



# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

**24 May 2017**

## **Foreword of the Scrutiny Chairs**

It is now two years since we re-aligned our Scrutiny Committees with the new Corporate Plan, approved in July 2015.

This year we saw some changes to the membership of the Scrutiny Committees and a change to the Chair of the Growth Scrutiny Committee as Councillor Steve Fritchley took up a position on the Executive. The Vice Chair, Councillor Jennifer Wilson took over the Chair and Councillor Brian Watson was appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee. Both have settled into their new roles and the Committee is working well.

Our focus over the next year needs to be on the challenges facing the Authority and we aim to ensure that Scrutiny makes a valuable contribution through its work. We appreciate the continued support of colleagues on the Executive and Officers and look forward to another year of collaborative working for the benefit of our communities.

***Councillor Rose Bowler***

Chair of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee

***Councillor Sandra Peake***

Chair of the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee

***Councillor Jennifer Wilson***

Chair of the Growth Scrutiny Committee

## **Summary of 2016/17**

### **Review of heating charges to tenants in properties served by a district heating system**

The Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee carried out the review to understand the reasons for complaints from tenants to the authority and to local members through surgeries relating to heating charges. Complaints questioned the amount that residents were being charged for their heating and expressed frustrations that they were unable to do anything to help them save money by turning radiators down, changing suppliers or even changing to a dual fuel tariff.

An interim recommendation was made to Executive in November 2016 and Executive resolved that the Head of Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Housing review the current method of charging the same amount for each type of property across the District and put forward alternative suggestions as to how a fairer system of billing could be introduced in the 2017/18 financial year.

As a result, Members have approved 2017/18 charges within the budget that will ensure every tenant served by a district heating system will see a reduction in their weekly heating charges.

The final report was presented to Executive in January 2017 and the Committee will continue to monitor the outcomes of the recommendations made surrounding the progress of the safe and warm scheme.

### **Where does public health fit within planning policy review**

The Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee carried out the review following concerns that the current Section 106 policy was not working to address public health issues.

The review concluded that we need to be clear who we consider is responsible for health provision in any new development. This point was discussed with our stakeholders and it was agreed that the responsibility ought to lie with the NHS and not necessarily the developer. Negotiations via the Planning Officer with the NHS through the CCG makes sense but there are so many other demands on S.106 monies that the developer cannot be expected to deliver public health provision, although it may contribute towards it.

The provision of appropriate healthcare is only one aspect of promoting public health and planning policy can have a significant positive or negative impact on wider

health and wellbeing issues. An increased willingness to consider the impact of planning policy on wider health and wellbeing issues was acknowledged by stakeholders but it was stated that this needed to be maintained, particularly when faced with difficult economic and regeneration choices and developer pressures.

Two recommendations were considered by Executive on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and later approved. The second recommendation, relating to a hot food takeaway policy to be included in the publication draft of the local plan was also considered and accepted by the Local Plan Steering Group on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017 where this will be developed further.

### **Annual review of the Community Safety Partnership**

Following on from the success of last year's review and in order to ensure that an effective review of the Community Safety Partnership was carried out, the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Scrutiny Committee compiled a list of questions set out under the following headings;

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Understanding local communities
- Accountability

The questions were provided to the relevant Officers and Portfolio Holder four weeks prior to the annual review to ensure that the Officers had a reasonable amount of time to prepare their responses.

The review meeting was more structured than it had been in the past and Members and Officers agreed that the review was conducted more efficiently as a result and a thorough review of the work of the Community Safety Partnership over the past year took place. The Committee considered the Bolsover Community Safety Partnership Plan and Action Plan 2017 – 2020 and raised questions on the identified priorities.

The Committee were reassured that the right level of staffing and resource was in place to deliver the 2017 – 2020 Action Plan and have identified ways in which it can support the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

### **Growth Scrutiny Committee**

The Growth Scrutiny Committee produced a set of Performance Indicators to enable the effective monitoring of key growth issues. The Committee considers these

indicators every six months to monitor progress. Areas of failing performance have been challenged to ensure that steps are being taken to bring performance back on track.

The Committee also considered and responded to the consultation on 100% Business Rates Retention.

A quarterly growth update is considered which has covered projects including;

- Devolution
- Sherwood Lodge site
- Coalite
- Joint Venture Company
- Broadband/Digital Derbyshire
- HS2

### **The impacts of our work**

We have monitored past recommendations and are pleased to see some of the impacts our reviews are having;

#### Hard to Let Properties

We have seen initial plans to alter the layouts of some of our sheltered accommodation from bedsits into 2 bedroom apartments which will provide desirable properties that tenants want to live in. We are pleased to see that Victoria House, Creswell is in Phase 1 of the Safe and Warm Scheme with work scheduled for completion in October 2017.

#### District Heating Scheme

As a result of the review, all tenants have seen a reduction in their fuel charges from April 2017.

Phases 1 and 2 of the three year project to update all communal heating systems have been identified, with work on phase 1 commencing April 2017 and completion due in October 2017.

Our recommendations included communication with tenants on when they can expect to see works start at their accommodation and also using the evidence from the scrutiny review to help to prioritise the order of works for schemes within the final

phase of the project. We will continue to monitor the impact of our recommendations over the next 12 months as work progresses on the Safe and Warm Scheme.

### Where does public health fit within Planning Policy?

Both recommendations have been accepted/adopted by the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Local Plan Steering Group to be taken forward.

### CAN Rangers

A review of CCTV was commenced following a further recommendation made by Executive which requested that a further report be prepared by officers to explore a more joined up collaborative service. Longer term options are linked to the review of CCTV within the District. Executive were advised in June 2016 that a move towards more redeployable cameras may offer opportunities for the Rangers to play a larger role in the installation, retrieval and siting of CCTV cameras where needed.

### Business Support

The Business Growth Fund (BGF) was established for local businesses in the Bolsover, South Normanton and Shirebrook areas that are not eligible for BNED LEADER Approach funding, with grants available between £1,000 and £10,000 towards project costs. Eight grants have been approved under the Council's Business Growth Fund totalling £64,144.00. Outcomes expected from these grants include 15 new jobs created.

We are pleased to note that the new Bolsover District Council website will be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 which includes updated business support and advice pages as we recommended within our review.

### **The year ahead**

At the Annual Scrutiny Conference on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 Members will discuss suggestions of work items put forward and develop the work plans for each of the three Scrutiny Committees.

The Scrutiny Officer will provide support to the Scrutiny Members to implement a programme of Scrutiny Reviews that will constructively challenge current practices and identify service improvements.