

Foreword of the Scrutiny Chairs

Throughout 2018/19, our Scrutiny Committees have continued to carry out their functions in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Annual Council in May 2018 resulted in a change at Growth Committee with Councillor Karl Reid appointed as Vice-Chair. In addition, there were a small number of membership changes.

As a result of the extensions to our 2017/18 Work Programmes, we provided an Interim Report to Council in May 2018 and can now fully report on both our 2017/18 and 2018/19 Work Programmes.

Our focus over the next year needs to be on the challenges facing both the Authority and service provision by our partners. 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 2018/19

Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee

During 2018/19, Members received a range of reports to Committee. Some have been routine update reports and others have been linked to service transformation and development of new policies:

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Technology to Improve Support to Members and Transparency within the Democratic Function – Consultation on proposal for development via Transformation Programme 2018,
- Transformation Programme 2015-19 and Transformation Plan 2018

The Transformation Programme was suggested as a topic for review as part of the Conference in 2017.

The Committee received two presentations updating on the existing Programme and a briefing on the development of a revised Programme, which is currently being completed by the Joint Strategic Director – People. As it is not yet clear what will be delivered and the timescales for delivery, we have agreed to keep a watching brief over how projects develop with the aim of monitoring the effectiveness of the Programme. The Committee will also receive prior notification of the reports going to the Transformation Governance Group, allowing for pre-scrutiny of high-level investment decisions.

Policy Development

- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy – Review of revised Policy
- Joint Equality & Diversity Policy for Service Delivery – Review of Revised Policy
- Single Equality Scheme 2019-23 – Consultation on Revised Scheme
- Carbon Reduction Plan 2018-30 – Consultation

Performance Review Reports

- Corporate Plan 2015-19 - Quarterly Monitoring Reports
- Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints Annual Report 2017/18
- Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Annual Report 2017/18
- Customer Service Standards – Q1 & Q2 report
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints – Q1 & Q2 report

This is the first year that the Committee have looked at the various reports related to Compliments and Customer Service Standards. This change was introduced as a result of good practice guidance from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

We have taken a varied approach to Review work during the year covering two different areas:

Review Work – Review of Standards Committee – Operational Review

As part of our work plan for 2018/19, Members agreed to undertake a Review of Standards Committee. This mini-review came about as a result of a request from BDC Standards Committee for an external review of how the Committee operated.

During the 2017/18 municipal year, BDC Standards Committee responded to the national consultation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life on their 'Review of Local Government Ethical Standards'. As a result of their own review, the BDC Committee felt it was pertinent to also have an external opinion of how they operated and requested that scrutiny complete a review.

A range of concerns were raised by Standards Committee and these were considered as part of the scoping process. The review was completed outside of the usual meeting programme via a small Working Group, with regular reports back to Committee.

The key issues arising from the review were:

- The introduction of a more formalised approach to training, particularly at Parish level;
- Consideration of Article 9 of the Constitution and the Committee Terms of Reference (Part 3.6) as part of the annual review process – see the benchmarking exercise at 5.5 and 5.6 within the appended report, which highlights areas for consideration;
- Improved public information, both web-based and hard-copy, to ensure the role of Standards Committee is clear.

Within the report completed, the Committee agreed seven recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in improving existing approaches to Member training and engagement on Standards.

Review Work – Review of Delivery of Environmental Health & Licensing

As part of our work plan for 2018/19, Members agreed to undertake a Review of Delivery of Environmental & Health & Licencing.

This was agreed following the Review of The Strategic Alliance in 2017/18, as a result of the recommendation 2.1 which suggested three possible areas for further scrutiny. This review topic was primarily chosen as a result of Member concerns that Bolsover residents were receiving a 'lesser' service, as a result of the Partnership arrangement via the Strategic Alliance.

The evidence gathered, however, has proven that the service is operating in an equitable manner, with the service overcoming a wide range of issues in terms of changes in staffing; pay structures and terms and conditions; an overhaul of supporting IT systems; different operating/organisational cultures; and different back office and finance systems.

Externally, statistics clearly show that customer satisfaction has not only been maintained for Bolsover residents, but has in fact improved. Having reviewed the evidence presented, we now feel on the whole very satisfied and reassured by current delivery.

The key issues arising from the review were:

- The development and approval of a revised Service Level Agreement;
- A review of the online 'Report It' system to ensure that customer engagement remains efficient, with systems that are simple to use.

Within the report completed, the Committee agreed three recommendations which we hope will further improve a service that is already performing well. Given the upheaval of creating a merged service across the Strategic Alliance, Members commend that work ethic of Officers who have continued to strive for excellent and efficient service delivery.

Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee

During 2017/18, Members received a wide range of reports to Committee. In contrast, during 2018/18, the focus has been mainly on the development and implementation of new legislation and policies:

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Health & Wellbeing Strategy – Annual Report

Policy Development

- Licensing Act – Statement of Licensing Policy 2019-2024: Policy Review
- Gambling Act – Statement of Principles 2019-2022: Policy Review
- Corporate Enforcement Policy – Policy Review
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy – Policy Review

Performance Review Report

- Corporate Plan 2015-19 – Quarterly Monitoring Reports
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Annual Review of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every Local Authority to have a specified Committee (the “Crime and Disorder Committee”) with the power to:

- review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.
- make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.

(Responsible authorities are effectively the statutory partners within a community safety partnership i.e. Police, Local Authorities (County and District), Fire and Rescue Authority, Probation Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups. This is determined by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (c. 37))

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 around:

- Funding levels and allocation of resources
- Current crime trends
- The impact of Anti-Social Behaviour
- The efficiency of the partnership and how we compare statistically at a national and regional level
- Partnership working with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Partnership working with Derbyshire Police and the Partnership Sgt.
- Support from the PCC to local Partnerships
- Current PSPOs (Public Space Protection Orders) and the potential to develop others
- Cross-service working with BDC Legal Services
- Emerging issues and ways in which scrutiny can support the CSP further

Officers were invited to attend from Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire Police and Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioners Office.

Key issues currently included:

- The changes to Derbyshire Police resources expected during 2019/20 as a result of planned investment.
- PCCs CSP Grant Fund – the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner noted that funding for BDC in 2019/20 was guaranteed. However, the PCC elections were to be held in 2020 and the current Police and Crime Commissioner may not give a commitment for funding beyond his term.
- A review by the Home Office on the nine CSPs was also being carried out to see if they were fit for purpose. Further, within the County, CSPs, Derbyshire County Council and the Police were reviewing current CSP relationships and discussions had taken place as to whether to merge the nine CSPs into north and south based on police divisions which could also affect future funding of the CSPs.
- The CSP were continuing to commission Extreme Wheels sessions for targeted diversionary work in the District aimed at young people who were causing nuisance behaviour. The CSP Action Group monitored and determined which areas needed targeting and provided funding to Leisure Services to advertise the sessions on their behalf. Extreme Wheels staff would advise if there was regular low attendance at sessions and the event would be moved to another targeted area.
- Communities in Derbyshire were being asked to form a Community Speed Watch, similar to Neighbourhood Watch, where if volunteers, (trained by the police) could demonstrate that there was a real problem in their village this would give strength to enforcement being undertaken in that area.
- In response to a Member's query regarding the 3 PSPOs in the District, the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer provided some background information on how these had come into force. It was also confirmed that the PSPOs in Shirebrook and Langwith had been extended as a result of their success.

Review Work – Review of Enforcement action undertaken by Bolsover District Council to improve the quality of the environment across the District.

At the beginning of 2017/18, the Committee was particularly concerned about enforcement, especially in areas that the general public find really annoying and a danger to public health and well-being. The Committee started by looking at dog fouling, litter and fly tipping but as the review progressed the Committee realised that it needed a more in depth investigation into all environmental enforcement activities.

The Committee gathered evidence by producing a 'Member's questionnaire' about their concerns in their own Wards. We made comparisons with other local authorities and also accompanied the Dog Warden and Enforcement Officer for a full day which was an eye opening experience. Due to the wide range of issues assessed, Members chose to roll the review in to the 2018/19 year to ensure the review was given sufficient regard. We also extended the review to incorporate the current enforcement policy reviews taking place.

The key issues arising from the review were as follows:

- levels of staffing resource and the subsequent impact on service delivery, effective use of resources and enforcement activity;
- communication and awareness of enforcement activity, both internal with Officers and Members and externally with the public;
- communication on how to contact the Council and use of online reporting;
- potential reputational risk, where the Authority area is seen to have high levels of littering/fly-tipping and poor street cleanliness standards;
- ensuring our policies are compliant and support our delivery of enforcement activity; and
- ensuring efficient and effective use of the enforcement powers available to the Authority, by all staff with designated authority. We prioritise enforcement against businesses equally with enforcement against the general public and encourage officers to have a robust approach with businesses in relation to the cleanliness of the areas immediately surrounding their premises and the actions of their customers/clients i.e. around shops, pubs. Education programmes need to be aimed at both the public and businesses.

The final report produced from the analysis of our findings contained eighteen recommendations. It was satisfying to see a change within service delivery during the course of the review, with the team now fully staffed, but there are still further improvements that can be made. While the review was very lengthy, Members feel that there will be clear benefits to the service areas we have investigated.

Committee approved the final report in July 2018, prior to approval by Executive in September 2018. All recommendations were approved, alongside an additional recommendation requested by Executive for an interim progress report after six months of the monitoring period. This was presented to Executive in April 2019.

Review Work – Review of Authority’s Perception of Young People

As part of our work plan for 2018/19, Members agreed to undertake a Review of The Authority’s Perception of Young People.

The issue was initially raised by Bolsover District Youth Council (The Young Voice) and suggested as an area for review by Scrutiny. Member’s felt that Scrutiny could add further support to the existing work of Youth Council on stereotypes.

The aim of the review was:

- To establish the current approach across frontline services when interacting with young people and to ensure the Council portrays a positive image.

Members were hopeful that the review process would not raise any concerns, but felt it was important to carry out a thorough check and balance of all front-facing service areas. The wide range of evidence gathered shows there are no areas of concern.

The key findings arising from the review are:

- That the Council’s existing policies and protocols embed a positive approach to service delivery to young people.

- That the CSP continue to review current delivery to ensure that engagement with (and reward to) vulnerable/'at risk' young people requiring additional support/mediation services is maintained, wherever resources allow.
- That further consideration be given to equality of access to leisure provision, with particular reference to the location of provision and ensuring wherever possible that this is spread across the District.
- That the Council continues to work closely with The Young Voice (the Youth Council), as a mechanism of ensuring young people are fully engaged in our planning and decision-making processes; and able to feedback to the Council as and when required on the quality of our services.

Within the report produced, the Committee agreed two recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in maintaining and further enhancing its positive approach when dealing with young people.

Growth Scrutiny Committee

During 2017/18, Members have received a range of reports to Committee, some allowing us to monitor delivery of core projects and others to develop new policies for the Authority.

Policy/Strategy/Programme Monitoring Reports:

- Growth Strategy Update Q3 & Q4 2017/18 and Growth Performance Indicators Q3 & Q4 2017/18
- Growth Strategy Update (Presentation)
- Growth Strategy Update Q1 & Q2 2018/19 and Growth Performance Indicators Q1 & Q2 2018/19
- Update on Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-20

Policy Development:

- Draft Local Enforcement Plan (Planning)

Performance Review Report:

- Corporate Plan 2015-19 – Quarterly Monitoring Reports

Review Work – Review of Income Generation

The Growth Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Income Generation, as part of the 2017/18 work programme following consideration of a range of topics suggested at the Annual Scrutiny Conference in 2017.

While the Committee agreed the scope of this review early in 2017/18, due to changes internally the review did not progress as planned. As a result, we further refined the scope in January 2018, which allowed us to re-focus on assessing how we had generated income to date and identify new ways of increasing income to the Authority. Due to further changes to the Transformation Programme during 2018, it was agreed to roll the review forward in to the 2018/19 municipal year, in order to be able to fully consider the options available to the Council for further Income Generation.

The core reason for taking this review forward, was to identify additional ways to reduce the impact of the loss of central government funding. We felt it was important to look at income generated by both assets and services, rather than focussing on one specific area. Furthermore, we examined work that had already been achieved developing additional income streams to the Authority and compared our approach to neighbouring authorities.

The key issues identified from the review where we feel further work needs to take place are:

- How we currently market our services and expertise externally;
- Our approach to investments and being risk aware, not risk averse;
- How we manage and develop our existing assets;
- How we embed a culture of commercialisation across the organisation, in order to secure the future financial stability of the Council

The Committee put together 11 recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in identifying new investments and mechanisms for income generation. We have also identified recommendations aimed at improving the management of our existing assets to create further income sustainability.

Officers welcomed the Committee's recommendations and provided clarity on possible approaches they will take when implementing them. It is hoped that the recommendations will help the Council move forward with new approaches to income generation.

We appreciate that the activity suggested will require the production of further business plans and reports to Transformation Governance Group and/or Executive. We await the opportunity for further scrutiny of the business proposals that come forward.

The impacts of our work

During the year, we have monitored past recommendations and are pleased to see some of the impacts our reviews are having.

Post-Scrutiny Monitoring: Review of Disability Adaptations to Council Properties (2017/18) – Interim Report November 2018

During 2017/18, the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny scrutinised Council performance in making disability adaptations to Council properties. Their purpose was to explore whether the Authority continues to receive value for money in procuring disability adaptations and ensure it is able to carry out as many adaptations as possible each year within the allocated budget. The perception of a waiting list for adaptations was a concern to Members.

The aim of the review was to assess whether the process of providing disabled adaptations to Council properties works efficiently to provide what disabled residents need and delivers value for money.

The Committee concluded that the reasonable course of action is to continue to monitor the Council's performance on carrying out 300 disability adaptations to Council houses each year.

- 1 out of 1 recommendations have been completed –
 - 179 adaptations achieved year-to-date (YTD)
 - 1047 achieved during first three years of Corporate Plan against a target of 900 for that time period.
- The service remains under continual review to ensure value for money and efficient delivery. Subsequent to the Review, revised procurement processes are being implemented to further ensure prompt turnaround of adaptations.

The final monitoring update is due to Committee in June 2019.

Post-Scrutiny Monitoring: Review of The Strategic Alliance (2017/18) – Interim Report January 2019

During 2017/18, the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny scrutinised The Strategic Alliance. An Interim Report was approved by the Scrutiny Committee in April 2018 and submitted to Executive in May 2018. The Committee concluded that due to the complexity of the topic reviewed, an Interim Report which further refined the scope and pinpointed more specific areas for review was the best course of action.

The Committee put together a number of recommendations which aimed to assist the Council, in looking at the future arrangements for further development of the Strategic Alliance.

- 1 out of 5 recommendations have been completed - The terms of reference for the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee have been reviewed and will be kept under annual review to ensure the Committee's remit remains fit for purpose in monitoring and developing the work of the Alliance.
- 4 out of 5 recommendations are 'On track' and partially completed.

The final monitoring update is due to Committee in July 2019.

Post-Scrutiny Monitoring: Review of Enforcement action undertaken by Bolsover District Council to improve the quality of the environment across the District (2017/18) – Interim Report March 2019

The Healthy, Safe, Clean & Green Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of Enforcement action as part of the 2017/18 work plan following consideration of a range of topics suggested at the Annual Scrutiny Conference. The review was rolled forward in to the 2018/19 municipal year to allow sufficient time to consider all the evidence gathered.

The Committee put together a number of recommendations which aimed to assist the Council, in looking at potential service improvements in relation to enforcement action undertaken by Bolsover District Council to improve the quality of the environment across the District

To date 13 out of 19 recommendations have been achieved, 5 are on track and 1 has been extended but will still complete within the original twelve month monitoring period.

Key achievements so far include:

- Adoption of Corporate Enforcement Policy
- Process in place to ensure Scrutiny consulted for all future enforcement policies, prior to adoption.
- Increased use of enforcement patrols and introduction of Body Worn Cameras.
- Staffing resource in Legal services expanded with agreement for a permanent addition of 0.60fte.
- Assessment of potential District-wide PSPO progressing.
- Performance against SS 03 and SS 04 on track to hit target at Q4.
- Additional commentary now received as part of Quarterly Performance Reports, on areas not achieving the required cleanliness standard.
- All FPNs and enforcement patrols now posted on social media. A quarterly Infograph is put on the website. Regular Enforcement/Streetscene Articles in In Touch,
- Process adopted by Environmental Health for publicity of enforcement activity has now been embedded as the standard template used by all services within Corporate Enforcement Group.
- Environmental Health are now using body worn cameras during enforcement incidents. Deployment of CCTV at fly tipping hot spots is continuing. Use of CCTV is monitored by Environmental Enforcement, Cleansing and Education Group.

- Corporate Plan target for education initiatives (H 12) has been achieved at end of Q3. Officers have jointly delivered school education programmes to 137 classes of 4,100 (approx.) children. Officers now working with the Youth Council to progress a programme for secondary age pupils.
- Three Officers are now trained to use the DVLA system. An audit by the DVLA revealed a high level of compliance (Dec 2018). The internal review of abandoned vehicles is continuing with input from internal audit.
- A review of pressures and service demands on the whole EH service is underway.
- Team innovate have carried out some updates to the 'Online' reporting script. User testing has taken place.
- All EETOs and Dog Wardens have mobile smart phones and laptops to enable new work to be allocated whilst out on the District.
- All EH staff continue to be allocated workloads, to meet the flexible needs of the service. Patches are designed based on service demand and ensuring maximum efficiency.
- Quarterly Infograph on enforcement. Service-wide report on enforcement activity issued Oct 2018. Monthly briefings with Portfolio member. Updates to Parishes on FPNs issued. Various In Touch articles published.

The Members' Surgery has been in operation for 36 weeks from 23/05/18 until 06/02/19. Continuing to operate Surgery and assessing options for a permanent location, if to be mainstreamed.

The final monitoring update is due to Committee in October 2019.

The year ahead

Setting the Committee Work Programmes

The Annual Scrutiny Conference will take place on the 3rd June 2019, where Members will discuss a wide range of topic suggestions for consideration as part of setting the work programmes for 2019/20. Using our prioritisation tool, Members will score each topic as well as providing additional information for the Committees to consider as part of their topic selection following AGM in May 2019.

Member Training

Following the local elections in May 2019, Members will receive a range of training as part of Member Induction. As part of the Annual Scrutiny Conference, Members will receive training from East Midlands Councils including an overview of core scrutiny skills and best practice.

In addition, it is hoped to build on the internal training in 2018 on questioning and evidence analysis.

Self-Assessment and Evaluation

During 2019/20, Officers will be looking to work alongside Members to complete a self-assessment of our current scrutiny structure and processes. There are a number of tools available to assist this, via the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and the Local Government Association. It is anticipated that the review process will be complete in time to make any necessary amendments to the Constitution for 2020/21.



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