

Improvement and Scrutiny



Annual Report 2015/16

Foreword by Cllr Clive Moesby, Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee

Our Improvement and Scrutiny Committee structure is based on the Parliamentary Select Committee model and is comprised of the four I & S Committees (People, Places, Resources and Health) all of which are overseen by the Improvement and Scrutiny (I & S) Management Committee.

The Committees' recommendations, following a review, are submitted to Cabinet. Agreed actions are then implemented by the relevant departments, and progress is monitored by the Scrutiny Committees.

During 2015/16 the four Improvement and Scrutiny Committees developed their work programmes to undertake a number of varied and wide ranging reviews. The work they have done, and the outcomes they have achieved, are described in more detail later in this report.

The County Council, in common with many other public sector organisations, has continued to face financial pressures due to budget reductions. To help the Council protect vital services, the role of our Scrutiny Committees has become more focussed on developing efficient and innovative methods to enable us to continue to provide services to the people of Derbyshire.

We have called upon a number of Members and officers of our own Council, as well as representatives of our partners in the public, private and health service sectors in undertaking the reviews and investigations which are detailed in this report. Their advice and expertise has been invaluable in helping our Committees identify areas for improvement and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their input over the last year.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clive Moesby".

Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — People

Cllr Diane Charles, Chair of the I & S Committee - People

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Completed a review of the impacts of the authority's decision to change the eligibility threshold for adult social care. The review emphasises the crucial role Adult Care staff have in supporting adults with their social care needs and the requirement to provide information and advice on what services are available. All recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and follow up research has shown that the majority (70%) had managed reasonably well since their support had ended; some had even achieved greater independence.
- Completed a review of radicalisation in schools. The review found excellent preparatory and follow up work with schools in regard to the Prevent duty which came into force in 2015/16. All recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and follow up work will take place on reviewing implementation during 2016/17.
- Completed a review of Starting Point, the authority's new way of managing how children are safeguarded, during it's trial phase. The report highlighted excellent partnership working. The evidence from the trials highlights that all agencies involved have shared information and expertise for the benefit of the vulnerable children who have been referred. All recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and follow up work will take place on reviewing implementation during 2016/17.
- Undertaken a review of child sexual exploitation, consulting widely with residents and groups/organisations in Derbyshire as well as partners such as the Police and Public Health.
- Undertaken a review of hate crime, consulting with many partner organisations, our internal employee panel and networks as well as external LGBT, BME and disabled groups.
- Reviewed the progress of both the Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Boards through discussions with the independent Chair's and their annual reports.



Review of Eligibility Threshold Changes

Roger Miller, Assistant Director (Prevention & Personalisation), Adult Care

The review resulted from a desire to learn from the implementation of changes to the eligibility threshold for adult care services. The review consulted a wide range of people and organisations. Letters and questionnaires were sent out to all clients who were identified as no longer receiving a service following an assessment with 58 questionnaire responses. This represented a response rate of 24%, which is viewed as very good.

There was also 15 one-to-one follow up interviews with clients who filled in the questionnaire. The review also consulted with four NHS Hospital Trusts, four Clinical Commissioning Groups and three organisations and the working group held discussions with community and voluntary sector.

The review found good working practices by the Adult Care department in response to the changes in eligibility thresholds and the wider provisions of the Care Act 2014. Overall, Social Workers and Community Care staff were shown to be highly regarded and respected by those who they arrange support for.

Through the review and it's consultation, it found that people whose need for support was being assessed, and their carers, benefitted from information, advice and signposting to alternative care services. There is a wide range of services which the Authority provides or has knowledge about and more consistent communication of this will ensure people can make informed choices.

As part of the recommendations, a follow-up research project was developed with those clients who were involved in the original consultation. This research included interviews with 20 individuals affected by the FACS eligibility criteria change. Of these clients, the majority (70%) had maintained their independence well since their support had ended; some had even achieved greater independence.

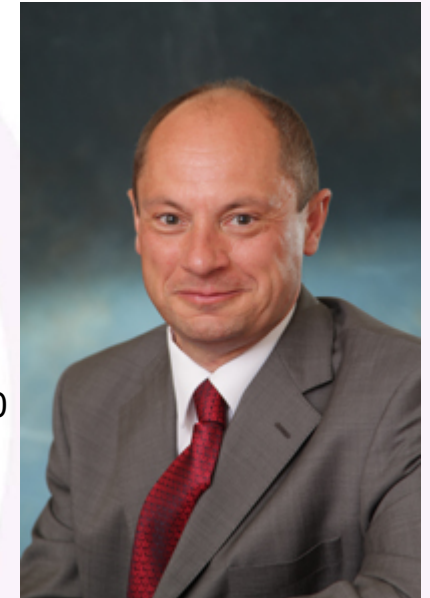


Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Places

Cllr Kevin Gillott, Chair of the I & S Committee – Places

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Completed a review of 20mph Speed Limits and recommended that the Council be more open to introducing 20mph limits in residential areas, where the circumstances are appropriate. The review found there to be strong community support for the introduction 20mph speed limits. More than 1000 residents responded to a survey, with over 70% of respondents expressing support for 20mph speed limits on residential streets in their neighbourhood. The review, however, stopped short at recommending the introduction of area wide 20mph schemes in Derbyshire. Having listened to the views of public health professionals, traffic engineers, road safety officers, the “20’s Plenty for Us” campaign, and other local authorities the working group felt that the evidence for and against area wide 20mph speed limits is currently inconclusive.
- Completed a review of the impact of funding cuts on the delivery of community safety services in Derbyshire. The review highlighted that, in order to achieve savings, organisations are having to be more reactive when delivering services . In general they have less capacity to delivery preventative projects and the severity of an issue needs to be greater (than it would have been previously) before an intervention is considered.
- Met with Network Rail to raise concerns, about an announcement made by the Secretary of State for Transport (in June 2015) , that the Midland Main Line electrification project was to be paused.
- Commenced a review of tourism in Derbyshire to identify opportunities for the Council (in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations) to grow the visitor economy.



Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Resources

Cllr Clive Moesby, Chair of the I & S Committee — Resources

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Completed a review of the Council's Trusted Trader Scheme aimed at ensuring the sustainability and development of the scheme. The review recommended further promotion of the scheme to increase and sustain the level of membership of Derbyshire traders. As well as the Council's own Communications Plan for the Trusted trader scheme, we exhorted the Council's Members and frontline staff to promote the use of Trusted Trader to people in their local communities and to vulnerable clients.
- Monitored the implementation of the recommendations of the Review of Derbyshire Credit Unions, particularly in the branding of Credit Unions as Derbyshire Community Banks and the rolling out of services to more rural and isolated communities.
- Commenced a review of the potential for the Council to generate income streams to support the Council's budget and protect vital services. This is particularly crucial at a time when the Council is facing continuing pressures on its budget.
- Continued to oversee the Council's progress in developing sustainable energy projects — particularly through the establishment of solar farms on Council owned land.
- Developed the response of the Council on proposals by HM Courts and Tribunal Service to close the Magistrates' and County Courts in Buxton.



Sara Dinsdale — Derbyshire Community Bank (t/a Erewash Credit Union)

We welcomed the backing of DCC's Scrutiny Committee in supporting the development of Credit Unions to;

- combat the uptake of “pay day loans”
- getting behind the “branding” of Credit Unions in Derbyshire as “Community Banks”
- funding the roll-out of our own services in the Derbyshire Dales area
- exploring ways to further promote the services of Community Banks to communities across the county.

Such high-level support is vital towards achieving the credibility and sustainability of Credit Unions in Derbyshire.



Response to the Proposed Closure of Buxton Courts

Cllr Caitlin Bisknell - Buxton North and East Electoral Division

In the summer of 2015, Derbyshire County Council was invited to participate in consultation, by HM Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), on proposals to close Buxton Magistrates and County Court. It was proposed that all Court business would be transferred to Courts at Chesterfield or Derby.

The Resources Improvement & Scrutiny Committee was asked to investigate the impact of these proposals on the local community and develop a response on behalf of the Council to the HMCTS. The Committee consulted with its service department managers and local Members, including myself, to ascertain the probable impact on local people.

Of main concern was the additional travelling time and costs for witnesses and victims of crime who would have to face the journeys to the alternative Courts should the Buxton facilities be closed.

The Scrutiny Committee produced a robust response to the closure proposals which challenged the ability for local people to access the justice system if they were forced to attend Courts in Chesterfield or Derby.

Although the consultation process finally resulted in the Buxton Courts being closed, the concerns raised by the Council resulted in the retention of the Stockport Courts (which had also been earmarked for closure) to allow people from the High Peak area to access services nearer to home.

Whilst the closure of the Buxton Courts is regrettable, access to services at Stockport lessened the detrimental impact on communities in the High Peak and this was a result of the strong case developed by the Scrutiny Committee for the Council.



Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Health

Cllr Sean Bambrick, Chair of the I & S Committee — Health

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Continued to receive information from the county's health service commissioners and providers on their performance and any major service reconfigurations. This included the monitoring of measures put in place to continue GP services on the sudden closure of 2 surgeries in Chesterfield and responding to outcomes of CQC inspections, including that at Chesterfield Royal Hospital.
- Continuing the scrutiny of health services in the north west of the county through membership of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities' Joint Health Scrutiny Panel. This facilitates a collective approach to health scrutiny with other Local Authority partners and provides a voice for the communities in the High Peak area when Health Services are re-designed.
- Participating in the collective scrutiny of health services in the South Yorkshire/North Derbyshire "Working Together" Programme
- Seen the publication, by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), of the Committee's review of Immunisation. Concentrating on improving the take-up of 'flu vaccines amongst the Council's own front-line staff and the take-up of the HPV vaccine amongst teenage girls, the review has helped to promote, nationally, the use of "Return on Investment" Scrutiny models to quantify the benefits of health and council services.



Andy Gregory — Hardwick Clinical Commissioning Group

Hardwick CCG has engaged with Members of the Health Improvement and Scrutiny Committee throughout the year to share progress and receive views on the development of the 21c #JoinedUpCare proposals in the lead up to the Better Care close to home consultation.

The discussions have influenced the way in which we have undertaken the consultation and local knowledge and connections with Local Area Committees have meant that we have been able to engage with the right people locally to ensure as many people are able to have their say on the proposed changes to provide better care close to home.

The Committee and the CCG have been in regular productive dialogue on the progress in securing resilient, long term primary care services in Creswell and Langwith. The Committee has offered regular robust challenge which has supported the CCG in securing longer term services for local people.

As other service challenges have arisen throughout the year, the Committee has enabled confidential discussions to take place to ensure that the appropriate people were informed. On some occasions it isn't possible to brief the Committee in confidence because of the urgency of the changes we need to make to ensure patient safety. The Committee is rightly concerned about such situations and will facilitate special meetings if necessary to which members of the public and other interested parties are invited. This helps us to explain the relevant circumstances in more detail and be held to account as necessary to ensure that patients needs are addressed during any changes to services.

The Committee has been flexible in its approach to facilitating confidential briefings which have been invaluable in enabling the CCGs to discharge its duties effectively and in line with the expectations of the Committee.



Police and Crime Panel

Councillor Julie Hill, Chair of the Derbyshire Police and Crime

The Improvement and Scrutiny officer team also supports the County's Police and Crime Panel which is made up of Members nominated by the County Council, City Council, District and Borough Council's (with political balance) and independent Members who are appointed through an application process.

In the past 12 months, the Panel has:

- Furthered developed the skills and capacity of Panel Members through a bespoke development day in partnership with Frontline Consulting. Participation at national conferences, financial training and shared best practice through the East Midlands and England Police and Crime Panel Networks.
- This allowed Members to effectively scrutinise and support the precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner for 2016/17.
- This also enabled Members to challenge and support the PCC's annual report.
- Began to undertake proactive scrutiny of areas of work, holding the PCC to account over the 101 service, budget monitoring with further areas being developed into a work programme.
- Successfully recruited a new independent member for the Panel.



Improvement and Scrutiny going forward

Here are some examples of work our Committees are undertaking in 2016/17 and beyond.

On-going scrutiny of health service reconfigurations and monitoring the future development programmes proposed by local Health Service Commissioners.

Finalise the Hate Crime Review which will ascertain how the Council is working with partners to deter Hate Crime and explore people's perceptions around Hate

Finalise the review of tourism in Derbyshire to identify opportunities for the Council to support and help grow the visitor economy.

We will continue to review how the authority is working to support vulnerable children and adults in Derbyshire through the safeguarding working group.

Scrutinise the Council's flood risk management role by monitoring the implementation of the Derbyshire Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Undertake a review of broadband access in Derbyshire and assess future implementation plans for businesses and rural communities that currently do not have access to affordable, high speed broadband services.

Monitor the progress of service improvements by East Midlands Ambulance Service in partnership with the Health Scrutiny Committees of the East Midlands Councils.

Finalise the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Review. The review will highlight the extent to which partnerships are working together to deter CSE in Derbyshire.

Meet the Improvement and Scrutiny Officer Team

For any information about Improvement and Scrutiny in Derbyshire, please contact the Council's officers;

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I & S Committee - Resources



Contact Details

The Chairs of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committees are always keen to hear from anyone who has an interest in Improvement and Scrutiny - or who would like to suggest areas for a scrutiny review. Please use the contact details below

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