

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2017/18

1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. Good scrutiny is an essential part of the governance of Cheshire East Council. The council's scrutiny committees play a vital part in holding the Cabinet and Executive officers to account and in shaping policy, challenging decisions and building partnerships across the borough, particularly in relation to health matters. This annual report sets out the varied and extensive work that the council's four overview and scrutiny committees have undertaken over the last year.
- 1.2. The influence of overview and scrutiny is determined by members of the Council. This only works if scrutiny activity is Member-led. Cheshire East has a proud tradition of maintaining a robust Member-led independent scrutiny function.
- 1.3. On behalf of all of the members of the overview and scrutiny committees, I commend this report to you and look forward to continuing to work to improve the way in which the four overview and scrutiny committees carry out their activities and to strengthen their influence on the Council's decision makers and of our partner organisations.



Councillor Margaret Simon
Chairman, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.0. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Margaret Simon
Vice Chairman: Councillor Mo Grant

- 2.1. 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 Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of all of the overview and scrutiny committees and has a secondary role to co-ordinate the work of the other three 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.

Budget and Quarterly Performance

- 2.2. As part of the committee's continuing role to monitor Council performance across all Council activities, the committee has reviewed quarterly budget and performance reports throughout the year. Following on from last year's annual report, the committee remains confident that the Council is maintaining a stable position, enabling it to prepare for the immediate future.
- 2.3. The committee also took the lead in scrutinising the Council's pre budget consultation process which began in the autumn of 2017 and culminated in February 2018 with a number of comments being forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

Best4Business

- 2.4. Three members of the committee have been appointed to a joint working group with Cheshire West and Cheshire Council to scrutinise the Council's Oracle Replacement Programme – Best4Business.
- 2.5. Initially, the joint working group met to scrutinise the rationale and business case for investment in a new package and the need for change. This involved reviewing the procurement process and final contract. The Joint working group also looked in detail at the transformation programme required to deliver the change
- 2.6. The joint working Group supported the rational and business case for the replacement of the HR and Finance System and the proposed level of investment and this was endorsed by the Committee. It was subsequently agreed with both authorities that the joint working group should have continued opportunities to scrutinise the implementation of the new HR and Finance System once the contract had been awarded. That scrutiny has been taking place throughout the year and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee has received regular updates.

Crewe Fire Station 2nd Fire Engine

- 2.7. On 7 September 2017 the committee invited Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) to make a presentation relating to a proposal to change the utilisation of the second fire engine located at Crewe Fire Station from 'whole time' to 'on call'. The committee decided to monitor the situation and specifically asked those Members who represented the Council on the Fire Authority to feedback to the committee later in the municipal year.
- 2.8. In the intervening period, a lot of public interest had been generated in respect of the future of the second fire engine at Crewe and the committee therefore invited CFRS back to the committee on the 11 January 2018, to

provide an opportunity for the committee to question CFPRS on the proposal which had been published in the CFPRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2017/18. The committee also invited the Fire Brigade's Union's representative to address the committee in respect of its formal response to the IRMP. The meeting was well attended by members of the public, fire and rescue workers and the press. On this occasion, the committee made a formal response to the Cheshire Fire Authority ahead its final decision.

- 2.9. The committee decided that it could not support the CRFS proposal to change the utilisation of the second fire engine at Crewe from 'whole time' to 'on call' utilisation and sought the support of the two Cabinet portfolio holders with responsibility for issues concerning community safety to support the committees position on the matter.
- 2.10. The matter was formally considered by Cheshire Fire Authority on 14 February 2018. Cheshire East representatives on the fire authority who attended the meeting reiterated the Committee's stance on the matter and stated that they would not support any change to the duty system for the second fire engine at Crewe. The Council was delighted to learn that the Fire Authority subsequently resolved to retain the second fire engine at Crewe. The intervention of the Committee in this particular issue illustrates the key role that Overview and Scrutiny can and should play in matters that affect the residents of Cheshire East. We sometimes need to remind ourselves that our scrutiny role extends beyond the boundaries of Cheshire East Council. This is a perfect example of a matter that affected Cheshire East, 'the place' rather than Cheshire East Council where the responsibility for a decision rests with a partner organisation, but the matter is of such importance locally that the opportunity for an open and transparent debate in public through an independent Overview and Scrutiny function proved invaluable.

Members' Accommodation, Facilities and Culture Task and Finish Group

- 2.11. The Task and Finish Group which was reported upon in last years annual report which is reviewing facilities for members of the Council is still ongoing. The aims of the group were two fold: firstly to increase the space available to allow increased numbers of Members to congregate at the Council's Headquarters and secondly to provide better conditions for informal interaction between members of all political groups. As most formal meetings take place at Westfields Sandbach, and therefore the most likely place for Members to gather in significant numbers before meetings, the group decided to limit its review to facilities at Westfields Sandbach only.
- 2.12. Meetings have been held with the Leader of the Council and senior officers about the options available to improve facilities at Westfields and to ensure that this achieved at minimal cost and with as little disruption to staff as possible. A Members' survey was also conducted seeking Members' views about current facilities and future improvements.

- 2.13. As reported last year, the group has also considered ways of improving the 'Civic identity' of Westfields and to make better use of the foyer and publically accessible areas.
- 2.14. During this period, work had begun on the Council's new Vision, Behaviours and Employee Deal, which became the Brighter Future Together cultural programme. It was considered appropriate that the group should take a step back while the strategic review was completed. Now that new cultural programme is been rolled out, the group has picked up its work again with a view to completing its final report in the Autumn of 2018.

New Homes Bonus

- 2.15. As part of the budget process, Cabinet had asked the committee to assist with the development of a policy to allocate monies from the £2million which had been set aside by the Council from the New Homes Bonus. The New Homes Bonus is now a permanent feature of the funding settlement and is aimed at encouraging planning permissions for the building of new houses in return for additional revenue.

Budget Training

- 2.16. In December 2017, a training session was delivered by Ian Fifield from North West employers to develop the role of scrutiny in the budget setting process. This was designed to help overview and scrutiny Members to consider how to prepare questions to highlight key areas of concern for debate and scrutiny.
- 2.17. Unfortunately the number of Members who were available for the training session was less than anticipated but that did not detract from the enlightening and entertaining presentation given by Ian.

Looking ahead

- 2.18. The Members' Accommodation, Facilities and Culture Task and Finish Group is committed to concluding its review by the Autumn 2018.
- 2.19. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Integration has invited three scrutiny members to monitor ongoing fly-tipping issues across the Borough.
- 2.20. As in previous years, the committee will continue to have an overarching role and scrutinise the budget consultation process and the medium term financial strategy prior to any decisions being made by Cabinet and Council.
- 2.21. The committee will receive updates on a quarterly basis outlining key performance indicators and the outturn performance data for 2018/19 from within each of the Council's directorates.

3.0. Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Rhoda Bailey
Vice Chairman: Councillor Sarah Pochin

- 3.1. As in the previous year, the committee has continued to monitor the Council's improvement plan which was carried out at the beginning of the 2015/16 municipal year. The committee has scrutinised the performance scorecard quarterly, which provides essential dates along with qualitative information to measure the effectiveness of services within children's services. The committee also considered the budget prior to Cabinet and Council.

CAMHS Tier 3 and 4

- 3.2. The committee recognises the importance of children's mental health and wellbeing and invited the Clinical Director for Central and East Cheshire Child and Adolescent mental Health Services (CAHMS) to a meeting to answer a series of questions relating to tier 3 and 4 of the of the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Cheshire East. The committee acknowledged that the waiting time had gone down from 4 years to 2 years for neurodevelopment assessments, however this was still considered to be too long for families to wait. The committee will continue to scrutinise the service and the Director has been requested to attend subsequent meetings to monitor progress on waiting times for referrals for assessment and admissions to A&E.

Mobile Unit and visit to Children's Centre

- 3.3. As part of the Committee's ongoing work to monitor the de-designation of Children's Centres, the committee visited Broken Cross Children's Centre which had been de-designated and spoke with the Manager on the work undertaken at the Centre and Health Colleagues who also share the building. Members also visited Congleton Children's Centre which had not been de-designated, met with the Manager and two Family Support Workers; this building was also shared with Health colleagues. Members were pleased with the work undertaken at the centres and the impact it had on the local community.



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Educational Travel

- 3.4. Throughout the year the committee has continued to review the various stages of implementing the Children's Services Transport Policy review which had three strategic priorities:
1. To ensure the Educational Travel Policy meets strategic requirements, provided for the assessed needs of children and offered sustainable solutions.
 2. Ensured travel arrangements were delivered efficiently
 3. Ensured organisational management review, structure and processes operated efficiently.
- 3.5. In regard to available walking routes to schools, the committee has walked the route between Mobberley and Knutsford Academy/The Studio and Bollington to Tytherington High School to ensure the routes were fit for purpose. Following concerns previously raised by the Committee, walking the Tytherington High School route enabled Members to see the new pedestrian crossing which had been installed on the Middlewood Way, Macclesfield.
- 3.6. Strategic objective 2 aimed to equip more young people with an Education Health Care Plan EHCP, where appropriate, the necessary skills to travel independently, thereby increasing their choices, working towards being independent adults in society and reducing transport costs over time.

SEND Reforms Task and Finish Group

- 3.7. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a series of reforms relating to special educational needs and disability (SEND). The reforms aimed to improve the provision of services for children and young people with SEND, as well as giving them and their parents/carers greater control over how their needs are met, up to the age of 25. Following a slow response to the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014, a report was submitted to informal Cabinet outlining the Council's improvement programme to implement all aspects of the SEND reforms. The Schools Forum had concerns regarding the funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and alongside this, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny committee recognised the need for an in-depth look at the entire SEN system due to there being considerable delay in transferring existing statements to EHCP. The committee therefore agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the progress made in implementing the SEND reforms. Following the in-depth review the Task and Finish Group made 17 recommendations to Cabinet, which will be considered in due course.

SEND Inspection and Action Plan

- 3.8. In March 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint local area inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Cheshire East. This inspection looked at how effectively partners

in Cheshire East work together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND to improve their outcomes. Following the SEND Inspection, the Council reviewed its improvement plans which the committee will monitor, particularly in respect of Autism pathways. The findings of the inspection reinforced the recommendations of the SEND Reforms Task and Finish Group.

Looking ahead

- 3.9. The Children and Families Act 2014 extended the SEND system from birth to 25 Years, which will support young people into further education, employment and independent living. The SEND Reforms Task and Finish Group had concerns that post 16, young people are not able to access the jobs market due to other social issues, for those that are unable to work, and there is also a lack of social care. As this was a new requirement of the Council, there were significant improvements to be made. The committee agreed to establish another Task and Finish group to look at the local offer for 16-25 year olds.
- 3.10. The committee will also continue to scrutinise children's mental health services, the autism pathway and sustainable modes of transport.

4.0. Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman – Councillor H Davenport
Vice Chairman – Councillor T Dean

- 4.1. The committee commenced the year by receiving a presentation on the key strategic issues facing the Borough which fell within the remit of the Committee. This was used to form the work programme for the rest of the year and the committee agreed to concentrate on the following areas.

Supported Bus Service Review

- 4.2. This review was undertaken by the Council to assess whether or not the supported bus service met the needs of residents, presented value for money and could achieve a saving of £1m. Scrutiny took place throughout the process, which involved reviewing the proposed consultation and its results prior to Cabinet before making several recommendations to Cabinet on the final proposals. This issue gained significant public interest at the committee meetings and members of the public used the public speaking time to express their views which the committee took on board. Several services were retained following the Committee's input and further reports will be considered by the committee on the effects of the policy review.

HS2 Consultation

- 4.3. Consideration was given to a presentation on the DfT consultation relating to the Crewe Hub: options for building on the existing connectivity. The presentation detailed the HS2 route line, consultation process and the

Council's proposed response to a series of questions, which the committee supported. Due to this issue being a key priority for the Council, the committee will continue to scrutinise any proposals and progress made.

Air Quality

- 4.4. The Committee received an update on the Council's action plan in relation to air quality with particular reference to the management of data and submission of the annual status report to DEFRA. It was agreed that the Committee would scrutinise the Council's draft Air Quality Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan and Annual Status Reports each year to provide assurance on this important matter.

Housing and Homelessness

- 4.5. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy, the Council decided to implement a Strategy for 2018-2023 as part of the aim to deliver high quality, safe, affordable housing. The Strategic Housing team had worked alongside Regeneration and Health colleagues to ensure the strategy priorities linked with the wider agenda for Environment and Regeneration; and that consideration was given to statutory duties such as the Homeless Reduction Act to prevent homelessness. The committee has scrutinised homelessness in Cheshire East and extra controls in the private rented sector. Members were particularly interested in tightening controls on Houses of Multiple occupancy in the Crewe area and this will be continue to be monitored by the Committee.

Local Transport Plan

- 4.6. The existing Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 for Cheshire East was prepared at a time pre-dating the Council's current planning framework, as defined in the new Local Plan. It also reflects a period when there were severe constraints on the Department for Transport's funding for major infrastructure projects and block funding allocations to local authorities, hence a number of potential major projects within Cheshire East are inadequately profiled in the current document. In this regard, the current Local Transport Plan is no longer fit-for-purpose as a planning framework for local transport throughout Cheshire East.
- 4.7. Likewise the original SEMMMS Strategy is now over 20 years old. In order to properly plan for key 'cross boundary' transport challenges in the future this work must be updated to take account of the schemes delivered by the original SEMMMS strategy and the context of new and emerging development pressures.
- 4.8. The committee has considered the pre consultation draft and proposed approach to public consultation and made several recommendations to Cabinet. Results of the public consultation and amendments to the LTP will be considered by the committee in due course.

Budget

- 4.9. The committee gave consideration to the pre budget consultation for 2018/21 relating to Environment and Regeneration. The committee raised strong concerns to Cabinet regarding the proposed £500,000 revenue saving relating to the new highways contract. This saving was subsequently not implemented by the Council.

Flood Risk Management

- 4.10. In accordance with 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 the past year.

Looking ahead

- 4.11. In line with best practice, the committee will be receiving a quarterly overview of key performance indicators and the outturn performance data for 2018/19. The scorecard will provide an accessible summary of performance against the targets within the place directorate and contribute to the overall monitoring of the Council's journey towards achieving its corporate outcomes.
- 4.12. The committee will also continue to scrutinise the implementation of Local Transport Plan and the Air Quality Action Plan and Strategy along with the Annual Status Report.
- 4.13. The committee will be scrutinising the implementation of the well managed highway infrastructure code of practice, the biggest change in the new code is the focus on a risk based approach, a step change considered as a timely opportunity to revolutionise highways maintenance.

5.0. Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Jos Saunders (May 17 – Jan 18) / Councillor Stewart Gardiner (Jan 18 onwards)

Vice Chairman: Councillor Beverly Dooley

- 5.1. As in the previous year, the committee has continued to monitor the Quality Accounts by associated Health Partners across Cheshire East. The committee was advised about the initiatives and priorities for the future and was asked to submit comments for inclusion in each of the accounts.
- 5.2. The committee reviewed the Local Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report and a performance report from Everybody Sports and Leisure (ESAR) as part of its work programme.

Clinical Commissioning Groups: Capped Expenditure Programme

- 5.3. The CEP was introduced by NHS England and NHS Improvement in response to the financial pressures faced by the NHS. With this context, health partners across Cheshire East had focused on delivering work that would achieve financial stability. South Cheshire CCG had written a CEP to reduce an in-year deficit of £3.5 million. Eastern Cheshire CCG was facing £5 million of savings. The committee noted presentations by CCG officers and requested more information from the CCGs as more detail on the savings became known.

Substantial Developments or Variations (SDVs) reviewed this year

- 5.4. The process for SDVs was designed to establish an agreed method for determining whether a proposed service variation or service development is “substantial” and therefore a matter upon which there should be formal consultation with the Committee. This year the committee reviewed four SDVs as below:

1. Potential Branch Surgery Closure at Rode Heath, Scholar Green

- 5.5. The committee was advised that the GP branch was a partnership, but in March, one of the Doctors had retired. Since then the branch had failed to recruit to this post and this had impacted on patient appointments. The committee felt that lessons could be learned from the consultation process.

2. Potential relocation of outpatient services in Handforth

- 5.6. The committee was patient Clinics from Handforth by East Cheshire NHS Trust. After hearing a presentation from East Cheshire NHS Trust and Eastern Cheshire CCG, the committee was satisfied with the consultation process and supported the proposal to relocate outpatient services in Handforth.

3. Mental Health Service Redesign pre-consultation business case and consultation

- 5.7. In January 2017, Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (ECCCG) announced a potential proposal to close The Millbrook Unit, of its mental health inpatient services in Macclesfield.
- 5.8. The Health, Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee decided the proposal satisfied Level 3 of the process for Statutory Development or Variation (SDV).
- 5.9. In order to fully engage with the process, ECCCG, in partnership with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP) and overseen by Cheshire East Council, decided to draw up a full business case that developed 3 options with the strengths and weaknesses of each option. Once completed the business case was taken out to public consultation for 12 weeks in order to gauge public opinion and factor this into any decision making.

Spotlight Review on Mental Health Service Provision in Cheshire East

- 5.10. In April 2018, the committee held a one day spotlight review on the subject of mental health provision across Cheshire East. Health and Adult Social Care is commissioned and provided by a number of organisations across Cheshire East. Representatives from these organisations were invited to the review to present on the day in order to best inform the committee ahead of any decisions in respect of the Millbrook Unit.

Spotlight Review on Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC)

- 5.11. In June 2017, the committee formally agreed and adopted its report on DToC, which set out its findings and recommendations following an in-depth spotlight review carried out in January 2017. This was a considerable piece of work; representatives from the Council, NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG and NHS South Cheshire CCG were invited to provide evidence and data, which informed the final report.
- 5.12. The committee further monitored DToC at its meeting in March 2018, at which the same representatives were asked to submit a review of performance relating to DToC at approximately 12 months after the spotlight review was undertaken.

Task and Finish Group on Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Providers

- 5.13. The committee delegated five Members to form a Task and Finish group to look at a specific Community Safety matter. There had been an increase of tenants living in Social Housing and affected by Anti Social Behaviour due to the withdrawal of ASB teams. The knock on effects of this had been a surge in referrals by one Housing Trust directly to either Cheshire Police or the Council's ASB teams.
- 5.14. The Task and Finish Group scoped the nature of the review they wanted to undertake and consulted with officers at Cheshire East Council, Guinness Housing, Peaks and Plains and Plus Dane. The group are in the process of reviewing its findings and shaping a final report.

Looking ahead

- 5.15. As set out in its work programme, the committee will receive quarterly updates on key performance indicators and the outturn performance data for 2018/19. The scorecard will provide an accessible summary of performance against the targets within the people directorate and contribute to the monitoring of the Council's performance.
- 5.16. The consultation on the proposed mental health service redesign concluded on 29 May, 2018. The committee will receive the results of the consultation and provide the ECCCCG with a formal response outlining its final position regarding the outcome of the consultation and the proposed next steps regarding mental health services in the area.