

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL – 16 July 2014

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

1. Introduction

1.1. This is Bedford Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2013/14, as required by the Council's Constitution. It is a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees which are:-

- Adult Services and Health
- Children's Services
- Corporate Services
- Environment and Sustainable Communities
- Budget Scrutiny Committee
- Paediatric Services Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Bedfordshire Strategic Health Services Review Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2. We have been fortunate to have had considerable contributions to our work this year from partners and the local community. Members have been heavily involved in evidence gathering and in events such as public forums and site visits as well as Committee meetings. We would like to thank everyone who has played a part in the Scrutiny and Overview process this year including the Mayor, all Members of the Council, Council officers, partners and the public.

2. Adult Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.1. The Adult Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference include adult social care, operational housing, leisure and culture. It is also the council's health scrutiny Committee.

- 2.2. The Adult Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has again considered issues across its terms of reference.
- 2.3. In relation to health, the Committee considered the changes to Paediatric Services at Bedford Hospital on several occasions. The Committee was invited to join a Health and Wellbeing Board meeting following the news that junior doctors were being withdrawn from the Hospital's Paediatric Service and that there would no longer be a paediatric in-patient service nor a paediatric A&E service. The Committee monitored progress on a number of occasions, focusing on reasons why the service had been withdrawn, any problems with the reduced service, such as access to other hospitals, and also on the timetable for the return of services to the hospital. The Committee met with the hospital five times through the year, and invited representatives from patients' groups as well as hospital representatives to its meetings. The Committee also kept up-to-date with the gradual return of services and the changes to the service made by the newly appointed Paediatric senior consultant. The Committee also considered that the Clinical Commissioning Group's proposed review of service was a 'substantial variation' of service and this led to the formation of a Joint Committee with Central Bedfordshire. More details on that Committee can be found below.
- 2.4. The Committee also followed up on other work done nationally on care standards. This included an update on the Francis Report, receiving a report on the Council's response and the Clinical Commissioning Group's response to that report as well as the Committee's own update on recommendations in the Francis Report for Health Overview and Scrutiny. The Committee also received updates on progress in relation to the Winterbourne View report.
- 2.5. The Committee continued its work from previous years on NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), to consider how, if at all, the number of people in receipt of NHS CHC had been affected by the changeover from PCT to CCG. The Committee also met with the new Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust, Dr Anthony Marsh.
- 2.6. Other items this year included:-
- East of England Ambulance Service Trust – turnaround plan
 - East of England Ambulance Service Trust – Quality Account
 - SEPT Mental Health and Community Services – Quality Account
 - HealthWatch Bedford Borough – invitation to observer
 - Adult Services Annual Report on Complaints/compliments/comments
 - Adult Social Care Local Account
 - Paediatric Services Consultation – BCCG's review of paediatric services
 - Centre for Independent Living
 - Public Health Strategy
 - Bedford Hospital NHS Trust – outcome of CQC inspection
 - Joint Non-Acute Health and Social Care Services Review
 - Warm Homes Health People grant
 - Adult Safeguarding Annual Report

- Provision of Leisure Services
- Carers' Services – update
- Dementia Steering Group – update on its work
- Gypsy and Traveller Management Policy
- The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum
- Older People's Accommodation
- Adult Social Care Charging Policy
- Adult Social Care Eligibility Policy
- 'Just Ask' pilot project in urban areas
- Changes to Mental Health Services
- Performance information

3. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1. The Committee from the previous municipal year were conducting a major review into Corporate Parenting at Bedford Borough Council, and the new Committee decided to continue this review, concluding at the June 2013 meeting.
- 3.2. The final report and the recommendations were considered by the Council's Corporate Parenting Group. A merged action plan detailing recommendations from both the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was produced and was used to keep track of actions completed.
- 3.3. This demonstrates the value that scrutiny can add to improving the delivery of front line services.
- 3.4. This year the Committee continued to use a tried and tested way of interfacing with service areas and partner organisations in an informal environment, by having a pre-meeting exhibition which was staged in the foyer area outside the Committee Room during the hour before the start of the formal meeting. This gave the Youth Parliament, Superkids Young Carers, LINK Vice Versa (young inspectors) and the Children in Care Council an opportunity to demonstrate their latest research, consultation and campaign work representing the voice and views of children and young people in Bedford Borough. This provided the opportunity to engage with Members in a less formal way than the usual method of receiving a report in the Committee environment.
- 3.5. Other subjects the Committee looked at during the year included:
 - The Education Performance Report;
 - "Getting to Good": A report on the progress of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services;
 - The Troubled Families Programme;

- Service Level Agreement with Church Schools: A presentation on the Service Level Agreement offered by the Diocese of St. Albans to Church Schools;
- Looked After Children: Data on Looked After Children, including number, profile, placement and legal status;
- The Jobs Hub and Young People
- “Working Together 2013”: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB): A report on the arrangements for the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the receipt of the Annual Report;
- Fostering and Adoption: A report on the future of the service;
- Child Poverty and Health Inequalities;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Careers Education: A report on the Information, Advice and Guidance service to schools, the Jobs Hub and Young People, NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) statistics, and activities to encourage participation;
- Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC): A report from the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on SERAC, and a report on the Sexual Exploitation pilot project carried out in Bedford Borough;
- Looked After Children (LAC): A report on LAC that are reported as missing;
- Services to Young People: A report was provided on the range of service provision available and representatives from the Voluntary Sector were invited to discuss the services they offer to young people. As a result a recommendation was made to the Executive that representatives of Voluntary Organisations which provided services for children, young people and families be involved to a greater extent at the specification stage of the commissioning process. This was accepted by the Executive at their March 2014 meeting;
- Family Group Conferencing and Young Carers: Service providers of Family Group Conferencing and Young Carers were invited to the Committee to discuss their roles. Recommendations were made to the Portfolio holder, and as a result all schools in the Borough have been written to asking them for details of how they support Young Carers.

3.6. Towards the middle of the year the Committee decided to carry out a six month review into the schools’ use of the Pupil Premium (extra funding given to schools to “close the gap” in attainment between those who are entitled to free school meals or those who are Children Looked After (CLA) and the rest of the cohort).

3.7. The key questions the Committee decided to answer were:

1. What is the gap in attainment between those who are entitled to free school meals or those who are CLA and the rest of the cohort across the key stages?
2. What are the different types of intervention that schools are using to close the gap?
3. Which intervention strategies are most effective? How are schools measuring the impact?
4. What national good and effective practice is there?
5. How is good and effective practice being shared?
6. How clear are schools and governing bodies about how their pupil premium is being used?
7. How well are the schools fulfilling their statutory duty to report on their use of pupil premium (e.g. posting details on their websites)?

8. What are the characteristics of good practice?

- 3.8. The evidence gathered by Members during the review, which involved visiting schools to see how the Premium was being used, was incorporated into a final report considered at the April 2014 meeting. This report and the recommendations therein were considered by the Executive at their June 2014 meeting, and all the recommendations were accepted.
- 3.9. As an additional smaller review Members left the Committee room to visit four Children's Centres which are now run under the recently let contract. A report was received at the February 2014 meeting and four recommendations were made to the Portfolio holder.
- 3.10. Due to the large remit of service areas covered by the Committee, the use of off agenda briefings was continued. This enabled the Committee meetings to be more focussed. Off agenda briefings were received on:
- School Meals: The report on the impact of the contractual price increase from Caterlink (the contracted provider of School Meals);
 - Ofsted Changes: Details of the criteria that trigger an Ofsted inspection of school improvement effectiveness. Section 135 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers Ofsted to conduct inspections of Local Authority children functions;
 - Bedford Hospital Paediatrics: Links to the information considered by the Adult Services OSC. This avoided the duplication of two Committees looking at the same subject.

4. **Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 4.1. The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference include all the services in the Chief Executive's Directorate (Governance, HR and Corporate Policy, Economic Development) and the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate.
- 4.2. The Committee had a varied work programme again this year. In September Committee members visited the Jobs Hub in the town centre and met with staff and services users to learn more about how the Hub works and its success at helping people into work and training. The Committee heard from staff about the very high level of interest in the Hub, which had already met its target. In addition, members heard from one service user who was looking to get back into work having recently re-located, and from a young person seeking work and training.
- 4.3. The Committee also followed up on its work in relation to debt collection and rate relief. The Committee had previously received the new policy on Non-Domestic Rate Relief and received a report the implementation of that policy, as well as an update on other changes to non-domestic rates. In addition, the Committee continued to receive updates on the 'Accelerating Bedford' broadband scheme, now that the scheme is being rolled out and the first schedule of works is in place.
- 4.4. There were two call-ins this year. Decision 1109 – Riverside North Proposed Development was called in by Cllrs Fensome, Gambold, Mingay and Rigby and considered by the Committee in June. Having heard from the call-in Members, the Mayor as decision maker, and received technical advice from officers, the Committee found that there were no concerns about the decision and that therefore it could be implemented.

4.5. Decision 1119 – Church Lane Development was called in by Cllrs Fensome, Gambold, Mingay and Rigby and considered by the Committee in July. Having heard from the call-in Members, the Mayor as decision maker, and received technical advice from officers, the Committee found that there were no concerns about the decision and that therefore it could be implemented.

4.6. Other items this year included:-

- Bedford Borough Partnership Annual Report
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Revenue and Capital Budget – outturn
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Welfare Reform
- Bedford Bus Station Area – improvement works
- Church Lane Development
- Bailiff Reform
- Performance Indicators

5. Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5.1. The Committee from the previous municipal year were conducting a review into public conveniences, and the new Committee decided to continue this review.

5.2. Towards the middle of the previous municipal year, Members of the Committee had demonstrated their willingness to change their work programme in order to react to issues raised by the public.

5.3. This was as a result of a petition of 1,592 signatures which was submitted to the Council over the closure of public conveniences.

5.4. As a result the Committee had embarked on a review of public conveniences in the town centre and over the course of several meetings engaged with the following parties:

- Bedford BID representatives;
- The Portfolio Holder of Bedford Borough Council;
- Bedford Borough Council Officers;
- Users of the services;
- Taxi and Hackney Carriage Drivers;
- Bedford Link;
- The organiser of the petition referred to above;
- A neighbouring Local Authority where an established Community Toilet Scheme is in operation.

5.5. The new Committee concluded the review at the May 2013 meeting. The final report produced contained recommendations which were all accepted by Full Council in July 2013.

5.6. During the year members looked at a wide variety of service areas under their remit and received reports on:

- The Empty Homes Programme;
- The Council's Carbon Management Programme; Information on the achievements to date and plans for the future;
- Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs): The Police and Members of the Bedford and Luton IAGs were invited to discuss these groups of community representatives who regularly meet with police to form a two way dialogue and provide an opportunity to give feedback, advice and input a community perspective on a range of local policing issues;
- The Community Safety Plan: The Police were invited to discuss the impact on rural communities of the changes to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams;
- Access issues to new housing: The Bedford and District Access Group were invited to present the issues surrounding access to new housing in the Borough. An update was received towards the end of the year;
- The Designation of four Neighbourhood Areas;
- Section 106 funds from building developers, and the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Waste and Recycling Services: Details on how the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funding secured by the Council is being invested in the protection of Front-line Waste & Recycling Services;
- Salt Bins in the urban area; A briefing on the issues surrounding the installation and use of salt bins in the urban area;
- The Open Space Supplementary Planning Document;
- Bedford Borough Local Plan 2032: The Committee received and commented on the Issues and Options paper;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDs) and SUDs Approval Bodies;
- The Bedford Western Bypass Northern Section: An update on the progress;
- The Parking Pricing Strategy.

5.7. Due to the large remit of service areas covered by the Committee, the use of off agenda briefings was continued. This enabled the Committee meetings to be more focussed. Off agenda briefings were received on:

- Access issues: A briefing on the provision of dropped kerbs in the villages and towns of the Borough;
- Wind Turbines: Details of the Council's Planning Policy towards wind turbine developments;
- Minerals and Waste Plan: An update on the situation regarding the planned incinerator at the Rookery South site.

6. **Budget Scrutiny Committee**

6.1. As well as the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees, there is a Budget Scrutiny Committee whose role is to consider the Executive's budget proposals for the forthcoming year. The Committee met twice in 2013/14 at key points in the budget setting process. At its first meeting in

October it considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Executive's modernisation proposals that were out for public consultation. Questions were asked in relation to Council Tax Freeze grants, future predictions for council tax increases, local enterprise partnerships, changes to the New Homes Bonus, and the ring-fenced grant for Troubled Families. In addition, the Committee asked questions on the modernisation proposals concerning ICT, 'channel shift', cash limits on budgets, economic development work, commercial skills, Children in Care Council Annual Achievement Awards, environmental services, library services and car park income. The reports were received.

- 6.2. The Committee's second meeting in January enabled it to consider the Executive's proposed budget for 2014/15, prior to consideration by full Council. The Committee reviewed the Capital Programme 2014/2015 to 2016/2017, Draft Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision and the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget 2014-2015. Questions were asked in relation to the transfer of leisure services, contract provisions, Invest to Save projects, capital financing and footways. On the General Fund Revenue Budget, questions were asked about forward planning for budgets, savings requirements, the terms of the Council Tax Freeze Grants, shared services, proposals in relation to Environmental Services, fostering and adoption services, and the Better Care Fund. The Committee received the reports.
- 6.3. In addition, the Committee made recommendations in relation to its terms of reference and meeting schedule. Full Council agreed the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee and as a result the Committee will have an additional meeting in June 2014 to consider the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Investment Strategy, before its meetings in October and January as part of the budget setting process.

7. Paediatric Services Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 7.1. This Committee was established as a statutory Joint Committee with Central Bedfordshire Council, as both Health Scrutiny Committees agreed that this was a 'substantial variation or development' of health services. The Committee heard evidence from the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) about its engagement work with local parents, carers, children and other stakeholders about what their priorities were in relation to any service redesign. In addition, the Committee received evidence about the reasons for the review following the withdrawal of Paediatric junior doctors from Bedford Hospital Trust in the summer of 2013. This review did not progress to public consultation as BCCG decided to pause this review due to the launch of the Strategic Health Services Review at the end of 2013.

8. Bedfordshire Strategic Health Services Review Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 8.1. Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council agreed to amend the terms of reference of the Paediatric Services JHOSC to enable it to consider the Strategic Health Services Review. This is a joint review by Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Monitor, the Trust Development Authority and NHS England. This review covers both acute services which are hospital based, and community and primary care services. Its four areas of interest are urgent care, care for long-term conditions, planned care such as operations and children's and maternity to continue the review of children's service at Bedford Hospital started in 2013.

8.2. The Committee has received evidence in relation to the case for change, the engagement plan and completed engagement work, links with Mental Health service change, links with the Better Care Fund plans, and the initial research on models of care. At its future meetings the Committee will be considering the programme board's final report on the clinical proposals, the public consultation plan, travel and transport, as well as progress with the consultation and its outcomes.

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Minutes: Adult Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 21 May 2013
- 25 June 2013
- 10 September 2013
- 15 October 2013
- 12 November 2013
- 17 December 2013
- 4 February 2014
- 4 March 2014
- 15 April 2014

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 13 June 2013
- 18 July 2013
- 12 September 2013
- 17 October 2013
- 5 December 2013
- 13 February 2014
- 24 April 2014

Budget Scrutiny Committee

- 15 October 2012
- 24 January 2013

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 20 May 2013
- 17 June 2013
- 9 September 2013
- 7 October 2013
- 18 November 2013
- 13 January 2014
- 10 February 2014
- 14 April 2014

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 23 May 2013
- 11 July 2013
- 5 September 2013
- 10 October 2013
- 28 November 2013
- 16 January 2014
- 27 February 2014
- 3 April 2014

Paediatric Services Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5 November 2013

Bedfordshire Strategic Health Services Review Joint Health
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 9 December 2013
- 27 February 2014
- 22 April 2014

*Background
Papers:* Nil