganised to include guidance as to which member of the team is best placed to provide assistance for particular projects.

**Accountability**

R8. We recommend that providers of commissioned services should be strongly encouraged to develop positive relationships with Members, ensuring a regular exchange of information which can be exploited to enable issues raised by residents or by Members, for example through regular visits, to be explored and resolved at the earliest possible stage. A requirement for Member involvement with commissioned providers can be embedded in contracts.

R9. Pre-consultation with service users and Members before settling on options and going out to full consultation would also be beneficial. For example, had Scrutiny been involved in the early stages, with Members taking part in a pre-consultation
with service users, the ensuing Short Breaks consultation would have been a less stressful process for all concerned.

R10. We recommend increased promotion – before, during and after the event - of engagement with residents with regard to Commissioning, so that when decisions are taken, it will be apparent how residents’ views have been taken into account in helping to shape the service. For example, residents’ comments can be placed more prominently in webpage information, consultation results and media releases.

R11. Governance information in the Commissioning toolkit, and other resources as relevant, should be reviewed and amended to provide a clear indication of what activities are actually involved in the approvals process, including timeframes for each element. It would be useful for this to include a quick guide to accountability and how to ensure that:

- Service users are still able to feed in to review and contract management; and
- Democratic oversight is retained.

It is also recommended that a link to the Forward Plan be included to provide information as to what projects are currently pending decisions.

R12. Members should receive updates on the progress of Commissioning projects, and should be encouraged to be actively involved as far as possible in the Evaluation, Design and Review stages of the process, in order that their local knowledge and expertise can contribute to good decision-making and effective contract management.

R13. We recommend that Commissioning officers engage Scrutiny in both evaluating and designing services to be commissioned and with regard to arrangements for contract management. It is suggested that greatest support for accountability would be achieved through the proactive encouragement and involvement of Scrutiny from the earliest stages of each Commissioning project.

**Sound contract management**

R14. It is recommended that the Commissioning toolkit and other resources concerning the Commissioning process record engagement of stakeholders, such as service users and Members including Scrutiny, as an intrinsic element of the review process.

R15. We strongly suggest that Members and Scrutiny be engaged as an essential element of contract monitoring, to ensure regular and ongoing review of service needs and performance is built into contracts as a requirement.

R16. It would be helpful for all Members to participate, to whatever level is practical, in engaging and visiting providers on a regular basis for monitoring and Scrutiny purposes, in order to pick up and address any issues.

R17. Contract monitoring is a critical part of the Commissioning process, and as such should not be left for Commissioning officers to work out piecemeal how this will work for each service being commissioned. We recommend that Commissioning officers and the BOLD team establish a working group, including Member
participation, to establish standards for contract monitoring which will make the process of putting this in place for each service easier in future.

**Flexibility in ever-changing circumstances**

R18. We strongly recommend that *Commercial Skills for Commissioning* training is provided for Members and WCC managers, as has been proposed, at the earliest possible opportunity.

R19. Training provided needs in the first instance to be sufficient to ensure officers and Members are equipped with the appropriate skills, and afterwards supplemented with follow-up sessions and refreshers as required to maintain currency.

...all within the context of achieving value for money

R20. Involvement of Scrutiny in Evaluation and Design phases of Commissioning will be helpful in ensuring services and contracts are shaped as required.

R21. We recommend each Commissioning project includes a review of how the process was managed, exploring what went well, what could have gone better, and what can be done to improve the experience for future projects. Reviews should be conducted by internal peers and/or Scrutiny to ensure objective analysis.

R22. We suggest that consideration could be given to the possibility of Worcestershire County Council setting up a business to act as an ‘umbrella’ organisation for some services presently supplied in-house. This could support services to run more flexibly whilst returning profits as appropriate to the County Council, as with Shropshire Council’s ip&e Group, under which banner the council’s Marketing and Communications function is now operating successfully.

### Detail of findings

There are 4 stages to the Commissioning Cycle:

- **Evaluate** – start by involving and listening to customers, researching all available information to identify priorities through the democratic process. Consider the delivery options about how best to meet the outcomes required
- **Design** the service specification giving further consideration to how best to deliver the outcomes required
- **Source** the right provider for the customer at the right price for the tax payer
- **Review** the performance of the provision by checking it is delivering against quality standards and take action when needed.

### Transparency

1. Transparency is an essential feature of an efficient and effective Commissioning process. As important as doing the right thing for residents in terms of evaluating,
designing, sourcing and reviewing service provision is ensuring that the manner by which these processes are carried out, and recorded for the future, is open and visible. It should be possible for residents, Members and officers to access information to enable them not only to know and understand what has been done, but, for example, how it was done, what the costs are, how decisions were made, what consultation was carried out and what, if any, changes to the proposals were made as a result. Members need to be aware what is happening, and to have a voice on behalf of their constituents both in and out of consultation.

2. Unfortunately, transparency of information for officers and Members on the Commissioning process suffers by being out of date, incomplete, and spread across a range of sources. It is important to stress that we do not believe this obfuscation to be deliberate; rather, it has come about through information and resources having been developed by a range of personnel for a range of services, without reference to one another. The problem has been compounded over time through a lack of oversight to develop and apply a single, cohesive format and timeframe for ensuring information is current.

3. From conversations during Scrutiny Task Group meetings, we were pleased to note that officers have a strong knowledge and understanding of the services and areas they are commissioning, which they were keen to share with Members. Transparency for residents, for example, information in consultations about projects such as Future Lives, is also generally clear, although engagement may be restricted for those unable to access these online. However, information provided for officers and Members, for example, on SID and the website, is muddied, most likely through having been written and compiled by multiple officers working in different teams. As a consequence, clarity and transparency are obscured by a disparity and lack of connection between sources.

4. With a strong Leader and Cabinet Model in place, non-Cabinet Members need to be involved heavily in their wards, and maintain awareness of the various projects underway, in order to retain a strong usefulness to their residents and the Council on the frontline. The availability of useful, concise and current information about Commissioning, along with an understanding of one's local constituents and their needs and issues, is critical to maintaining this connection and ability to act appropriately on behalf of residents. This is not, however, always the experience of Members. Instances of issues encountered in the course of this Scrutiny include:

- Perception differs as to what does, and does not, qualify as Commissioning. For example, the Positive Behaviours spin-off is included as a successful case study in the Commissioning section on SID, although according to the Positive Behaviours team themselves, this is not strictly Commissioning since they have taken a service out of County Council control, rather than having been commissioned by the Council to provide services on its behalf

- Contracts information for commissioned services can generally be found in the E-Tendering Portal. However, finding information on services for which the

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1. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/procurement
tendering process has completed is complex, as there appears to be no keyword search facility to help filter almost 800 expired tenders, and registration is required to view related documents. Options for Registration do not presently include the facility for a Member to be identified as such.

- The County Council's Viewpoint 2013 staff survey included a request for staff to indicate their understanding of the term 'commissioning' and the way this is approached by the County Council. Four options were given for responses: 'strongly/ moderately agree', 'slightly agree', 'slightly disagree', 'strongly/ moderately disagree'. Of the 28% of staff who responded to the survey, 64% strongly or moderately agreed that they understood 'commissioning' and the County Council's approach. **However, this figure is subjective as it records staff perceptions of their understanding without placing this in the context of what is understood about Commissioning.**

- **Detailed information for Members about Commissioning projects is often limited to briefings.** Commissioning Member Briefings are provided once every 6 weeks (this is presently under consideration with a view to increasing the frequency), with each briefing focusing on one or more specific topics. These are open to all Members, although an additional disadvantage with this style of briefing is that the range of services involved means Members may only receive a Commissioning update on a particular service once a year. Lead Scrutiny Members and Opposition 'spokespersons' are also invited to Cabinet Member Briefings at which Commissioning projects may be discussed. However, attendance at these latter sessions is often low, with some having been cancelled at very short notice.

- **Information about scheduling of meetings and events is often unclear and less than transparent.** For example, a Commissioning Member Briefing originally due to take place on 27 January 2014 was rescheduled to 3 February. This was communicated via the Councillor Portal weekly update email, which included a link to **Commissioning Sessions for Councillors**, a page on the Council website. The webpage did not mention this was a rescheduled meeting, and the Councillor Portal email was issued on 27 January at 4pm, after the meeting had originally been scheduled to take place. As Members tend to receive a large volume of emails, essential messages such as information about briefing schedules need to be signposted explicitly and unambiguously so as to be easily visible within Inboxes, rather than buried as a link within the Councillor Portal update.

- **Commissioning information available on the WCC website and SID is comprehensive in scope, including positive case studies.** However, coverage seems sparse and some content is outdated, with some 'dead' and circular links. Useful information is scattered over several areas, including the E-Tendering Portal on Worcestershire.Business.Central, not all of which are clearly linked, resulting in a resource that is 'muddy' and less transparent than it needs to be. **It is often hard to find, for example, information about what engagement and consultations are underway or have taken place with regard to Commissioning.**

- The Commissioning toolkit itself appears to have been designed for 'step by step' access, although it is time-consuming to click around the various areas.
For those seeking support, it is not immediately obvious that the appropriate route for this is the Programmes and Projects team, since there are no explicit links to contact details for advice within the toolkit. This resource is also not available in any format other than online on the County Council’s staff intranet SID (if it is, this is not promoted), which is inflexible given that not all officers have access to SID at all times. The toolkit in its current form would be useful as a back-up source of information for officers who are working with a Commissioner or other specialist, but does not work well as a stand-alone tool for someone learning about the Commissioning process.

- Another tool clearly designed to present a lot of information in a concise and accessible format is the Commissioning Roadmap. However, the layout is so compacted that this is impossible to read on screen or in print format at 100% size, requiring zooming and scrolling to be readable, which impacts on the time taken to absorb the data presented. Although Task Group Members were informed in late 2013 that the Roadmap had been redesigned in response to feedback, the February 2014 version is little different from previous. Members have also reported similar issues with the Procurement Process diagram, hosted on the toolkit under Source External: Tender Management Process.

- Other website content relating to Commissioning activity, for example the Commissioning page on the Councillor portal, does not appear to have been updated recently, giving the impression that keeping Members informed and updated through this route is not considered a priority. As of 25 February 2014 the latest set of Commissioning Briefing slides available from this page is from 23 September 2013, although 2 further Briefings have taken place since this date, whilst the link Commissioning Sessions for Councillors opens a PDF poster for the 23 July 2013 session. Also, the version of the Commissioning Roadmap accessible from the Councillor Portal is six months out of date (August 2013), and a link is included to a Budget Consultation feedback document from 2011.

5. We are conscious that the above list may appear rather to labour the point that there are issues with Commissioning information and its accessibility. However, we feel it is important to note the range of issues we have encountered indicate that relevant officers and teams lack understanding of the scale of the problem, as is reflected in the detail of the related recommendations. It is also understood that the recommendations aimed at improving transparency will involve a considerable amount of work and time, though we feel strongly that this investment will be worthwhile when balanced against the time that will be saved for officers and Members in accessing information and guidance.

**Accountability**

6. Whether providing services in-house or commissioning external providers, the County Council is utilising public funds for the benefit of residents, and consequently it is necessary to ensure proper arrangements are in place for governance and accountability, and that these are communicated clearly. **Accountability for County Council activities including Commissioning rests with the Council and Executive.** We feel that Members and Scrutiny can provide
assistance to ensure clarity, understanding and confidence that the right decisions are being made for the people of Worcestershire.

7. **We found that there is inconsistency in the information concerning governance of Worcestershire County Council’s Commissioning. As a result, the approval process is unclear.** The Commissioning Toolkit presents the route for project approval as being via Directorate Leadership teams and either the Joint Commissioning Executive, BOLD governance or the Strategic Leadership team, whichever is appropriate for the project. However, no reference is made to involvement of, for example, Cabinet or STAR Chamber, the latter of which is referenced in slide 9 of the Task Group’s Commissioning Briefing presentation (3 September 2013), and for which meeting frequency is noted on the Commissioning Roadmap.

8. The toolkit approval process does not appear to include Cabinet Member involvement, although a decision made by Cabinet is referenced in the case study for Catshill Library. It also does not reference the Forward Plan (hosted in the Democratic Services area of the external website), which records requirement for Cabinet or Cabinet Member approval for key commissioning activity, nor does it mention the possibility of discussion and decisions in full Council (including Notices of Motion), or note that Cabinet decisions can be challenged through the call-in process. Whilst call-ins are relatively rare, they can impact significantly on the timescale and outcomes of a Commissioning project, thus it is beneficial for involved officers to be aware of such possibilities, particularly where projects may attract controversy.

9. **There is no explicit statement of where accountability lies in the process – the assumption, gained through discussion with officers, is that this comes into play through contract management. There needs to be a visible audit trail, together with a single point of contact for final responsibility.** Organisations delivering commissioned services may be accountable to the commissioning body, rather than to local people. This may lead to a diminution of democratic oversight and service users' access to means by which they can influence services in future. **We also note that accountability can be more complex when a service is contracted out, since tracking down who to speak with in the event of an issue may not be as clear.** Audit trails need to be evidenced and open to challenge as required. Checks and balances need to be set to provide assurances that the right controls are in place, and following the Commissioning Member Briefing on Early Help Group Members did not feel this was necessarily the case.

10. The Communications and Engagement section of the Commissioning toolkit states, ‘The Commissioning process is driven by what our customers want and need therefore it is vital to engage with members of the public/ service users at the earliest opportunity.’ By far the longest list of suggested ways in which a group can be involved related to engagement of children and young people.

11. **We feel, however, that more evidence is required that the Commissioning process is customer-driven.** Feedback from residents, for example those attending public meetings to make representations, gives a very different picture. A resident who spoke at the 9 January 2014 Cabinet meeting about his son’s use of the Moule Close facility for Short Breaks expressed concern about the way in which the consultation had been conducted, and said that the experience had led
him and others to lose trust in the Council. This in turn had impacted confidence in the ability and willingness of the Council to do what is right for their children. He indicated that the negative impact of the consultation process could have been avoided had some initial groundwork been done, and recommended early engagement with Scrutiny prior to going out to consultation.

12. In a scrutiny discussion with the Head of the Joint Commissioning Unit concerning personal budgeting, clear evidence was provided on how users were involved and listened to, arising from national Choice and Control policy, whilst acknowledging that users in Worcestershire often felt little choice and/or control was available. A presentation on Commissioning for Early Help services made no reference to consultation or engagement with residents, although expert knowledge and understanding of services, and the impact should these be withdrawn, was demonstrated. Indeed, with the exception of Positive Activities there has been little reference to consultation or engagement with residents by Commissioning officers speaking about their areas of responsibility, and several of the Future Fit Transformational Programme Concept Papers included as appendices with the Corporate Strategy Week bundle make little or no mention of consultation. There is a strong focus on delivery and outcomes, but nothing of the views of service users. This does not communicate the impression that services are genuinely being redesigned around the needs of residents.

13. Worcestershire is in no way alone in this lack of communication in how it is putting residents' needs first in Commissioning. For example, Gloucestershire County Council omits the needs/wants of residents from its list of Commissioning principles, despite its defining Commissioning as 'the process of understanding what local people need and want, deciding how to respond (designing services) and checking that it worked'. Suffolk County Council seeks to assure its Audit Committee that 'adequate safeguards exist to ensure value for money during the commissioning, award and ongoing management of contracts' – which does not appear to be placing the customer at the heart of the process. On the other hand, Shropshire's Good Commissioning Principles include recognising, valuing and supporting the input that all individuals, communities and stakeholders can bring to the process, and Shropshire councillors report that going out to the public changed their perception of the standard of job they were doing, as they discovered their own bureaucracy was delaying work that could have been done for less money and with fewer meetings.

14. Some Members were particularly struck that Commissioning in Shropshire was driven by discussion with residents and service users about their needs, and how these could be met with available resources, whilst in Worcestershire it appeared to be driven by financial necessity.

15. We feel that if we wish to be clear that the Council's Commissioning processes are indeed customer-led, it is essential to ensure we are broadcasting to residents, businesses, officers and Members that we are working to do the right thing, and that we consider it important to keep them involved and up to date. At present much of the information available online is comprised of old versions of documents which do not broadcast the current position, such as BOLD – The Story So Far, dated November 2011.
16. Members are a valuable source of insight into local communities and views of residents, which can be exploited for the benefit of Commissioning. Members are meant to be encouraged to find local solutions to local issues in Act Local, and involvement in Commissioning would be beneficial for this. It is not suggested that Members should be directly involved with all Commissioning projects due to the potential impact on already demanding workloads, although, as leaders within their respective communities, the opportunity for Member engagement would support the view of a Council that is proactive, responsive and accountable. Such engagement could include, for example, involvement in discussions to shape services, leading consultation events, or sharing 'soft intelligence'.

17. **Approaches to engagement of Members with Commissioning activities vary.** In Commissioning for Young People, Local Members have been at the heart of the decision-making process, working directly with young people in Local Commissioning Groups. Their views are also considered as local perspective for issues and services being commissioned, and once commissioning has taken place, they will continue to be involved in monitoring and review.

18. Unfortunately, this example of engagement appears to be unique, in that no other WCC Commissioning projects of which this Scrutiny is aware have directly engaged with Members beyond providing briefing sessions. Members may therefore have no involvement in projects within their own divisions until the issue reaches Cabinet.

19. It has been acknowledged that no conscious decision was made to exclude Members from participating in Commissioning activities. However, some involvement would be beneficial, even if limited to sharing of 'soft intelligence'. This would enable Members' local knowledge and insight to be injected into projects, and concerns to be followed up.

20. Member involvement with Commissioning activity also varies between local authorities. Of those which engaged with this Scrutiny:

   - Gloucestershire involves Members at an early stage to agree population outcomes reflecting local need and statutory responsibilities, with Members outside Cabinet taking no further explicit role in the process;
   - Shropshire is increasing Member involvement through Scrutiny, with Members talking to the community and officers about Commissioning projects, and reporting their findings to Scrutiny;
   - Suffolk involves Members in Councillor Divestment Working Groups to assess divestment proposals at an early stage, and later in testing business plans before they go to Council, Cabinet or DMT for decision and implementation.

21. It will be beneficial for Scrutiny to be aware of current and potential Commissioning projects at the earliest possible stage, enabling discussions to take place as needed between relevant officers and Scrutiny Members, such as the Short Breaks Scrutiny referenced elsewhere in this report. This support for effective Commissioning will reduce the risk of (admittedly infrequent) call-ins or potential damage to the Council's reputation, and ensure access to a wide range of information and viewpoints to support making the right decisions.
22. Services delivered through Commissioning can make a profound impact on the lives of residents, and **Scrutiny can play a valuable role in helping to make the link between strategic commissioning and operational management.** This can include raising concerns and issues, building positive relations, and identifying solutions. **Such involvement by Members and Scrutiny in accountability would not seek to undermine the role of the Council's core executive, but rather to maximise clarity and understanding to support good quality decisions made by the right people.**

**Sound contract management**

23. The Commissioning process does not end with the awarding of a contract to a service provider. In practice it should run as a cycle, with regular and ongoing review and evaluation leading to potential service re-design and re-sourcing as relevant to meet changing requirements of service users. This process needs to be as rigorous as the initial Design and Source stages, since as long as public money is being used to fund the service, the Council remains accountable.

24. **It is understood that Elected Members will participate in performance monitoring of commissioned services.** This is positive as Members can identify particular areas of concern in their divisions and bring these to the attention of Commissioners and contractors in order that issues can be resolved. **However, there seems to be no consistency or uniformity in contract monitoring or auditing of commissioned services across Worcestershire.**

25. In the Commissioning toolkit, both internal and external review frameworks indicate, 'It may also be appropriate to involve relevant stakeholders, including service users and/ or members'. **At the commencement of this scrutiny exercise there was little awareness amongst Task Group Members that this would be expected of them.** One Member reported having been informed at a meeting away from County Hall some weeks before that he would be taking part in contract monitoring, although nothing further had been heard about this for several weeks.

26. **Scrutiny can be built into contract specification, procurement and management in order to open out decisions and issues which might otherwise have been hidden from the public.** Contracts can also be scrutinised where there are causes for concern, or when they are progressing well and can be used as case studies and good examples for others.

27. **The contract monitoring process is designed to be developmental and supportive rather than punitive – providers, especially new organisations or those not accustomed to outcomes based approaches, are likely to need challenge and support in order to improve.** In some contracts, for example Early Help, payment may be withheld as a sanction for poor performance.

28. **Where Members are invited to participate in contract monitoring for commissioned services, the wording of documents is crucial.** Members may not have been involved in the Commissioning process leading to the contract, and will need to develop awareness of the service, provider and expectations within a very short time. Members are most active within
Commissioning for Positive Activities, including visits to commissioned providers on a regular basis.

29. Members representing divisions in Bromsgrove undertake visits to commissioned providers, although Group Members from Worcestershire's other districts reported that they had not been involved in such performance management activity. Again, this demonstrates inconsistency of practice, which, coupled with a paucity of training for Members participating in Commissioning, outlines a pitfall which could potentially impact negatively on service delivery, and consequently on residents' quality of life.

30. The work spent on careful evaluation, design and sourcing of Commissioning projects must be balanced with attention paid to reviewing and fine-tuning services. For example, it is acknowledged that commissioned provision in Early Help is somewhat experimental – this leads to concerns around the need to ensure positive experiences for service users. Pitfalls and risk could be much reduced with the involvement of Members and Scrutiny as an essential, rather than optional, component of contract monitoring.

**Flexibility in ever-changing circumstances**

31. The financial position prevalent in the last few years has forced councils to reassess every aspect of what services they provide, and how these are provided. Needs of residents and businesses are not static – it is well known, for example, that ageing populations mean provision needs to evolve to find ways of anticipating and meeting social care requirements. In Worcestershire the focus is shifting onto preventative measures, aiming for improved health in older age, and minimising impact of the ageing population on care requirements. We also recognise good work going on around the county, for example by libraries proactively hosting regular NHS Healthcheck sessions offering basic checks and advice with focus on preventative care.

32. There is an ongoing need for the Council to adapt and evolve to ensure the services it provides and commissions are relevant to the needs of residents and businesses in Worcestershire. This flexibility requires those involved to develop skills continually through training and updating awareness, and regular evaluation of whether projects are relevant to need and are being conducted appropriately.

33. In several interviews we have encountered officers who are knowledgeable, concerned and committed, who speak with passion and enthusiasm about the services being commissioned. We are also aware that a training programme for officers involved in the Commissioning process is presently underway, with a 1 day commercial awareness course, *Commercial Skills for Commissioning*, to follow later in the year for all WCC managers.

34. It has been proposed that this course will also be delivered for Members. Reference to this was first noted in the 23 September 2013 Commissioning Member Briefing, and both the Cabinet Member and Head of Joint Commissioning agreed in Scrutiny discussions that such training is needed. In the discussion with the Cabinet Member on 3 February 2014, Members were amazed that no date had
yet been set for this training. Further to this, we understand the planned session for all WCC managers also has yet to be scheduled.

35. We are concerned that, whilst the need for Members to receive this training in order to engage with the auditing process has been noted at senior levels, this amounts to little more than ‘lip service’ if no date has actually been set for WCC managers or Members almost five months after the topic was initially raised at the briefing. In order to support delivery agents in providing effective services to the benefit of residents, it is imperative that all Members receive this training as soon as possible.

36. Whilst the prospect of training is a positive development, we do not feel that a single day’s training is sufficient for officers and Members to gain a clear understanding of, for example, assessing bids for services. Consideration needs to be given to how this training can be expanded to ensure those who need to have awareness of, and participate in, Commissioning at any stage of the process, are sufficiently prepared to undertake this important responsibility.

37. We anticipate that in order to ensure officers and Members can continue to act and respond flexibly, training will not be provided on a stand-alone basis, but will be supplemented with follow-up sessions and monitoring to ensure skills are applied appropriately and with confidence. In stressing this point, it needs to be noted that this is a clear example of the feedback received by Worcestershire County Council in its most recent Peer Review of Commissioning, which reported that Commissioning was progressing well, but needs to move at a quicker pace. More than five months have elapsed since the first reference to proposed Commercial Skills for Commissioning training for Members, with repeated confirmation that this training is required. Not to have delivered, much less arranged, this training for Members after five months is unacceptable.

38. We support the development of skills and awareness across the Council as a means to enhance flexibility. The more officers and Members understand what needs to be done and the processes by which it can be achieved, the more it will be possible to participate in activities such as gathering soft intelligence, and engaging with residents, officers and Members with creative ideas for new ways to provide excellent services with limited resources.

39. The Review phase of the Commissioning Cycle should ensure flexibility in picking up and resolving issues with services. For example, Members can visit commissioned services to speak with providers, service users and their families, highlighting any issues and working with relevant officers to propose solutions. The better prepared Members are in understanding what is required of the service, the better and more quickly they can act to support service users and officers.

40. We also looked at other approaches to providing Council services, comparing Worcestershire’s Commissioning with the Co-operative approach adopted by some authorities. Councils which adopt a Co-operative approach, rather than becoming Commissioning authorities, generally do not contract out services, rather working on the basis of these being co-owned, designed and delivered in partnership with customers and service providers. The emphasis is more on working with local communities to design services around their needs.
41. Co-operative values align well with public services, although councils utilising this approach tend to be less complex unitary authorities rather than multi-tiered as Worcestershire. Ed Mayo, Secretary General of Co-ops UK, stated in a March 2013 blog post, “Co-operatives can be many things but not, without very significant stretch, can they be a local authority.” **The Co-operative approach does clearly work for some authorities; however, there would be significant practical challenges for Worcestershire in adopting this approach from its current position.** For example, with communities defining their needs, services would need to be very responsive to smaller areas rather than larger contracts, which would be more time consuming and expensive in the early stages.

42. **This is not to say that the Council should discard the Co-operative approach entirely – in terms of flexibility and promoting entrepreneurship, we were pleased to note that both the Leader and Cabinet Member are of the opinion that Worcestershire County Council could look at commissioning and supporting a co-operative organisation as a service provider.** This is a positive indication that the Council is happy to look flexibly at services from a range of provider types with a focus on which will provide the best benefits for service users, and indeed we are aware of a number of contracts being awarded to, for example, not-for-profit organisations in Early Help.

...all within the context of achieving value for money

41. Value for money is the bottom line. This does not mean providing services as cheaply as possible, but ensuring that every effort is expanded in making the most of the financial resources available. **The County Council has a great many demands to be met with limited, and dwindling, resources, and a commitment to provide services to meet demand which afford the highest possible quality and benefit.** In some cases, such as Early Help, commissioned contracts are still at an early stage, and it will take some time to see whether these are truly successful in terms of providing value for money in quantity and quality of services, evidenced through performance against outcomes and user feedback. **The aim is to create socially responsive projects which will have wide reaching impact across the County.** Successful services which are working well and need little from the County Council will be considered good value for money; those which perform less well, produce fewer benefits for users and require considerable support and performance management will not.

42. **Good planning is critical to ensuring value for money, since consideration of potential changes in service and user requirements needs to be robustly built in to contracts to avoid a good idea becoming an error which proves costly over time.** Effective utilisation of Scrutiny in the Evaluation and Design phases of Commissioning could support this work and reduce the risk of encountering such pitfalls.

43. In some cases, rather than Commissioning, services formerly provided by the County Council have been passed over to alternative providers, which now run these as independent businesses away from Council control. We spoke with ex-officers from Positive Behaviours and Malvern Outdoor Education Centre who were happy to tell us about their experiences.
44. The Positive Behaviours team is the first (and to date only) staff spin-off, in which a team sets up its own business to take on a service previously provided by the Council. Malvern Outdoor Education Centre is now run by Malvern Outdoor Elements, a company set up by the Centre’s staff. Both organisations began running their operations independently of the County Council in 2013. Neither receives Council funding, and thus have afforded excellent opportunities for valued non-statutory services to continue.

45. **Both Positive Behaviours and Malvern Outdoor Elements reviewed their experience of the process as having been largely positive, although we also found the process had thrown up challenges in each case.** Both organisations reported issues with financial aspects of their changeover, in one case due to a lack of advice on the need to obtain a vendor number in order to receive payment, and a failure in the other to transfer assets in time which resulted in money not being available in time to run the payroll. Malvern Outdoor Elements also stated that council bureaucracy had caused the deadline for completion of the handover to be delayed owing to processes not having been completed on time.

46. However, both also commented on areas in which they had received excellent support. The Positive Behaviours team had been awarded voluntary redundancy payments which they had not expected, which were helpful to the finances of their new business. Malvern Outdoor Elements were supported by work carried out on their building to ensure this would not generate costs for them early on which could jeopardise the future of their service. In both cases, a relatively small financial outlay by the County Council will have helped to secure the future of these services in the long term, which can certainly be considered value for money when laid against the potential impact of either losing the services altogether, or the risk of the new providers being unable to maintain the service in the long term.

47. These exercises clearly present an opportunity for Commissioners and directorate teams. The one criticism highlighted in Worcestershire’s Peer Review of Commissioning is that the speed of progress could be faster. Given that there are costs associated with the time taken to undertake projects and performance manage contracts, such as officer time, it is in the Council’s best interests to do everything possible to ensure ‘the right service from the right provider at the right price for the taxpayer’. This avoids the need for performance management and interventions in future, which are costly not only financially but also in the negative impact on the Council’s reputation and the trust placed in it by residents and businesses.

48. Ensuring the Review phase of the Commissioning process is fully implemented will help ensure the best value for money, as will conducting reviews following completion of each exercise to explore what went well, what could have gone better, and what can be done to improve the experience for future projects. Such reviews can be conducted by, or in partnership with, Scrutiny Members, and should include evaluation of whether the project was conducted at the right pace, or could have been undertaken more quickly by reducing elements without negatively impacting on the outcomes.

49. **One example of processes being redesigned through evaluation is Shropshire Council.** Officers had discovered, through talking with local
people, that processes they had thought to be efficient were in fact deeply bureaucratic and time-consuming, and more costly in the long run. A request to fit a shower for a resident was found to have resulted in two years of meetings and additional support for the resident whilst the need for the shower was explored, when it would have been far quicker and cheaper just to fit the shower in the first place.

50. Shropshire also set up its own business with the aim of generating profits and bringing these back into the Council – their Marketing and Communications team now operates under this banner, and has extended their service to cover the Police and Crime Commissioner, with a resulting increase in staff rather than the cuts they would have needed to make had the team not made this move. The Leader of Worcestershire County Council has indicated that although he does not see a problem with such arrangements, he does not see it as the Council’s business to compete with the private sector.

Conclusion

50. In the findings of this scrutiny, we have expressed concerns regarding communication, Member involvement, and training relating to the Council’s commissioning process, which, it should be stressed, are entirely distinct from the services being commissioned.

51. Prior to this scrutiny exercise, Group Members’ understanding of the commissioning process was limited. As a result of the scrutiny work understanding has developed, and it is clear that Worcestershire County Council has a number of officers working creatively in several areas to design and source, internally or externally, the best possible services for residents with the resources available.

52. In several interviews, we have encountered officers who are knowledgeable, concerned and committed, who speak with passion and enthusiasm about the services being commissioned. The most recent External Peer Review noted that commissioning is delivering benefits, and we can see evidence of this, although the most positive examples we encountered were not strictly examples of Commissioning. Positive Behaviours and Malvern Outdoor Elements have both thrived since stepping away from local authority control to operate as independent businesses.

53. There is a huge quantity of information available which is intended to raise awareness of commissioning, the projects underway and where to go for further advice. However, this is frequently incomplete or fragmented, inconsistent and out of date. Whilst we accept the intent is to provide as much information as possible to ensure transparency, the result is an ‘out of focus’ image of the commissioning process. This presents an impression that the commissioning process is not considered important or a priority in terms of ensuring information is accurate and current – which is not an impression that we would wish officers or residents to gain.
54. There is also evidence that more practical engagement of Members (other than Cabinet Members) would be beneficial, including increased engagement with Scrutiny. It is a concern that a statement in the Commissioning toolkit appears to champion Member involvement, before specifying only that Members will be 'involved' through being told about what is happening at briefings and similar. **Informing alone is not the same as involving.** Encouraging Scrutiny and member involvement at different stages of the process will help to ensure positive commissioning activity is publicised, increase opportunities to identify and resolve any issues, and raise public confidence that the commissioning being carried out is in their best interests. An excellent example is the recent Scrutiny into Short Breaks by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, for which Member involvement contributed to the extension of the consultation period, and to the conclusions which supported residents' wishes concerning two Short Breaks units. As a result proposals to reduce provision significantly were scaled back with support from the Cabinet Member Cllr Liz Eyre.

55. The aim to make Worcestershire an excellent commissioning authority is a laudable one. This exercise did not set out to scrutinise the actual services being commissioned, although it is clear from discussions that a great deal is being done to maximise benefits for residents with increasingly limited resources. However, we feel there is a need for more 'joined-up thinking' with regard to information and Member involvement. The information provided about Commissioning on the toolkit on SID and elsewhere needs to be reviewed and updated more frequently, including checking against other County Council resources to ensure these are consistent. Member involvement should be rather more than Members being told what is happening, particularly if they are to participate in contract management. Scrutiny needs to be involved at an early stage, and Members in general given the opportunity to participate in commissioning relating to their divisions. This more 'connected' approach recommended by this Scrutiny will support increased openness and transparency in the commissioning process.
## Appendix 1 – Schedule of Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 September 2013</td>
<td>Briefing session for Task Group Members with Clare Marchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 September 2013</td>
<td>Members attended Commissioning Member Briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>September to December 2013</td>
<td>Information Gathering exercise: other authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 October 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 October 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Anne Clarke (Head of Adult Social Care), Nick Hands (Malvern Outdoor Elements) and Jo White (Co-operative Futures)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 November 2013</td>
<td>ASH meeting with providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 November 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Paul Finnemore (Commissioning Manager: Young People) and Richard Keble (Head of Joint Commissioning Unit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 November 2013</td>
<td>Members attended Commissioning Member Briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 December 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Hannah Needham (Strategic Manager: Early Help)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 December 2013</td>
<td>Visit to Shropshire Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 December 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting: Sue Stokes and Dee Milbery (Positive Behaviours Team – Staff Spin Off)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 December 2013</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Pauline Harris (BOLD Programme Manager)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 February 2014</td>
<td>Members attending Commissioning Member Briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 February 2014</td>
<td>Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Leader and Cabinet Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 March 2014</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny report submission to Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board</td>
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Appendix 2 – Evidence and Supporting Documents

NB ‘Paper File Ref’ refers to paper document stored in file 55/190/6 Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group (barcode 2013136777) – this file will be retained in Worcestershire County Council's Corporate Information Management Unit following the conclusion of the scrutiny exercise.

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<td>M1</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting notes, 1 October 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting, 31 October 20134 (Anne Clarke, Head of Adult Social Care; Nick Hands, Malvern Outdoor Elements; Jo White, Co-operative Futures)</td>
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<td>M3</td>
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<td>M4</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting notes, 12 November 2013 (Paul Finnemore, Commissioning Manager: Young People; Richard Keble, Head of Joint Commissioning Unit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting notes, 2 December 2013 (Hannah Needham, Strategic Manager: Early Help)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting notes, 9 December 2013 (Sue Stokes and Dee Milbery, Positive Behaviours: Staff Spin-off)</td>
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<td>M7</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting, 17 December 2013 (Pauline Harris, BOLD Programme Manager)</td>
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<td>Agenda</td>
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<td>Meeting notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: meeting, 3 February 2014 (Cllr Adrian Hardman, Leader of Worcestershire County Council; Cllr John Campion, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Meeting notes</td>
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## Briefings, Reports and General Documents

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<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Scrutiny Proposal</td>
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| **B2** | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group: Member Briefing, 3 September 2013  
   Clare Marchant |
| **B3** | Meeting notes  
   Presentation slides |
| **B4** | Commissioning Roadmap: V3.2 (as at 20 August 2013) |
| **B5** | Commissioning Member Briefing, 23 September 2013  
   Elaine Carolan, Lead Commissioner: DASH (Future Lives)  
   Fran Kelsey, Commercial Projects Manager (Upskilling)  
   Patrick Birch, Director of Resources (Commissioning of Support Services) |
| **B6** | Briefing notes  
   Presentation slides |
| **B7** | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group, meeting 31 October 2013  
   Presentation slides: Anne Clarke, Head of Adult Social Care |
| **B8** | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group, meeting 12 November 2013  
   Paul Finnemore, Commissioning Manager: Young People |
| **B9** | Presentation slides: Positive Activities Local Commissioning Update  
   Briefing: Positive Activities for Young People |
| **B10** | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group, meeting 2 December 2013  
   Presentation slides: Hannah Needham, Strategic Manager: Early Help |
| **B11** | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group, meeting 17 December 2013  
   Presentation slides: Pauline Harris, BOLD Programme Manager |
| **B12** | Outline Scrutiny Questions:  
   Commissioners and Senior Officers  
   Involved Officers (present and previous)  
   Co-operative Futures (Jo White)  
   Cabinet Members/ Leader |
| **B16** | Hammond, Ed (May 2011). *Shared Services and Commissioning*  
   London: Centre for Public Scrutiny (Policy Briefing 10)  
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| B17  | Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, meeting 24 October 2013: Corporate Strategy Planning Discussions  
   Pack of papers relating to all meetings of the OSPB and scrutiny panels where the outcomes of Corporate Strategy Planning (CSP) and the 2014/15 Budget were to be discussed.  
| B18  | Communication highlighting items of special interest for Commissioning Scrutiny Members |
| B19  | Commissioning Pages on SID  
| B19  | Commissioning Member Briefing, 3 February 2014  
   Hannah Needham, Head of Early Help and Partnerships  
   Pauline Harris, BOLD Programme Manager |
| B19  | Briefing notes |

**Other Authorities**

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<tr>
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| A2   | Gloucestershire County Council: Commissioning Information Pack  
   Summary: Gloucestershire County Council |
| A3   | Shropshire Council |
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   Summary: Shropshire Council |
| A5   | Notes from meeting with Shropshire Council on 6 December 2013 |
| A6   | Suffolk County Council |
| A7   | Suffolk County Council: Commissioning Information Pack  
   Summary: Suffolk County Council |

**Co-operative Approach**

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</table>
| C1   | Commissioning Scrutiny Task Group, meeting 31 October 2013  
   Jo White, Executive Director: Co-operative Futures  
   Outline notes: Co-operative approach |
<p>| C2   | Co-operative identity, values &amp; principles |
| C3   | The Oldham Continuum |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C4</th>
<th>The Oldham Co-operative Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Co-operative Council</em> (Oldham Council 2012, written submission to Parliament) <a href="http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcomloc/writev/112/m06.htm">http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcomloc/writev/112/m06.htm</a></td>
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### Appendix 3 – Scrutiny by Other Authorities

**Harborough District Council (Leicestershire)**

Harborough is presently facilitating a Scrutiny Task Group focusing on Commissioning and Procurement Strategies and Council Operating Model. This scrutiny exercise commenced in May 2013 and is scheduled to complete in May 2014. The primary purpose of this scrutiny appears to have been to review and amend the Council's draft Commissioning and Procurement Strategy.

**Warwickshire County Council**

Warwickshire's Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee tracks the overall delivery of the Council's Strategic Commissioning programme through progress updates at each meeting. The Committee will also receive an outline of how services are to be reviewed and which stakeholders will be consulted. Scrutiny Members will have the opportunity to input their views and suggestions before each review commences.