

# Improvement and Scrutiny



## Annual Report 2013/14

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

2013/14 has been a year of change for Improvement and Scrutiny (I & S) at Derbyshire County Council. The elections in May 2013 saw a change of administration with the Labour Group regaining control of the Council and a number of new Councillors taking up their duties.

The County Council, in common with many public service providers, is currently faced with making budget reductions, with an overall target of £157m for the five-year period 2013/14 to 2017/18.

In addition to our scrutiny of “in-house” services, our I & S Committee - Health looks externally at all local health services provided by our partners in the health service community. Members on this Committee have had an additional challenge in holding to account organisations which commission and provide services in a complex arena. I am pleased to say that, as the information given further in this report will demonstrate, they have risen to this challenge and undertaken their responsibilities admirably against a time of considerable change in healthcare provision.



The Council's Executive has instigated the **Derbyshire Challenge** to explore new ways of delivering services to mitigate against the impact of significantly reduced budgets. This is being undertaken against a background of a number of service pressures which have been identified across the Council's departments.

As Chair of the I & S Management Committee, I am determined that the Council's Improvement and Scrutiny function directs its work programmes to assist the Executive – through both challenge and support – in achieving its budget targets whilst protecting services as much as possible. I see 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 reflect this.

It is possibly unique in the public (or, in fact, private) sector to have a facility such as scrutiny where “lay-people” are empowered and have a responsibility to challenge and influence the way services are provided. Although our Scrutiny Members do not have the depth of expertise of the professionals who provide the services we scrutinise, they have developed their knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges faced – and provide a link with the people who use our services. As such we can offer an alternative, innovative view to help shape future service provision.

I believe the latter element is crucial. Local Members have a great knowledge of the needs, problems and aspirations of their local communities. The 30 Members serving on the Scrutiny Committees provide a formal mechanism to ensure that the right services are provided to the right people and at the right time.

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. The breadth and depth of the involvement of Scrutiny in the Council's services over this period is impressive, particularly as this work has been undertaken by Committee Members who include some who have no previous Scrutiny experience – and some who are new to the County Council. However, all have contributed to the role of their Committees and review working groups and I am grateful for their continued input.

It is also important to note the situation which arose in the Improvement and Scrutiny team last summer when the officer support was reduced considerably. Happily, this reduction was as a result of two officers (Ratna Taylor and Graham Spencer) leaving to take up new appointments elsewhere in the Authority and I wish them both well in their new roles. For some weeks the support for Scrutiny rested with just one officer (Jackie Wardle) until the appointment of two more officers (David Rose and Roz Savage) who joined the team in January and June 2014 respectively. I am pleased to welcome them to our team. Our Committees are now benefitting from the support of the three officers and are progressing with their busy work programmes.

Within the last 12 months we have created a new way forward for Improvement and Scrutiny and it is on this platform that I wish to build so that Derbyshire County Council's Improvement and Scrutiny function continues to achieves outcomes that we can be proud of.



**Councillor Clive Moesby,**



## Councillor Brian Ridgway, Cabinet Member - Council Services

The Improvement and Scrutiny Officer team sits within the Legal and Democratic Services Division of the Corporate Resources Department and, despite resource challenges for much of the time (which will be evidenced within this report) the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee Members and Officers have worked hard to produce some key achievements during this last year.

As well as monitoring and supporting the provision of the Council's own "in-house" services, the scrutiny function is required to offer a challenge to local Health Service Commissioners and Providers, ensuring local accountability, and oversee Health Service re-configurations. Given the current background of change faced by the Health Service community, it is anticipated that this area will continue to take up a large part of the Improvement and Scrutiny workload for the foreseeable future.

Other legislative requirements placed upon Improvement and Scrutiny include maintaining an overview of the development of the County's Flood Risk Management Strategy and a number of other services provided by the County Council and our partners to prevent Crime and Disorder.

It is important to note that Improvement and Scrutiny aligns its work to the aims and objectives of the Council Plan - and also towards helping the Executive address the budget pressures with which we are currently faced. In these difficult times of diminishing resources and increasing service pressures, I consider Improvement and Scrutiny to be a valuable asset to the County Council - and our partners in the local public and voluntary sectors.

It is clear that the Improvement and Scrutiny Committees and their support officers have a very wide-ranging and diverse portfolio of responsibilities and it is to their credit that they have performed this role rigorously and with professionalism. I look forward to their continued challenge and support over the forthcoming years.



## Key achievements in Improvement and Scrutiny in 2013/14

Despite the period of change and the availability of officer support for the scrutiny function, the breadth and depth of the involvement of scrutiny in the Council's services over this period has been considerable. Here are some examples:

**Supported the Director of Property Services in streamlining the Council's property portfolio with a review of the Authority's non-operational property.**

**Recognition by OfSTED, during their inspection of the Authority's Safeguarding services, that the involvement of Scrutiny is making a valuable contribution to the quality of the service.**

**Approval of the Police and Crime Plan, and its on-going scrutiny, to ensure the Police and Crime Commissioner delivers the stated objectives.**

**The introduction of a number of initiatives - including a staff/peer support group- following consultation on our employees' experiences of domestic violence.**

**Highlighting the concerns of local people to Health Service providers during a temporary relocation of hospital facilities so that appropriate measures were put in place.**

## How does Improvement and Scrutiny work?

The Council's four Improvement and Scrutiny (I & S) Committees are each allocated 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 with recommendations to the Committee, which in turn, once approved, forwards them to Cabinet for consideration.

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

## Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — People

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

In the past 12 months, the Committee has:

- Initiated two reviews on equality, diversity and inclusion. One review is focusing on equality of opportunity in the recruitment and selection process. The other is looking at how the Authority considers equality, diversity and inclusion in the decision making process.
- Implemented a standing item looking at how the Authority delivers its safeguarding duties. A working group has been established, with terms of reference and a work programme, and meets monthly. Additionally, the Committee receives regular updates on the Authority's safeguarding performance.
- Implemented a standing item on receiving updates on what the residents of Derbyshire are saying about social care services from Healthwatch Derbyshire.
- Contributed to the recent OfSTED inspection of the Council's services for vulnerable and looked-after children which resulted in a "Good" rating.
- Agreed to a review of how the Authority will manage the change of eligibility thresholds for people receiving adult social care.
- Identified a number of reviews which will be prioritised and scoped out as part of the work programme going forward for the next two years.





## Example of good practice: Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding services

Cllr Kevin Gillott, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

*“Between 19 November and 11 December 2013, OfSTED carried out an inspection of the County Council’s services to Children in Need of Help and Protection, Looked After Children and Care Leavers. During this time the CAYA department officers, my Deputy Cabinet Members and I were involved in the intense programme of visits, meetings and requests for information which finally resulted in a “Good” rating for the Service.*

*As part of the process, Ofsted inspectors interviewed Cllr Diane Charles, Chair of the I & S People Committee and referred to Minutes and Reports from meetings of the Committee. The I & S People Committee has, over the last year, established a standing working group to oversee services that safeguard our children and Members of the Committee have taken an active role in ensuring the best possible support for Derbyshire’s cared for children.*

*The OfSTED report, in designating our service as “Good” referred to the Scrutiny role in that “....**The Council and its partners make good use of external and internal scrutiny**.....”*

*I wish to thank the Members of the I& S People Committee for their work so far and look forward to their continued challenge and support in the future”.*



## Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Places

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

In 2013/14 our Committee;

- Completed a staff survey on Domestic Violence and Abuse (DV/A) which sought the views of employees who had been, or were, victims of DV/A. Responses allowed us to recommend a number of measures to support staff and we are extremely grateful to those who took part in this very sensitive consultation
- Worked with the Council's Flood Risk Manager and his team as part of the process to develop a Flood Risk Management Strategy for the County (this work is on-going)
- Participated in a consultation by the HM Courts & Tribunals Service on their proposed reconfiguration of the Courts service in Derbyshire. We took evidence from the HMCTS senior staff, local Magistrates and the County Council's legal services team in order to assess the impact of the proposals and submit a response on behalf of the County Council
- We are about to begin a review of the highways maintenance and inspection process



## Example of good practice: Flood Management Strategy

**James Biddlestone, Flood Risk and Transport Asset Management, Derbyshire County Council**

*"I have been requested to present to, and work alongside, the Improvement and Scrutiny—Places Committee over recent months. I am able to say that they have provided an informed and supportive view to the way in which Derbyshire County Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, undertakes its legislative duties.*

*Most recently, a working group has been established which will help shape Derbyshire County Council's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The Committee's involvement is a legal requirement of the process and we are very pleased to have the Members working with us in this respect"*

## 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 Non-Operation property which helped inform a streamlining process being undertaken by the Director of Property. Key outcomes included the closer involvement of local Members in deciding the future of some of our non-operational land and premises and increased joint-working with District and Borough Councils to maximise the use of Council owned premises for social and community purposes.
- Undertook a review of Sustainable Energy and the potential for the County Council to develop its own schemes. The review encouraged the investigation of potential "green energy" projects and recommended the establishment of a dedicated officer group to ensure the Council's legal, financial and property management interests were protected.
- The Committee is about to begin a review of Credit Unions within the county.





## Example of good practice: Review of non-operational property

**Simon West, Deputy Director of Property, Derbyshire County Council**

*“The role of the I & S Resources Committee in reviewing the Council’s non-operational property portfolio has assisted in bringing forward the consideration for disposal of property that does not contribute to the delivery of Council Services.*

*Work has been undertaken between the Committee and officers, and this collaborative working has helped in identifying the issues and providing the appropriate solutions. This has resulted in a set of recommendations being put forward to Cabinet which will bring changes to the Council’s property portfolio and should deliver Capital Receipts and Revenue savings, without impacting on service delivery.”*

**Simon Allsop, Director of Finance/Treasurer – Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service**

*“During 2013/14, the Fire and Rescue Authority consulted on proposals to close and relocate some fire and rescue stations. We consulted with the County Council who, with the support and recommendation of the Council’s Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Resources, identified opportunities to work together in the future to share premises.*

*As part of the Chief Executives meeting and County wide Director of Finance meetings, the Fire Authority is sharing information on its plans and is looking at mapping its property alongside that of its partners to identify opportunities. The Fire and Rescue Service already use some of the office space at County Hall in working together with the Community Safety team.”*

## Improvement and Scrutiny Committee — Health

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

In the past 12 months, the Committee has;

- Undertaken a Select Committee style session on the situation pertaining to Heanor Hospital. This meeting took evidence from “expert witnesses” from the CCG and Health Service provider as well as local Members and Healthwatch, who were able to demonstrate local concerns. The session resulted in temporary initiatives being agreed with the CCG/Providers in the interim and the Committee will continue to monitor progress in developing services at Heanor.
- Organised a major stakeholder event to bring together all the five CCGs and the numerous health services providers operating in the county. The event enabled the Committee members to ascertain “who does what, and where” and also was an opportunity to emphasise the Health Service community’s obligations to the Health Scrutiny Committee
- We have recently been offered the opportunity to work with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) and Sanofi Pasteur MSD on a “Return on Investment” (ROI) review of the take up off Immunisation /Vaccination. This will look specifically at ‘Flu and HPV. We will be undertaking this review between July and December 2014 and the result will be shared nationwide by the CfPS



## Example of good practice: Consultation on service changes to Heanor Hospital

Helen Dillistone – Director of Corporate Development, South Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

*“The CCG was invited to meet with the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee to provide details of the service developments relating to Heanor Hospital.*

***The meeting was extremely productive, and one of the best committee meetings we have attended.*** *The meeting provided the CCG with an opportunity to discuss the background and context, and share latest developments with the Councillors. The meeting also enabled the CCG to provide assurance to the Committee that it is developing plans following due process and national consultation guidance.*

*The CCG received a number of helpful comments and constructive challenge which has enabled us to further our thinking to ensure the best possible health services are delivered to the population of Heanor.*

*The CCG welcomes the positive and helpful relationship it is building with Members of the Committee and Officers, and values the important role the Committee plays in helping the CCG to shape local commissioning decisions and associated engagement processes.”*



## Police and Crime Panel

### Cllr Paul Smith, Chair of the Police and Crime Panel

In the past 12 months, the Panel has;

- Approved the Police and Crime Plan from the Police and Crime Commissioner of Derbyshire.
- Approved the precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner for 2014/15.
- Approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2012/13.
- Scrutinised the performance of the Police and Crime Commissioner through on going Panel meetings including progress made in each Police and Crime Plan objective.
- Established a task and finish group, chaired by an independent panel member, to develop a performance framework to ensure reporting is timely and of value.
- Spent a day at Derbyshire Police Headquarters, Ripley, to see the whole range of services which the Force delivers.
- Developed relationships and shared best practice through the East Midlands and England Police and Crime Panel Networks.





## Improvement and Scrutiny going forward

Here are some examples of work our Committees are undertaking in 2014/15 and beyond.

**A review of the impact on people who are no longer eligible for adult social care support due to changes in the thresholds from Higher-Moderate to Severe.**

**A review of the highways inspection process.**

**A review of the County's Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to measure how effective it is and how it compares with other HWBs around the country.**

**A review of Credit Unions to see how people can be best supported in the current economic climate and whether the Trusted Trader Scheme can be extended.**

**Committees will make recommendations to Cabinet on equality and diversity in recruitment and selection and decision making.**

## 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

I & S Committee - Health

I & S Committee - Resources



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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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