

# Improvement and Scrutiny



(Draft) Annual Report 2014/15

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

During 2014/15 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 .

I am keen that the four Committees continue to direct their work programmes to assist the Executive — through both challenge and support — in achieving its budget targets whilst protecting services as much as possible.

I consider the scrutiny role as a positive resource for the Authority, working to identify *improvement* and *innovation* in service delivery. It is also crucial that the work of the Scrutiny Committees contributes to achieving the aims and objectives of the Council Plan - and our reviews will continue to reflect this. My Scrutiny colleagues and I will ensure that the Scrutiny function directs the work of our Committees to support the Council and its partners in this respect and help them to meet the challenges this opportunity will present.

Over the last 2 years, the Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees have worked very well towards their common goals. Cross-party working groups, established to progress each "task-and-finish" review, have provided a good balance between challenge and support in order to identify and recommend improvements to services.

The Chairs of all four Scrutiny Committees have contributed to this report with detailed information about the work of their Committees over the last year and I would like to thank them and the Improvement & Scrutiny Officers who support our Committees.



**Councillor Clive Moesby**

## Some key achievements in Improvement and Scrutiny in 2014/15

The breadth and depth of the involvement of scrutiny in the Council's services over this period has been considerable. Here are some examples:

**Developed the skills and capacity of County Councillors in safeguarding vulnerable children through Member Development Sessions on Child Sexual Exploitation and Social Pedagogy.**

**Completed a review of Highway Inspection and Maintenance Procedures. The resulting recommendations focused on improving communication.**

**Completed a review of Credit Unions in Derbyshire which resulted in a number of recommendations to support and help develop the Credit Unions providing services in the county.**

**Completed its review of Immunisation which was undertaken with the support of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). The review resulted in the establishment of an officer working group tasked with improving take-up of 'Flu vaccines by front-line staff.**

**Established a performance framework to effectively scrutinise the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner.**

**Maintained an overview of major Health Service reconfigurations to ensure the views of patients were key influences in the change process.**

**Completed reviews on how the authority considers equality and diversity in its decision-making and its recruitment and selection processes**

## How does Improvement and Scrutiny work?

The Council's four Improvement and Scrutiny (I & S) Committees each have 8 Members with political balance reflected by 5 Majority Group Members and 3 Members from the Minority Groups.

The 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 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.



Once a review topic has been identified, the scope is agreed by the committee. This defines the parameters and timescales of the review.

A working group is established to undertake the review. This includes following different lines and methods of inquiry, including discussions, desk research, interviewing "expert witnesses", consultation and surveys.

Once a review is finalised, the working group provides a report to the Committee which, on approving the review recommendations, forwards them to Cabinet for consideration.

The recommendations agreed by Cabinet are then implemented by the relevant departments, and progress is monitored by the Scrutiny Committee.



## 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 authority's recruitment and selection process and how it considers equality and diversity. The review endorsed the new approach by Human Resources (HR) to significantly shorten the timescales for Disability and Barring Service checks for employees. HR have also revised documentation following the review's recommendation of the need to recruit on attitude and behaviours as well skills and knowledge. The review has also led to a study of equality group declaration rates, benchmarking against other organisations, and identifying best practice and recommendations for improvements.
- Completed an interim review of the authority's work to safeguard vulnerable children and adults. Following the review, Members have been trained and developed, through the Member Development Programme, their awareness on Children Sexual Exploitation, Safeguarding and Social Pedagogy.
- Visited frontline services which work to safeguard vulnerable children. This has included developing a report which endorses 'Starting Point', the authority's new approach to provide a single point of access for children's referrals, using multi-agency teams.
- Completed a review of how the authority considers equality and diversity when making decisions. The review will ensure that the authority has the necessary processes in place to make informed decisions and the effects on different equality groups.
- Finalised 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.



## Example of good practice: Safeguarding vulnerable children

Ian Johnson—Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults

“The scrutiny working group on safeguarding has regularly challenged and supported the work of delivering services to vulnerable children. A strong and effective scrutiny function is an essential part of delivering an outstanding safeguarding service for vulnerable children and young people.

One of the benefits of this work has been the inclusion of various safeguarding training and development sessions in the Council’s Member Development Programme.

This has provided the opportunity for all Members of the Council to increase their knowledge and skills in what the authority and partners do to ensure vulnerable children are safeguarded. This has included a session with the Principal Social Worker for Children and Young Adults, who briefed Members on safeguarding services and the referral process if they encounter evidence of abuse.

Members also received a production of ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ which has been widely and positively received by schools in Derbyshire and has increased awareness of child sexual exploitation issues (CSE). Members have regularly reviewed the authority’s CSE action plan and strategy too.

Officers have regularly attended working group sessions to update Members on safeguarding performance. Additionally, Members have been briefed on the work of partners including from the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board and Derbyshire Safe and Sound.

The working group have also endorsed the authority’s new approach to provide a single point of access for children’s referrals using multi-agency teams—Starting Point”.

## Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Places

### Cllr Kath Lauro, Chair of the I & S Committee – Places

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Completed a review of Highway Inspection and Maintenance Procedures. The review looked at the current systems in place, viewed highway inspection and reactive maintenance activities on-site and compared them with the processes adopted by a neighbouring Local Highways Authority (Leicestershire). The resulting recommendations focused on improving communication so that all staff understand the rationale for current and future ways of working and embrace consistent working practices, and that the general public are better informed about the factors the Council takes into account when prioritising highway maintenance.
- Contributed to the development of the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) for Derbyshire by acting as a critical friend. The Flood Management Working Group challenged and made recommendations about the style and content of the strategy and ensured that comments received during the consultation phase of the project were adequately addressed. Following the implementation of the strategy the working group will continue to play a role. It will reconvene at strategic intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and monitor progress against the FRMS Action Plan.
- Considered the call-in of a decision, approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, to add the purchase of speed detection equipment to the Capital Programme 2014-15. Call-in is an formal mechanism for elected Members to challenge executive decisions if they feel that issues have not been handled in accordance with the decision-making principles set out in Article 15 of the Council's constitution. The Committee considered the evidence and resolved that the decision of the Cabinet Member had been taken in accordance with the decision making principles.





## 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 Credit Unions in Derbyshire which resulted in a number of recommendations to support and help develop Credit Union services in local communities throughout the county. The scrutiny review recognised and emphasised the importance of local Credit Unions in tackling poverty and discouraging people from using expensive or illicit loan sources and it endorsed the Council's continuing support for Credit Unions in Derbyshire.
- Continued to monitor the outcomes of 2 earlier reviews (Non-Operational Property and Sustainable Energy) to ensure that review recommendations are progressing. This included the Chair of the Sustainable Energy Review working group Chair taking part in a site visit to a large solar farm project with the Deputy Cabinet Member to continue to appraise the viability of similar schemes in Derbyshire. This continuous "hands-on" approach indicates how the expertise gained by Scrutiny Members during the review process can contribute to developing scrutiny outcomes.
- Commenced a review of the Council's Trusted Trader Scheme aimed at ensuring the sustainability and development of the scheme.





## Example of good practice: Review of Sustainable Energy

**Councillor John Owen—Deputy Cabinet Member, Highways, Transport & Infrastructure.**

In 2014 the Improvement & Scrutiny - Resources Committee completed a review of the Council's proposals to engage in the development of sustainable energy projects on County Council owned land. As the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, I am the lead Member for this project, overseeing the work of the project officers.

The review by the Scrutiny Committee was a natural progression from an earlier review the Committee undertook on the future use of the Council's non-operational land and property holdings.

As well as endorsing the concept of the proposed development of a sustainable energy project by the Council, the Scrutiny review offered additional support by regularly monitoring the project's progress and development – and ensuring that all key stakeholders, from within the Council's own departments and external organisations, were included in the process.

The additional overview which the Scrutiny review facilitated helped both me and the project managers keep the project to task and also helped raise the profile of this important project.

I am very appreciative of the commitment and support of the Scrutiny review working group Members and the Improvement and Scrutiny Officer for their involvement in our project's development.



## Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Health

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

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Completed its review of Immunisation which was undertaken with the support of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). Concentrating on improving the take-up of 'flu vaccines amongst the Council's own front-line staff (those working with elderly or vulnerable clients) and the take-up of the HPV vaccine amongst teenage girls, the review resulted in the establishment of an officer working group tasked with improving take-up figures amongst key staff.
- Participated in a LGA Peer Review of the County's Health and Wellbeing Board (via contributions to the review by the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer)
- Continued to receive information from the county's health service commissioners and providers on their performance and any major service reconfigurations.
- Made initial steps in a review of the discharge process from Acute Hospitals following a report on this issue from Healthwatch Derbyshire. This review will be the principal work stream of the Committee during the latter part of 2015/16 with a view to identifying and recommending any potential changes to the process to improve patient experience.
- The Council has developed its 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



## Jackie Pendelton—North Derbyshire CCG

The CCG has throughout the year kept the Members of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee up to date with the development of the 21c #JoinedUpCare transformation programme. The discussions have been both positive and productive and a real understanding of the issues facing the health and care system has been developed between us all. Helpful suggestions to attend Local Area Committee have been taken up by the CCG to ensure that we maximise the opportunities to talk to people to inform our work to ensure more people can remain independent in their own homes.

Other service challenges have arisen throughout the year and the Committee has enabled confidential discussions to take place to ensure 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 needed 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.





## Police and Crime Panel

### **Councillor Julie Hill, Chair of the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel**

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:

- Developed the skills and capacity of Panel Members through 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 2015/16.
- Established a performance framework to ensure reporting is timely and of value to scrutinise the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner through on going Panel meetings including progress made in each Police and Crime Plan objective.
- Considered the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2013/14.
- Begun the appointment process to secure a new independent Panel Member for the vacant role.



## Improvement and Scrutiny going forward

Here are some examples of work our Committees are undertaking in 2015/16 and beyond.

**A review of hospital discharges which will assess to what extent current processes are able to facilitate safe and timely patient discharge from acute hospitals**

**A 20mph speed limit review. The review will gather evidence about 20mph speed limits and 20mph zones, and consider their influence on road casualties, road users and local communities.**

**Child Sexual Exploitation Review. The review will look at what the authority is doing with partners to deter child sexual exploitation in Derbyshire.**

**Radicalisation in Schools Review. The review will look at what the authority is doing with partners to deter the radicalisation of school children in Derbyshire.**

**We will continue the on-going scrutiny of health service reconfigurations, flood risk management, crime and disorder partnerships and safeguarding services for vulnerable children and**

**A review of the potential to introduce sponsorship of Council Services by external organisations with a view to develop income streams for the Council and support local businesses.**

**Hate Crime Review. The review will understand what the authority is doing with partners to deter Hate Crime and peoples perceptions of what Hate Crime is.**

## 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 Management Committee

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I & S Committee - Resources



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I & S Committee - People

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I & S Committee - Places

Additional support to I & S Committee - Health





## 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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