



Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report

June 2016

Introduction

- 1.1 Welcome to the Council's 2015/ 2016 Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report.

Overview and scrutiny plays an important role in the governance of Cheshire East by examining the Council's performance and undertaking policy reviews. Through the work of six committees,



overview and scrutiny committee members ensure that the Council's decision makers and partner organisations are held to account for their decisions. We strive to ensure that the residents of Cheshire East receive the best value possible from those who provide services to the residents of the borough.

- 1.2 This is the second annual report since the Council reintroduced a formal overview and scrutiny committee structure comprising 6 committees in May 2014. The new structure was implemented following a review of the Council's arrangements by Professors Steve Leach and Colin Copus of De Montfort University.
- 1.3 The May 2015 elections introduced a significant number of new Members to overview and scrutiny. In order to give the new members the best possible start, a dedicated session on overview and scrutiny was included in the induction programme for new Members. This session was closely followed by a workshop hosted by Dr Stephanie Snape from NW employers on post regulation scrutiny and work planning best practice. Both sessions were well received by Members and arrangements are in hand to follow up the training sessions in 2016/17.
- 1.4 Local Authorities continue to face unprecedented reductions in central funding and the Government has recently announced that the Council will receive no revenue support grant at all in 4 years' time. The consequences are that the Council will then have to be fully self-funding. This is expected to be achieved through a combination of Council tax, business rates and fees and charges. The Council will therefore have to continue to transform the way in which it conducts its business. Overview and scrutiny will have an integral role to play in that process.
- 1.5 Each of the six committees have managed full work programmes during the civic year. This included six task and finish groups which began during the year. Three task and finish groups have already submitted final reports to Cabinet and the remaining three are expected to report in the summer of 2016.
- 1.6 Elsewhere, Health and Adult Social Care Committee undertook an intensive spotlight review of Ambulance Services in April 2016. This is a good example of an overview and scrutiny committee adopting a different method of

investigation, in this case, using a Parliamentary Select committee approach. Feedback from all those who took part in this review has been very positive and will undoubtedly be used for other reviews in future.

- 1.7 As always, our thanks are extended to all those who have taken part in the work of Overview and Scrutiny over the past year. Our work would not be possible without the co-operation and support of Cabinet Members, co-opted members, officers, public and partners.
- 1.8 I hope you find this report to be informative and look forward to the year ahead.

Margaret Simon Chairman Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.0 The work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

2.1 Corporate



Chairman: Councillor Margaret Simon

Vice Chairman: Councillor Mo Grant

Committee Members: Chris Andrew, Gary Barton, Gordon Baxendale, Sam Corcoran, Dorothy Flude, Arthur Moran, Jos Saunders, Bernice Walmsley, Liz Wardlaw, Hayley Wells-Bradshaw, Jonathan Weston, John Wray

- 2.2 The Committee is responsible for reviewing the Council's internal operation, including budget setting, risk management, governance, human resources and procurement. The committee comprises the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all of the overview and scrutiny committees and has a secondary role to co-ordinate the work of the other five committees to ensure there is consistency in relation to new legislation and best practice. The committee also oversees the training requirements of Overview and Scrutiny.

2.5 Committee work

- 2.6 The Committee plays a crucial role in monitoring the budget and operational performance of the Council on a quarterly basis. Allied to this, the Committee plays an integral part in the formal consultation arrangements on the draft budget. This year, the Committee played a full part in the consultation process by challenging portfolio holders and chief officers on budget options at key stages during the municipal year.
- 2.7 The Council is currently working in partnership with Price Waterhouse Cooper to redesign the Council's website to improve the digital offer to customers of Cheshire East. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been closely involved in overseeing the design of the new website and will, in the summer

of 2016, be involved in trials of a number of new software options during the development process. This development work is expected to lead to the Council having the most interactive local authority website in the country which in turn should provide commercial opportunities for the Council to sell to other public bodies.

2.8 The Committee has also received regular updates from the portfolio holder to oversee the local plan process following the pause instigated by the Local Plan Inspector in 2015.

2.9 Safer Parking for Communities Around Schools Task and Finish Review

2.10 A Task and Finish Group has been looking at universal problems associated with parking around schools. This cross cutting issue was taken up by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the aim of finding solutions to lessen the impact on local communities of inconsiderate parking around schools. Apart from the inconvenience caused to those local communities, the actions of some parents potentially puts children at risk. The group has also identified concerns associated with enforcement.



2.11 As the problem affects all areas within the borough, the group sent a questionnaire to all Members of the Council to gain an understanding of the personal experiences of locally elected representatives on a ward by ward basis. Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire and Rescue, highways, planning and education are all involved in the review.

2.12 Although the review is not yet completed, it is becoming clear that it is unlikely that a 'one size fits all' approach will be found. The group is exploring opportunities to work with an individual school and its local community to produce a mutually acceptable solution that can be used as blueprint for other locations.

2.13 Looking Ahead to 2016/17

2.14 The budget will continue to form a significant part of the work of the committee especially as the projected financial position of the Council continues to forecast significant pressures.

2.15 The Committee has been invited to review the Council's member training arrangements in order to ensure that the Council is fit for purpose to deliver training programmes that meet the modern needs of e learning and remote learning. In conjunction with this work, a review will be undertaken of member

facilities at the Council's headquarters at Westfields Sandbach which are recognised to be unsatisfactory at the moment.

- 2.16 As outlined above, the committee will be involved in further development work on the Council's improved website to improve digital facilities for Cheshire East residents.
- 2.17 A review of the Council's recent decision to disband Coscious will be undertaken. The committee is also committed to undertaking a value for money review of the third sector and partner organisations

2.18 Children and Families



Chairman: Councillor Rhoda Bailey

Committee: Members Beverley Dooley, Dorothy Flude, Laura Jeuda, Gill Merry, Arthur Moran, Jos Saunders, Liz Wardlaw

Co-opted Members: Jill Kelly, John McCann

2.19 Committee work

- 2.20 The Committee has overseen the Council's improvement plan which was produced in response to the Ofsted inspection carried out at the beginning of the 2015/16 municipal year. The review had looked at the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers. Inspectors had also carried out a review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- 2.21 The inspection report had subsequently identified 17 recommended actions for the Council and its partners and a further 8 for the LSCB to achieve a consistently good standard.
- 2.2 Two particular matters that the Committee focussed on from the improvement plan were the need to improve recruitment and retention of children's social workers and the introduction of a suite of performance indicators specific to children's services which will now be presented to the committee on a quarterly basis beginning in July 2016.
- 2.23 The Committee has also received briefings on the school improvement programme and school capacity in light of the expected increase in the number of academies in the borough and will be taking a keen interest in how this develops.
- 2.22 The Committee followed up the actions taken by Cabinet in response to the Care Leavers Task and Finish Group report from 2012. The aim of the 2012

review was to help care leavers make a successful and adjusted transition from care into sustainable independence and adulthood.

- 2.24 Since 2013, services for care leavers in Cheshire East have been driven by the Council's involvement in the New Belongings project as part of a north west cluster of authorities, aimed at creating better fully integrated, easily accessible services for care leavers.
- 2.25 The Committee was informed that New Belongings had progressed a number of actions during 2015, many of which had overlapped the recommendations of the task and finish review.

2.26 CSE Task and Finish Review

- 2.27 A task and finish group originally convened in December 2014 resumed in the late summer of 2015. The task and finish group produced an interim report in February 2015 which summarised the groups findings relating to the policies and procedures that were in place to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation. When the group resumed its work in 2015, members were keen to ensure that evidence existed to demonstrate that the voice of the victim was being heard and acted upon by the Council and partners in light of systematic failings widely reported in Rochdale and Rotherham. This is being tested by looking at some real life case to assess how the policies and procedures are applied and to gain an understanding of the process from the perspective of those closely involved. The review is expected to finish in September 2016

2.28 Looking Ahead to 2016/17

- 2.29 In response to significant public interest in the February Council decision to de-designate four children's centres, the committee included an item in its work programme to review the impact of that decision 6 months after the implementation of the decision.



- 2.30 The committee has recognised that little attention has been paid over recent years to children's mental health and wellbeing. The committee has therefore committed to undertaking a piece of work jointly with the Health and Adult Social Care Committee and colleagues in Cheshire West to review the Council's arrangements regarding the mental health of children and young people, which forms part of a 'Pioneer' project which is reviewing I arrangements across Cheshire. It is expected that the review will be carried out in a select committee style spotlight investigation along similar lines to the recent successful review of ambulance services.

2.31 A new Corporate Parenting Committee was set up in 2015 to oversee the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities. The Committee will review the impact that the new committee during 2016/17.

2.32 Environment



Chairman: Councillor John Wray

Vice Chairman: Councillor Gary Barton

Committee Members: Harold Davenport, Martin Hardy, Andrew Martin, Michael Parsons and Brian Roberts

2.33 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee deals with environmental matters including flood risk management and the following Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles (ASDVs):

- ANSA – waste and recycling, grounds maintenance, fleet and street cleansing.
- Orbitas – cemeteries and crematoria, handyman service.
- Transport Services Solutions – home to school transport, specialised transport, public transport, demand responsive transport and transport associated activities
- Fairerpower – energy supply

2.34 Committee Work

2.35 ASDVs

2.36 The Committee has continued to build upon the well-established working relations with ANSA and Orbitas, and the Council's Commissioning Managers which has enabled it to monitor quarterly performance reports on a regular basis.

2.37 To understand the improvements made by ANSA over the past 12 months, Members undertook site visits to the various depots and premises. Members were pleased to see the progress made to date, particularly the improved working conditions at West Park Depot in Macclesfield which had been highlighted by Members on a previous visit.

2.38 Street Lighting Review

2.39 Following reports in the press about an increase in accidents due to street lights being switched off as part of an energy saving initiative, the Committee reviewed the 702 street light programme in Cheshire East to ascertain whether or not switching off street lights on certain roads had caused an increase in accidents at those locations.

2.40 The Committee discovered that all the street lights involved in the programme were on rural lengths of road at locations where there was little frontage development and no pedestrian or cyclist provision. All approaches to junctions on these roads had remained lit. Historically, the sites had low

collision rates. A safety evaluation had been carried out based upon Police road traffic accident statistical data which compared collision rates before and after the switch off. The figures indicated that collisions had actually reduced since the switch off. It was also evident that crime had not increased during the period in which the lights had been switched off. The Committee concluded that the programme had not had a detrimental effect on residents and that no further action needed to be taken.

2.41 Speed Management Strategy

2.42 The Committee has assisted in drafting the Speed Management Strategy, which will address residents' concerns about the effect of speeding traffic on their safety and quality of life. The strategy required the input of various agencies including Cheshire Fire and Rescue and Cheshire Constabulary in the provision of:

- Setting local speeds
- Education with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Speed enforcement with Cheshire Constabulary
- Speed management measures (physical and persuasive)

2.43 The strategy is due to go out for consultation, prior to being submitted to Cabinet for approval in summer 2016.

2.44 Waste

2.45 The Committee has been monitoring progress made in the development of an Environmental Services Hub to be located in Middlewich, which will become the Borough's main recycling centre and new headquarters for Ansa. The new site is due to be completed in winter 2016. Plans were also in place to build and operate a Dry Anaerobic Digestion Facility within the borough to recycle garden and food waste to generate energy and high quality compost.

2.46 Flood Risk Management

2.47 Under the Localism Act 2011, this Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of flood risk management within Cheshire East. Members received an annual report outlining the progress made in 2015/2016, on the Council's flood risk management arrangements which due to significant flooding in other parts of the country during the recent winter had received renewed focus.

2.48 A revised flood risk management strategy had been produced in accordance with the Council's role as a Lead Local Flood Authority. One matter of immediate concern to Members had been the fact that the flood risk management team had three vacancies at the time the committee had received the annual report. Due to the national focus on flood risk management, it was apparent that qualified flood risk engineers were in high demand. For that reason, the committee wrote formally to the portfolio holder urging him to give the recruitment of staff within the flood risk team his highest priority.

2.49 Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group

Membership

Councillors: N Mannion (Chairman), Rhoda Bayley, M Parsons and B Roberts

- 2.50 A Task and Finish Group has been set up to address the problems of Fly Tipping within Cheshire East, as the current arrangements to deal with incidents were considered to be inadequate due to coping with the a significant increase in fly tipping over recent years which was now costing the Council around £160,000 per year. Along with reviewing the extent of the problem, the group is monitoring the success of a 12-month pilot scheme to address local fly-tipping/side waste issues in Crewe. The pilot scheme involves employing two full time officers who will take proactive action in areas within Crewe where high levels of fly tipping currently occur. This will be backed up by to a publicity campaign to make the public aware of the pilot scheme and work being undertaken by Cheshire East and Ansa.

2.51 Looking Ahead to 2016/2017

- 2.52 As well as continuing to monitor the work of the ASDVs and Flood Risk Management, the Committee will be will be looking to develop a place based parking strategy, which will identify and meet the needs of each individual town.

2.53 Communities



Chairman: Councillor Gordon Baxendale

Vice Chairman: – Councillor Chris Andrew

Committee Members: – Michael Beanland, Ellie Brooks, Mo Grant, Sarah Pochin, Gill Rhodes, Mick Warren

2.54 Committee work

- 2.55 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for Community Strategies, localism, communities and regulatory services, visitor economy, Tatton Park Enterprises and crime and disorder matters as provided by Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

2.56 Crime and Disorder Matters

- 2.57 The Safer Cheshire East Partnership is currently updating its plan to develop new priorities to reflect the changing landscape of crime in Cheshire East. Serious and organised crime are on the increase within Cheshire East compared to the rest of Cheshire. The police have new priorities for 2016/2017 including public space crime, cyber crime and organised crime around human trafficking and child abuse which will be reflected in the plan.

Following a recommendation from the Committee, rural crime will now also be featured and the Committee will be reviewing the final plan in June 2016.

The council now also has a statutory responsibility to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and adopting a prevention strategy. Local authorities must have a panel to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

2.58 Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle (ASDV)

- 2.59 Members undertook a tour of the mansion and catering facilities at Tatton Park and met senior officers to gain an appreciation of the vision for Tatton Park and also to enable the committee to review the performance of Tatton Park Enterprises from a better informed position. Members learnt about the cultural economy, the profile, governance arrangements, financial projections and the vision for future expansion for Tatton Park and Tatton Park Enterprises.



2.60 Task and Finish groups

- 2.61 Domestic Violence

Met between June 2015 - March 2016

Membership

G Baxendale (Chairman), E Brooks, M Grant, S Pochin and M Warren

- 2.62 The task and finish group was set up to consider how domestic violence is dealt with, investigate the under reporting of domestic abuse and understand the reasons why there is no longer a single specialist court in Cheshire East. The group met with representatives of the police, Council's Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit and service users.

- 2.63 The investigation revealed some interesting and startling facts about the extent of known domestic abuse in the borough and highlighted a number of

issues connected with current arrangements that the Council and its partners have in place to deal with domestic abuse including funding arrangements, which has led the group to making twelve recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

2.64 The recommendations focused around funding and working smarter with partners. The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the final on 21 April 2016 and was submitted to Cabinet for consideration on 3 May 2016.

2.65 Looking Ahead to 2016/2017

2.66 The Committee hopes to concentrate on Crime and Disorder matters and as well as developing strategies for preventing extremism, community cohesion and scams and mass marketing.

2.67 Jobs Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Chairman: Councillor Hayley Wells-Bradshaw

Vice Chairman: Councillor Jon Weston

Membership: Councillors Derek Bebbington, Susanne Brookfield, Craig Browne, Liz Durham (May-Nov 2015) and Brian Roberts

2.68 The Jobs Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring performance and policy development relating to economic growth and employment, regeneration of the Borough's towns and villages, housing and development management, and asset management: including facilities management, use of assets, disposals of land and buildings. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the ASDVs: Cheshire East Engine of the North, Civicance Ltd and the Skills and Growth Company.

Committee Work

2.69 The Committee began the municipal year by considering the progress of devolving assets to Town and Parish Councils and Community Groups which began in September 2011. Regarding Council assets more generally the Committee has also been monitoring the Strategic Asset Management Plan implementation process to ensure the aims of the strategy are being achieved and that consolidation of assets is not adversely affecting services.

2.70 The Committee has monitored the progress of regeneration projects in the Borough major towns of Crewe and Macclesfield. The Committee has been specifically keeping up to date with the progress of HS2, which will create

massive economic and social opportunities for the town and surrounding areas.

- 2.71 In January 2016 the Committee received progress and performance reports from Cheshire East Engine of the North, responsible for property development on major strategic land assets, and Civance Ltd, responsible for planning and development support. The Committee has also monitored the development of the newly created Skills and Growth Company, which will be responsible for business engagement and working with partners to create jobs and develop the skills of local people.
- 2.72 The Committee has looked into the potential introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and what that could mean for development in our area and how communities might benefit. The Committee has also been keeping up to date with the quality of private rented sector housing provision in the Borough and the impact it has on our residents. In particular Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) has been an issue in some areas and the Committee will continue to monitor the situation to see if there is any requirement for more in-depth scrutiny.
- 2.73 The Committee has continued to monitor the progress of Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union (CNCU). In August the Committee encouraged the Council to continue to support CNCU and has been monitoring the credit union to ensure that it is providing value for the Council's investment and support.

2.74 Apprenticeships – Task and Finish Group

October 2015 – March 2016

Membership

J Weston (chair), B Roberts and L Durham (until Nov 2015)

- 2.75 The Government has set a target of 3 million apprenticeship starts during the current Parliament. The Task Group was set up to see how Cheshire East would contribute towards this, to make the Council a best practice model for other organisations in the Borough to follow. During the review the Enterprise Bill and the Finance Bill were being developed by Government which introduced a 2.3% apprenticeships as a proportion of total employees target for public sector bodies and an apprenticeships levy for all organisations with pay bill over £3m. The Task Group met officers, training providers, local chambers of commerce and officers from Stockport MBC during the review and considered



Task Group visited the Apprenticeship Store in Stockport

a variety of previous reports from other local authority scrutiny bodies. The Task Group developed recommendations for the Council and produced a report. The Report was published in March 2016 and was presented to Cabinet in April 2016.

2.76 Section 106 Agreements – Task and Finish Group

December 2015 – March 2016

Membership

H Wells-Bradshaw (chair), S Brookfield, C Browne and J Weston

2.77 The Task Group was established following discussions at Corporate Scrutiny following concerns raised by several members about their lack of knowledge and involvement in the Section 106 Agreements in their communities. The Committee assisted with the arrangement of training sessions for councillors to help them learn more about S106s and the Task Group developed a Member Survey to collect the views of councillors. The Task Group received an excellent response to the Survey, demonstrating councillors' interests in this issue. Using the evidence gathered from the survey, and learning from previous S106 scrutiny reviews from other local authorities, the Task Group met with officers to discuss the issues and develop recommendations for how councillors' involvement in S106s can help to improve outcomes for communities. The Task Group produced a report which was presented to Cabinet in April 2016.

2.78 Looking Ahead to 2016/17

2.79 During the next year the Committee plans to continue to develop its relationships with the Council's ASDVs and monitor performance to help ensure they are delivering value for money and achieving the objectives set to them by the Council. The Committee will also continue to monitor the regeneration of the Borough's Towns and the progress of HS2 to ensure the Council is maximising the benefits of the huge opportunities for Crewe and the surrounding area.

2.80 The Committee will monitor the Cabinet response to the two Task and Finish Groups which carried out reviews this year. In particular, the Committee will look to build on the work of the Apprenticeships Task and Finish Group by establishing a further review to look at external apprenticeship provision across the Borough.

2.81 Earlier in the year, the Committee had aimed to develop a relationship with its neighbours in Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington. The Committee will continue to work on developing initiatives to create a joint scrutiny function to work with the Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership, to hold the Local Enterprise Partnership to account for the decisions it takes on behalf of the residents of the region.

2.82 Health and Adult Social Care



Chairman: Councillor Jos Saunders

Vice Chairman: Councillor Liz Wardlaw

Memberships: Councillors Damian Bailey, Rhoda Bailey, Beverly Dooley, Laura Jeuda, Gill. Merry and Arthur Moran

2.83 The Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee deals with the scrutiny of health and social care services by holding the Council and the many healthcare service commissioners and providers to account to ensure that health and wellbeing objectives are achieved. In its statutory health scrutiny role, the Committee has commented on substantial developments and variations proposed by the NHS, and commented on changes to adult social care services. The Committee has continued to work closely with both internal partners in the Council and external partners from the NHS and the community. The commitment and cooperation of partners to Overview and Scrutiny has been excellent and helped the Committee to carry out some valuable pieces of work throughout the year.

2.84 Committee Work

2.85 During the year the Committee had considered a wide range of health and social care issues. One of the main issues that the Committee has been involved in is changes to the way respite care is delivered. In November 2015 the Committee reviewed the implementation of changes to respite services and in April 2016 the Committee reviewed the performance information for the first three months of operation.

2.86 Also in relation to adult social care, the Committee has been keeping up to date with the implementation of changes to services required by the Care Act 2014 and the Council's review of its adult social care fees and charges. This year the Committee considered the response of the Council and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups to the two task and finish groups on



Committee Members on visit to Crewe Lifestyle Centre during development

Assistive Technology and Carers presented in March 2016. The committee received good feedback and the implementation of the recommendations is progressing well. In relation to Carers, the Committee has also been monitoring the development of the joint Council and CCGs strategy for carers

which has incorporated some of the recommendations from the Carers Task Group.

2.87 The Committee has continued to develop good relations with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and has considered a variety of the health services they commission. At several points this year the Committee has considered and provided feedback on reviews by both CCGs within Cheshire East in relation to primary care services and community service provision. In order to raise Member awareness of a number of key health initiatives, the committee received briefings on the following matters during the course of the year:

- On the work of both CCGs with NHS England to move to fully delegated commissioning of general practice which enables decisions about GP services to be made locally without the risk of conflicts of interest for the GP involved in decision making at the CCGs.
- On the work that both local hospital trusts were undertaking in relation to maternity services, following the Kirkup Report into failings at Morecambe Bay,
- On Cheshire East Healthwatch's Annual Report 2014/15 and a twelve-month performance report from Everybody Sport and Recreation.

2.88 In relation to Public Health, the Committee has considered the future funding arrangements for services and the coordination of the Winter Wellbeing Partnership.

2.89 Members have been on a variety of site visits including to the new Crewe Lifestyle Centre, lifestyle services at Macclesfield Leisure Centre and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services provided by community organisation ROAR in Macclesfield.

2.90 Ambulance Services Review

2.91 The Committee decided to conduct a review of ambulance services to consider how improvements might be made to response times in the Borough and how unnecessary demand for services could be reduced to help relieve pressure on budgets. A review was carried out in the style of a Parliamentary Select



Committee with the whole Committee taking part in one and a half days of intensive information gathering and discussions. The review brought together a wide range of organisations that have a stake in ambulance services, from the main provider and commissioners to other health and care services and partners in the community. This enabled the Committee to consider how the

whole system impacts on ambulance services and what we can all do to help improve outcomes for patients. The review was undertaken in two stages. Initially, the Committee held a fact finding day where stakeholders provided information about services and commissioning and answered members' questions. This was followed by a half-day session a fortnight later where the Committee discussed its findings and agreed its conclusions and recommendations to stakeholders. The Committee produced a report, which was published in April 2016 and has been sent to all those whom the Committee made recommendations to for a response.

2.92 East Cheshire NHS Trust

2.93 In May 2015 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published its report into the inspection it carried out at East Cheshire NHS Trust during December 2014. The CQC rated the Trust as 'requires improvement' and the Committee undertook to understand more about why this rating was given and what the Trust had done to address the issues identified by CQC. On 11 March the Committee held a meeting which representatives of both the CQC and the Trust attended to discuss what progress had been made by the Trust and to answer members' questions. Following consideration of the actions taken by the Trust to learn lessons from the inspection and improve standards the Committee was assured that residents were receiving safe, effective and caring services.

2.94 Looking Ahead to 2016/17

2.95 Plans have been put in place to ensure that in May 2016 the Committee effectively reviews the Quality Accounts for 2015/16 of East Cheshire NHS Trust, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

2.96 Following the success of the Ambulance Services Review the Committee will look to use the select committee approach that has proved effective in relation to large scale services.

2.97 The Committee will continue to work with health and care service commissioners and providers to ensure there is effective consultation and cooperation on potential developments and variations to services and will continue to monitor the ongoing integration of health and care services across the Borough. Although the Committee has not undertaken any joint working with other local authorities this year, the Committee will engage with its counterparts to ensure effective scrutiny of cross border issues. The Committee will also look at developing its relationship with the Safeguarding Adults Board, Healthwatch and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

3.0 Overview and Scrutiny Activity 2015/16 and Beyond

3.1 The work of Scrutiny should add value to the democratic process and have a positive impact for the residents of Cheshire East. As outlined earlier in this report, more than ever, Overview and Scrutiny Committees will need to

demonstrate the likely value that Overview and Scrutiny will add to any report or review. This will need to be carefully balanced against the time and resources required to undertake the activity.

- 3.2 It is widely accepted that Overview and Scrutiny is most effective when it is focused on a limited number of in-depth topics. In Cheshire East, this is backed up by the positive remarks expressed by Cabinet Members and partners to the task and finish work undertaken during 2015/16.
- 3.3 We firmly believe that we must maintain our overriding aim to be the eyes and ears of the residents of Cheshire East in holding decision takers to account. However, we also believe that our greatest added value derives from the detailed work we carry out through task and finish reviews. Although the reviews are time consuming for members when many have other competing interests, they are nevertheless challenging, often very interesting and rewarding for those who take part. With the continued help of council colleagues and partners, we intend to pursue as many opportunities as our resources will allow us, to carry out further task and finish work in the coming months and years.