

# **County Council – 19 May 2016**

## **Outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Work January – March 2016**

### **Recommendation**

- a) That County Council reflects on the outcomes and impact of overview and scrutiny over the three months from January – March 2016 and identifies areas of good practice, learning and opportunities for development that will continue to enhance the work and impact of scrutiny going forward.

### **Report of the Chairman of Corporate Review Committee**

#### **Background**

1. This report provides an overview of scrutiny work that has been undertaken since January 2016, highlighting how the Select Committees have added value to the democratic process and addressed the priorities of the County Council and its partners. This period clearly illustrates how early involvement with Members improves outcomes and promotes good working relationships with external partners. The Select Committees have scrutinised some of the current issues that the County Council has identified as key priorities, such as the Better Care Fund.

#### **Corporate Review Committee**

2. The Committee met on 8 February and considered the call-in of the Cabinet decision on the future model for Shugborough estate. Cabinet had taken a delegated decision to surrender the lease that had been taken out on the Shugborough estate in 1966 and had agreed to enter into two leases for the Walled Garden and the County Museum. The Cabinet decision had been called in over concerns about value for money, details of the two further leases and the lack of pre-decision scrutiny or Member involvement. The Committee expressed concern that this decision had not been discussed with Members before being agreed and felt that the process would have benefited from a wider input from Members with more detail provided on a confidential basis. The Committee recommended that Members have ongoing involvement in the future of Shugborough with the Corporate Review Committee monitoring the financial aspects and the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee scrutinising future decisions regarding the outdoor education centre, the walled garden and the county museum and reviewing performance management issues in regard to Shugborough with the National Trust.
3. Corporate Review were also presented with the Corporate Annual Report for Complaints (and Compliments) for 2014-15 and were informed that the number of complaints had increased from the previous year; it was suggested that this could be attributed in part to the various methods that have been made available to residents to register a complaint. Members requested that they be provided with a more detailed breakdown of compliments for further information and scrutiny.

4. Members were presented with the Story of Staffordshire and Performance update at their meeting on 22 February and identified a need for further scrutiny on the causes of deprivation. The Corporate Review Committee recommended that the Chair of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee consider adding one of the four underlying causes of deprivation, poor and overcrowded housing, to their Work Programme to allow closer scrutiny. The Committee received the Business Plan for 2016 to 2017 and requested that they be informed of local survey work in their divisions to aid engagement with communities and residents.

### **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee**

5. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee met on 22 January to consider School Improvement and Attainment in Staffordshire and Education Support Services. Members were informed that Staffordshire showed a positive direction of travel in terms of the percentage of schools judged as Good or Outstanding for the period September 2014 to August 2015. The Committee requested that future reports include comparison figures for statistical neighbours and the national average, to help Members understand the context of attainment in Staffordshire. Members recommended that further scrutiny take place when details of the Area Review undertaken to agree a sustainable way forward for Further Education were available in six month's time. This will allow Members to examine in detail the impact that the changes to schools' status will have on the Stafford Collegiate and Staffordshire's Further Education offer. The Committee received information on Education Support Services, Commissioning and Contract Performance and it was agreed that further information and scrutiny was required on the process of support to Electively Home Educated and the Entrust KPIs. A working group has been set up to consider the type of information the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee would like to see reported for future scrutiny, taking account of the current review of KPIs .
6. On 4 March the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee received an update on Adult and Community Learning. Key areas of deprivation had been identified to receive targeted service provision, Members recommended that they be included in consultation on any review of the local priority areas going forward, as it was agreed that Members are well placed to advise where the areas of deprivation were within the area they represent. The Committee also recommended that links with this work are improved with Public Health to help ensure appropriate courses are offered to support healthy living and promote good multi-agency working. Whilst the number of male participants in ACL in Staffordshire is higher than the national average, this was identified as an area for further work, partly through developing the range of courses offered. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee also received the 2014/15 Autumn and Spring terms' attendance report and heard details of the progress of the officer attendance working group that had been established to consider the range of issues around school attendance. Members requested that they receive further information on the work with unaccompanied young asylum seekers in future reports and that verified figures on exclusions be forwarded to Members as soon as these were available. Members congratulated officers on the progress that had been made to date and requested that further progress of the

officer working group on attendance be reported back to the Select Committee in six month's time. The Committee were presented with the Strategy on Commemorations for the Great War Centennial and were informed that all projects around the Centennial had been self funding through a range of grants. Members congratulated officers on the excellent work so far and endorsed the work programme going forward to 2019. The Committee also received information on the proposed relocation of Lichfield Library. Members requested clarification on the size of the proposed new site for the library and the IT resources that would be available for use by the public. Members recommended the inclusion of a break clause in the lease form part of negotiations with Lichfield Diocese but supported the proposal overall.

7. A small Working Group of Members (of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee) have met to consider the performance management of those services that fall within the purview of the Committee, currently supplied by Entrust. Members have met on two occasions and will report their findings to the June meeting of the Select Committee.

### **Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee**

8. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee continued its scrutiny of the work to address Child Sexual Exploitation in Staffordshire and received an update at their meeting on 18 January. The Cabinet Member, County Council officers and representatives from Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board attended the meeting to inform Members of the progress made in relation to the multi-agency plans. The Committee agreed to add the issue of modern slavery, including adult exploitation, to their work programme and it was decided that a single item meeting would be held on 4 April to focus on this issue and allow in-depth scrutiny by the Committee Members. Following previous scrutiny by the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee on the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation, a draft common procedure for ensuring that someone could not apply for a taxi licence under a fraudulent name, or who had been refused a taxi licence by one authority could not apply for a licence with a neighbouring authority, had been shared with all of the District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent City Council. The standardised policy would be amended slightly to meet individual circumstances but covered all concerns that the Committee had previously raised on this issue and was beginning to work. Members of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee also received an update on the re-commissioning of domestic violence services, following an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspection of Constabulary (HMIC) of Staffordshire Police Force in December 2015. The Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel attended the meeting to share the outcomes of discussions with the Police and Crime and Commissioner and to inform Members of the actions that were being taken to make sure that County wide safety measures were in place. The Committee also considered an update on the Council's review of the Supporting People Programme. Members highlighted the importance of services for male victims of abuse and the need for providers to discuss changes with their residents in a timely way.

9. At their meeting on 7 March, Members of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee received an update on the Best Start Strategy. Prior to this meeting, all Committee Members had had the opportunity to visit their local Children's Centre and find out more about the current Early Years offer in their division. Members who had visited a Children's Centre had identified concerns regarding the assessment process and support for parents with children with additional needs and the provision of antenatal support groups. Members also expressed concern that Children's Centres needed to provide family support, not just childcare, but that there was an inconsistent approach to this across the county. The Committee recommended Open Days at the Centres and suggested that there should be a structured approach to encouraging new people in the area to access the Children's Centre. The Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety agreed to raise the possibility of Open Days at the County Advisory Board and would encourage the Chairs of the District Advisory Boards to put these in place next year. The Select Committee requested to be provided with more information on the County Council's Early Years performance to aid scrutiny. Saving Lives: Staffordshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015/16 – 2020/21 was presented to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee. Members raised concerns that the number of suicides in Staffordshire was rising, in reverse of the national trend. The Committee acknowledged that a strategy was currently being developed but Members felt that Staffordshire was currently some way off this and it was important to gain a greater understanding of the causes to bring about the relevant actions. It was agreed that the joint implementation plan would be made available to the Members of the Select Committee once agreed and ratified. A report on the Safeguarding Implications of the Care Act was presented to Members, which provided an overview around adult safeguarding and considered whether there had been any significant changes in reporting since the Care Act had been introduced. Members questioned care in nursing homes and multi-agency responses.

### **Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee**

10. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee continued its in-depth scrutiny of the local NHS and partnership trusts and held a further two accountability sessions in January and March. These sessions give Members of the Committee, District and Borough Members and the public the opportunity to question senior NHS Trust managers and ensure that detailed information of the Trusts' progress is publically available through self-assessment reports and the views expressed by the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch Staffordshire, CCGs and the commissioners of services.
11. The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust attended an Accountability Session on 20 January. Their self assessment report referred to the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of the Trust in November 2015 and the subsequent issuing of a warning notice under Section 29A of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. Work had and was being undertaken to address the issues raised and the Trust would report back to the CQC by the 29 February 2016 and keep the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee informed of progress. Members queried staff sickness rates, recruitment and retention of staff and sought reassurances about the support for the workforce.

12. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee held an Accountability Session with representatives of the Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on 9 March. The Acting Chief Executive and colleagues presented the Trusts self-assessment report to the Committee and gave an overview of the key aspects. The team explained the process to appoint a new Chair and Chief Executive following the departure of the Chief Executive. Detail was also provided in relation to the trusts performance against key and national performance indicators.
13. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee met on 19 January and considered a report detailing the Outcomes of the Health and Wellbeing Board, which set out progress made against the statutory responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board, performance against priorities and proposed interface between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee. Members questioned the Co-Chairs in respect of a number of issues that included re alignment of services, finance, elective admissions for surgery, prevention and relationships with the CCGs. A proposed relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee for future scrutiny was agreed. The Committee received a progress update on the Better Care Fund and it was agreed that Members would continue to monitor and scrutinise this issues as one of the County Council's main priorities. Following their meeting on 21 September 2015, Members requested that they receive an update following the public consultation in relation to the opening hours of the Minor Injuries Unit at Sir Robert Peel Hospital, Tamworth and Samuel Johnson Hospital, Lichfield. Members were informed that changes had been made to the opening hours as a result of feedback received during the public consultation.
14. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee received a report from the Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing on the Care Act 2014 at their meeting on 2 February. This report detailed the principals enshrined in the act to empower people, carers and families to access care and support necessary to live an independent life in the community, and informed Members of the new legal responsibilities for local authorities to cooperate with partners. Members queried the financial implications for the County Council and the criteria that would have to be met by residents to access services. As requested, following the meeting, the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee were provided with the Eligibility Criteria and use of services following the implementation of Phase I of the Care Act 2014.

### **Working Groups**

15. In addition to these full Select Committee work programmes, over the three month period between January and March 2016, focused, in-depth scrutiny took place on areas of high public interest in the form of working groups. These give the chance for Members to scrutinise a topic in high-detail aided by senior officers.
16. The final report of the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services Working Group was presented to the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee, the

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee. This had been a cross-Committee working group that was established to consider the implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Staffordshire 'Mental Health is Everybody's Business' (the adult strategy) and the Strategy for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children and Young People from Birth to 18 Years Integrated Commissioning Strategy 2014 – 2017 (the children's strategy). The report presented the conclusions and recommendations of the working group, which were endorsed by the Committee Members. Members requested that the report be forwarded to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cabinet. In addition, Members also recommended that the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills encourage schools to develop their own mental health strategies.

17. Corporate Review Committee were presented with the final report of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016 – 2021 Working Group. The report contained detail on the financial difficulties faced by the Council and the key risks that Members felt needed to be highlighted. The Committee agreed the content of the report and that it should be submitted to Cabinet as part of their budget considerations. The Chairman of the Working Group was asked to present the report in person at the Cabinet meeting on 3 February when officers and Members welcomed the robust scrutiny of the budget that has been undertaken by the Working Group as it provides greater transparency and in-depth detail of the finances of the Council's key projects. The work that this Working Group undertakes helps to make the annual budget and medium term financial planning processes open and transparent to the public. All County Councillors have a duty to look after the interests of local tax payers in the management of the Council's resources and this Working Group provides the opportunity for intensive investigation.
18. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Working Group on Low Level Neglect met for the first time on 2 March, to consider the identification and response to low level neglect of children under the age of five years. Members had the opportunity to consider the draft Early Help Strategy and explored the role and responsibilities of childcare providers. The Working Group received presentations from representatives from the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust on the role of the midwife, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust on the role of the Health Visitor and Trent and Dove Housing on the role of housing associations. The Working Group met again on 23 March to consider the risk factors commonly present in the lives of children who experience neglect. The final report and recommendations of the Low Level Neglect Working Group will be presented to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee on 8 June.
19. Following the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee Inquiry Day in relation to the proposed consultation on Hearing Aids Policy, the South Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups sent a response, which detailed their decision not to proceed at this time and undertake a review of the prioritisation. The Committee agreed to write to the North Staffordshire CCG to review their decision following this outcome and request information on how the CCG will

gather evidence and measure the impact on residents after adopting the new policy. This is another example of Members carrying out scrutiny on areas that the public feel strongly about and ensuring that members of the public are given the opportunity to feed into the work carried out on these areas.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel**

20. The Corporate Parenting Panel enables the Council to adequately fulfil its collective responsibility to achieve good parenting for all children in their care. It helps to ensure that the services provided to children and young people looked after by the County Council are of good quality and meet their needs. The Corporate Parenting Panel aims to provide strategic leadership and hold partners to account for performance against strategies to improve all outcomes for Looked After Children and young people. The Panel Members also have the objective to act as advocates for Looked After Children and young people and to provide an advisory and advocacy function to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for children on behalf of Looked After Children and young people, currently the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Safety.

21. During the period between January and March 2016, the Panel met three times to monitor the following areas of work:

- Issues Affecting Care Leavers
- Regionalising Adoption
- Review of Placements and Residential
- Health of Looked after Children
- Fostering Review Update
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy

### **Audit and Standards Committee**

22. The Audit and Standards Committee provides independent assurances of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performances to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and oversees the financial reporting process. The Committee is also responsible for matters relating to standards of Member conduct, including dealing with any complaints.

23. The Committee met on 21 March and considered annual reports on Information Governance and Members Standards, and received the external audit plans for the County Council and the Staffordshire Pensions Fund. In relation to the County Council's Audit Plan for 2015/16, the Members of the Committee recommended that a letter be sent from the Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee to the Leader of the Council proposing the appointment of a Cabinet Member without a portfolio of spend to monitor the County Council's finances, which would lead to greater transparency and would engineer a more resilient Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Leader of the Council has thanked the Committee for their thorough scrutiny of the Audit Plan.

## Looking Ahead

24. It is clear that each of the Select Committees have continued a full work programme of activity with positive, effective outcomes, aided by the ongoing engagement with the Cabinet Members on service reviews and developments.
25. Committee Work Programmes focus on the Council's Commissioning Plans and there are opportunities to support the Council to achieve these plans through robust and proactive pre-decision scrutiny. As the Council reaffirms its key priorities for 2016/17 Corporate Review and the other Select Committees will need to consider the extent to which these priorities are reflected in select committee work programmes.
26. To be effective Select Committees need to continue to be:
- Rigorous in identifying issues in a timely way for which it has a genuine opportunity to feed in new insight into the development of services for the communities of Staffordshire and for which it has the time and capacity to have an impact. Members are reminded of the existence of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions as a useful tool in identifying forthcoming decisions for which the Select Committees may have an interest in investigating further.
  - Consider wide ranging evidence, where appropriate, not solely relying on information presented by Directors but also evidence from the wider engagement of frontline staff, service users and the public to help inform the evidence base of scrutiny investigations. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee continues to seek the views of commissioners, the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch Staffordshire in advance of Joint Health Accountability Sessions. This ensures that Members and the public are well equipped to scrutinise the performance of services with the supporting evidence to challenge the Trusts.

## Link to Strategic Plan

The Select Committee work programmes have produced recommendations that have directly contributed to the Council's strategic priorities.

## Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

This is a summary of the work programmes of all of the Select Committees from January – March 2016.

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