

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL – 15 JULY 2015

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Subject: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

1. Introduction

1.1. This is Bedford Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2014/15, 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
- 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 and public health. 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 matters, the Committee decided to carry out a review of health service provision at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), which is commissioned by NHS England. The Committee established a sub-committee to carry out the review on a 'task and finish' basis. The key lines of enquiry were:-
- Commissioning of health services – to consider any changes to services since NHS England took responsibility for this function
 - The 'patient pathway' for detainees
 - Legal matters relating to detention and health provision
 - Safeguarding and care
- The sub-committee met on a number of occasions, and heard from the NHS England Commissioner, the healthcare provider, G4S Healthcare, as well as former detainees, former employees and groups working with detainees at Yarl's Wood. The sub-committee also met with a representative of the Independent Monitoring Board for Yarl's Wood. Members went on a site visit to the IRC, and met with the NHS commissioner, healthcare provider, the Home Office and SERCO managers before being taken round the Centre. The sub-committee will continue with its review in 2015/16 in anticipation of the reports from recent inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Care Quality Commission, and any reports from the National Audit Office and the Shaw Review commissioned by the Home Office.
- 2.4. Other health items were a short review into the proposed change in service in relation to the provision of incontinence supplies to care homes. The Committee heard from Bedfordshire Care Homes, who were concerned about the speed of the change proposed and how they would continue to be able to receive supplies. Working with Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and SEPT, the care homes were able to see a continuation of the service and to work with them on any future change for a longer term solution and better communication.
- 2.5. The Committee also received updates from Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) on its emerging financial difficulties, and requested regular updates from BCCG on the position with regard to the level of debt, ways in which this would be addressed and whether this would have any impact on services. The Committee will continue to receive reports on this issue in 2015/16.
- 2.6. In relation to the Council's own services, the Committee began a review relating to water fluoridation, which is now a council responsibility in relation to any local scheme to add fluoride to water supplies. The Committee has received evidence from Fluoride Free Bedford, Public Health England, and a literature review from Council Public Health officers and a briefing on local authorities' role in relation to water fluoridation. The Committee will continue the review in 2015/16 and receive evidence on a local dental health survey in the autumn.
- 2.7. Other items this year included:-
- South East Essex Partnership University NHS Trust Quality Account 13/14
 - Bedford Hospital NHS Trust Quality Account 13/14
 - BCCG – IVF Commissioning
 - Transfer of BUPA care homes to Bedford Borough Council

- Public Health – Alcohol prevention and treatment strategy
- Bedford Hospital – Breast Radiology Referral
- Bedford Hospital – financial position and recovery plan
- Winterbourne View Action Plan
- NHS contracts, tariffs and penalties
- SEPT Wheelchair services
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – new processes
- East of England Ambulance Trust – performance
- Mental Health Services – procurement of a new provider
- BCCG – Contract with Circle for Musculo-Skeletal Services
- Better Care Fund and the Care Act 2014

3. Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.1. The Committee did not identify a topic for a major review this year, however the work programme was as busy as ever. The topics looked at by the Committee included:

- Young Carers: Having previously invited Young Carers to discuss what it meant to them to care for a family member, as a follow up to this, all schools in the Borough were written to by the Portfolio Holder (recommended by the Committee) requesting details of the support given to Young Carers and requesting that support is increased. The responses to this letter were considered by the Committee at their 16 March 2015 meeting. The schools who responded were also invited to attend this meeting. The Committee concluded by making two recommendations:
 - that Officers be requested to consider how information on young carers can be shared between Social Services and schools;
 - that good practice relating to support given to young carers be shared between all schools.
- Fostering and Adoption: A report was received on how the “in house” service will be monitored;
- Children and Families Act: A report on the implementation of the Act including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was received at the June meeting and an update was given at the November meeting;
- Place Planning for schools: A presentation was given on how school places are planned and monitored across Bedford Borough;
- School Overview: A presentation was given on the various types of schools in Bedford Borough;
- Performance Indicators;
- Universal Free School Meals: A report on the plan for implementation was received early in the year, and this was followed up with a second report on the progress at the March meeting;
- Birmingham Schools: A report was received on the possible implications of the events in Birmingham for schools in Bedford Borough;
- 0-19 Support Challenge and Intervention Team: An update was provided on the services offered by the team;
- Education Performance: The unverified results and the verified results were both considered during the year;

- School Capital Investment Plan: A report was received on the implementation of the plan;
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) annual report, detailing the business plan that had been developed which set out the strategic priorities that had been identified as the primary focus over the next two years;
- Sexual Exploitation of young people: A report was received providing an overview of the Borough Council's safeguarding arrangements for children identified as at risk of or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation.
- The new Residential Children's Homes Contract: A report detailed the outcomes of the joint commissioning work with Central Bedfordshire on the award of a new contract for the management of residential Children's Homes from November 2014 led by Central Bedfordshire Council;
- Pupil Premium: A report was received on the Council's activities in encouraging and monitoring best use of the premium. A further oral update was given and the Committee are continuing to monitor this subject;
- Services to 16-19 year olds: A report provided an overview on careers education in Bedford Borough and the Council services available to 16 - 19 year olds;
- Bedford Borough Council services purchased by Academies;
- School Uniforms: A report was received on the various school policies, including price variations, and the Committee made recommendations to be communicated on to all schools;
- The Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum, where the Committee learnt that the Forum was a group of parents and carers of disabled children who worked with local authorities, education, health and other providers to ensure the services planned and delivered met the need of disabled children and their families;
- Self-Harm among Children and Young People in Bedford Borough, where the Committee learnt that emergency hospital admissions for self-harm in children and young people 10 to 19 years old have risen nationally in the last three years. However the local rate has remained stable over the same period although there is some indication of a rise in the 10 to 14 year olds;
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), where it was reported that FGM was a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

3.2. The use of off agenda briefings was continued with briefings received on:

- The Annual Report on Childcare Sufficiency;
- A School Overview: Details of the current situation in Bedford Borough regarding the status of schools, including a map showing the distribution of the different types of school;
- GCSE/A-level reform;
- The Schools Funding Formula 2015/2016.

4. Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1. The Committee continued to look at the wide range of services provided by the Chief Executive's Directorate. This included receiving reports on:

- The Council's Consultations Strategy, looking at the reasons behind the falling number of respondents to major consultations;

- Procurement, covering how to encourage local business to increase their level of business with the Council;
- The Council's Value for Money Strategy;
- Apprenticeships, noting the success of the Apprenticeships scheme in Bedford Borough;
- Town Centre regeneration, detailing how to improve the town centre by delivering new investment and maximising its townscape and heritage quality;
- Year-end performance indicators (2013/14);
- The Risk Management Strategy Review. This was an example of pre-decision scrutiny of a decision to be taken by the Executive;
- Human Resources, including a presentation on all of the Human Resources Services currently provided by the Council;
- The Council's website, where the Portfolio Holder for Revenue and Benefits, Customer Services and ICT reported on best practice in local authority websites and how the Bedford Borough Website is developed;
- Enforcement Agents' (formerly Bailiffs) Services to the Council, detailing the Council's experience of the effect of the bailiff reforms over the first year following the changes in regulation.
- Customer Services, covering how customer enquiries to the Council are processed, including the use of ICT systems.

4.2. The Committee also invited guests to various meetings to discuss the services they provided in partnership with the Council including:

- The Bedford Business Investment District (BID) who gave a presentation on the activities and future plans for the BID;
- Parish Councils, who discussed communication issues with this Council, including the activities of the Town and Parish Council Network.

5. Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5.1. The Committee started the municipal year by inviting the Portfolio Holder to give a presentation on his work with the Environment Agency, in his role as the Council's representative on the Anglia (Central) Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

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

- The "The Higgins" Bedford, the Council's recently refurbished gallery and museum complex;
- Play Areas across the Borough, covering the maintenance, condition and any future work planned for the 92 play sites maintained by the Council;
- Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities Supplementary Planning Document. This was an example of pre-decision scrutiny of a decision to be taken by the Executive. The Committee made three recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Executive and incorporated into the final Supplementary Planning Document;
- "Why would you campaign?" to deter people from littering and fly tipping;
- The year-end performance indicators (2013/14);

- The Community Safety Plan and crime performance indicators: The Police were invited to discuss the latest crime performance indicators and the report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on "Core business: An inspection of crime prevention, police attendance and use of police time";
- The Council's policy for the use of CCTV enforcement vehicles;
- The Council's Planning Policy towards wind turbine developments;
- Collective switching, where consumers get together to negotiate a group deal with their gas and electricity suppliers;
- Priory Park Visitors Centre, detailing possible future uses for the Centre;
- Access Issues in new housing, an update on previous reports.

5.2. The Committee also invited contractors to discuss the services they provide to the Council including:

- Fusion Lifestyle which has managed this Council's leisure sites since 1 February 2014. The Committee decided to keep a watching brief on these services and will invite the contractor back to a future Committee meeting;
- "Door to Door" who provide wheelchair accessible minibuses for people unable to use public transport in the Bedford area.

6. Budget Scrutiny Committee

- 6.1. The Budget Scrutiny Committee's role is to consider the Executive's budget proposals for the forthcoming year. In 2013/14 the Committee's terms of reference were revised and an additional meeting was added to the calendar for June. The Committee met three times in 2014/15 at key points in the budget setting process in June, October and January.
- 6.2. At its first meeting in June it considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Capital Investment Strategy (CIS). With regard to the MTFS, questions were asked in relation to the forecasts of financial impact, the progress of the Better Care Fund, reporting of in-year trends, forecast council tax, and ongoing funding pressures. On the CIS, Members asked questions about Invest to Save – Leisure Facilities, a Commercial Property Strategy, and the reduction in external borrowing. The Committee also agreed its work programme for the year taking into account changes to its terms of reference and the additional meeting in June.
- 6.3. The Committee's second meeting in October enabled it to consider the Executive's proposed budget for 2015/16, prior to consideration by full Council. Committee members had agreed to submit questions in advance and written responses were provided. The Committee reviewed the Capital Programme 2014/2015 to 2017/2018, and the Service Modernisation proposals and Revenue Budget Planning for 2015/17. Issues discussed included the anticipated funding gap, Invest to Save schemes, Residential care homes, car parks, empty homes, the Council's Draft ICT Strategy, procurement, Invest to save proposals in Adult Social Care, and options for council tax.
- 6.4. At the Committee's third meeting on 22 January 2015, Members considered the Executive's proposed budget for 2015/16 as well as the Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2017/18, draft prudential indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision. Committee members had agreed to submit questions in advance and written responses were provided. In addition, Members considered the cost of agency social workers and the work being done by the Council to recruit permanent staff. The reports were received by the Committee.

7. Bedfordshire Strategic Health Services Review Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

- 7.1. Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council agreed to establish a 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. The review began in the autumn of 2013.
- 7.2. The Committee met five times through the year as the different stages of the review progressed. The Committee considered a number of issues over this period including:-
- Regular updates on communications, engagement and consultation
 - The need to consider travel and transport issues in any proposed service change, especially in relation to hospital services
 - Emerging models of care, focused on care close to home and care in hospital
 - Ongoing timetabling for the review
 - The 'case for change' and the engagement of the public and clinicians in its development
 - Hospital services, and the emerging model of a 'Modern District General Hospital'
 - The role of Monitor and McKinsey in the review process
 - Emerging GP federations and how this could help with services closer to home
 - The ongoing process for consultation, with the decision that services would be consulted on separately as models emerged, rather than one very large consultation for all
 - North Bedfordshire Acute and Community Services programme
 - Emerging models for services from Bedford Hospital, with networks to tertiary and specialist providers.
- 7.3. The review will continue in 2015/16.

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Minutes: *Adult Services and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

- *20 May 2014*
- *1 July 2014*
- *9 September 2014*
- *2 October 2014*
- *11 November 2014*
- *16 December 2014*
- *3 February 2015*
- *3 March 2015*

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- *5 June 2014*
- *10 July 2014*
- *11 September 2014*
- *23 October 2014*
- *12 February 2015*
- *19 March 2015*

Budget Scrutiny Committee

- *3 June 2014*
- *13 October 2014*
- *22 January 2015*

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- *19 May 2014*
- *16 June 2014*
- *8 September 2014*
- *6 October 2014*
- *17 November 2014*
- *16 December 2014*
- *9 February 2015*
- *16 March 2015*

Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- *15 May 2014*
- *26 June 2014*
- *4 September 2014*
- *16 October 2014*
- *27 November 2014*
- *8 January 2015*
- *12 March 2015*

Bedfordshire Strategic Health Services Review Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- *11 June 2014*
- *7 July 2014*
- *3 November 2014*
- *17 December 2014*
- *17 February 2015*

Background Papers: *Nil*