

County Council – 15 February 2018

Outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Work May – December 2017

Recommendation

That County Council reflects on the outcomes and impact of overview and scrutiny from May - December 2017 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

Background

1. This report provides an overview of scrutiny work that has been undertaken since May 2017, highlighting how the Select Committees have added value to the democratic process and addressed the priorities of the County Council and its partners.
2. Following the County Council elections, the Chairmanship and individual Membership of the Select Committees was agreed at the Annual General meeting of the County Council on 25 May 2017.

Corporate Review



Councillor David Brookes
Chairman of Corporate Review

3. On the 12 July 2017, Corporate Review considered introductory presentations on the areas within the Committee's remit. Details of the Council's **Total Performance Management Framework** and the quarterly reports submitted on **Performance and Delivery Progress** were discussed. The Committee's Work Programme for the year was examined and agreed.
4. On the 29 August 2017 Corporate Review considered the **Performance and Delivery Progress report** for April – June 2017. Members raised a number of issues including employment, the relative value of jobs within the County and the investment undertaken by the Council, skills profile and requirements, re-training, and priorities within Health Care, in particular End of Life Care, Cancer Care and Mental Health. In November, the Leader updated Members on the Performance and Delivery Report for July-September 2017 and Members again scrutinised various aspects of the report, questioning the pace of performance and suggesting that a more challenging local benchmark set in regard to childhood obesity.

5. At the 3 November 2017 meeting, Corporate Review scrutinised the **Penda Property Partnership (PPP)** including a revised Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP). The Penda Property Partnership was formally established between the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Kier in June 2015, as an innovative approach to enable the council and the PCC to maximise the opportunities available from land and property assets to support the delivery of outcomes and priorities. The Cabinet Member explained that at the last Board meeting the PCC had decided not to sit at the table. The PPP would continue to work with the PCC to dispose of sites on the Strategic Asset Management Plan. The reason behind the decision had been that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had understood that they had “the general power of competence” under the Localism Act 2011, which gave them wider powers in regard to disposal of their assets. However, this had proved to not be the case. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would be welcome to return to the Board at any time in the future. Members asked what impact this had on the Partnership’s finance and resources and the Cabinet Member reassured Members that it had no financial impact. Members questioned the PPP’s ambition in regard to affordable, decent housing and links to borough and district council planning processes; the occupation of empty properties by guardians; the additional benefits of the relationship with Kier and governance and risk management. It was confirmed that a new Property Sub-Committee would be meeting for the first time in December. Members requested that the SAMP be amended to distinguish those properties that were being disposed of in-house as part of the capital receipts programme from those being disposed of through the Partnership; that the Green rating indicator in the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating be applied only when income had been received and that activity associated with Town Deals be acknowledged in the SAMP. An item on **Town Deals** will be scrutinised in April 2018.
6. Corporate Review on the 27 November 2017 examined the **People Helping People (PHP)** programme. The Committee considered the first year of PHP which had focussed on laying the foundations for a fundamental redesign of how the Council worked and promoting innovative ways of managing demand and working with communities. The Committee were invited to influence how the second year could be delivered and to shape the work underway to ensure Members were at the forefront of establishing a new way of working and engaging with local communities. Members commented on the difficulty that some parishes were having to resource the proposed initiatives and the mixed reception that the concept of PHP was having in some parts of Staffordshire. It was suggested that more work needed to be done to increase the pace and scale of the PHP initiative in order to meet the Council’s financial challenges. Members requested that they be fully involved in discussions regarding community assets. The Cabinet Member responded that the Cabinet Support Members (CSMs) initiative was still in its infancy and agreed to take the issue regarding local Member involvement back to a meeting with the CSMs. Reference was made to the development of a social prescribing model (non-clinical services) in year two and it was confirmed that discussions had taken place with individual willing GPs. Committee Members suggested that it would be better to take this initiative forward with all GPs through a single point of access. Members asked for more

performance information on the impact that the PHP initiative countywide and broken down by Districts.

7. The **Corporate Annual Report for Complaints** was also presented to the Committee in November. Members focussed on the learning that had been taken from complaints.
8. Executive decisions made by the Cabinet, by Cabinet Members under delegated powers or by other bodies with executive powers may be 'called in' for reconsideration by Corporate Review. The Committee can either agree that the decision be implemented or refer the decision back, with recommendations, to Cabinet or the relevant decision maker. Corporate Review met on the 8 August 2017 to consider a **Call In** on the Cabinet decision relating to the **Public Analyst and Scientific Services** and on the 5 December 2017 to consider the **Call In** regarding revised **Local Supported Bus Services**. Both matters are discussed in more detail at paragraphs 14-16 and 28-29 within this report.

Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group

9. In August Corporate Review considered proposals for scrutiny of the **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**. The Director of Finance highlighted the value of this work.
10. The MTFS Working Group of Corporate Review is responsible for providing challenge during the development of the Council's MTFS and the annual budget and council tax setting process. The work of scrutiny helps to ensure that the Cabinet develops a good and balanced budget.
11. The working group, Chaired by Councillor Colin Greatorex, has asked searching questions around innovation, transformation, efficiencies and aspirations. The current MTFS is informed by a focus on four 'enablers': Commercialism; Community Capacity Building; Demand Management and Digital designed to guide commissioning priorities. The Working Group felt that scrutiny in 2017-18 should align itself with these priorities whilst maintaining a focus on financial aspects.
12. Between 12 October and 21 December, the Working Group met seven times to interview, individually, those Cabinet Members with responsibility for the enablers as well as the Leader of the Council, the Community Cabinet Support Members (jointly) and the County Council's External Auditors. Subsequently, the Working Group met again in January 2018 and will report back their findings to Corporate Review on the 25 January 2018.
13. It is poignant to note that Robbie Marshall was one of the Working Group at the start of this year's process. He was very supportive of the scrutiny process before his untimely death in November and we will miss his cheery and positive nature.

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee



Councillor Ian Parry
Chairman Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

14. To date the Committee has met on five occasions this municipal year.
15. In July and November the Committee considered the **Supported Bus Network**. It was initially reported in July that there would be public consultation on how the available budget for supporting bus services in Staffordshire from 2018/19 onwards could be best spent and Members were invited to take note of the consultation and consider how all target groups could be encouraged to respond. Members expressed concerns about the impact of the proposals on rural communities; the impact on the economy of reduced connectivity for students and employees; the need to promote public transport and the potential impact on the environment of increased car journeys. The Cabinet Member agreed that green travel should be promoted and undertook to identify pockets of rural isolation and encourage community and voluntary car schemes by pump priming schemes if necessary. It was agreed that further detail on rural impact should be given in the community impact assessment. Members discussed the relationship between the County Council and bus operators and the need to promote services using new technologies and free newsletters and encourage bus operators to be more innovative in their approach – an example of encouraging them to use smaller buses on some routes was given. It was also suggested that bus travel for employees should be part of the consideration when new business parks are developed.
16. On the 14 November 2017 the Committee again considered the proposals regarding the Supported Bus Network following a period of public consultation and prior to a decision by Cabinet. In response to Members concerns, in particular the impact on social isolation, the Cabinet Member assured the Committee that he would give priority to addressing the matter. Members suggested that the Cabinet Member discuss with bus companies how they may adopt a more commercial approach and come forward with details of how they planned to market their services and that the County Council worked with the bus companies to encourage local transport schemes. It was suggested that more work was needed to encourage volunteers, making volunteering more attractive, lobbying MPs to ask them to remove potential legal obstacles and developing the My Staffs App to include details of community transport schemes with Community Support Members taking this forward. In regard to the consultation, Members considered that there could be an environmental impact as a consequence. Members also proposed that the Cabinet Member lobby MPs to propose changes to Section 19 Permits of the Transport Act 1985 that require not for profit passenger drivers to have the same permits as bus operators, as this stifled innovation. Disappointment at the low level of responses to the consultation from MPs and local councils was expressed.

17. Corporate Review met on the 5 December to consider the **Call In** of the Cabinet decision taken on 15 November 2017, that following a public consultation, Option 1 (revised local **supported bus services** (no Connect or Demand Responsive Services). The item was Called In by Councillor Woodward who argued that the matter should be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration as there had been insufficient research into opportunities to develop community-based transport schemes; that innovative ways of using the total transport budget and the Council's in-house transport facilities had not been explored, and concern had been expressed regarding the impact of the proposed changes on the most vulnerable residents and on local businesses. The Cabinet Member agreed to undertake further work with bus operators prior to April 2018 to identify if the remaining agreed supported bus network (or the commercial bus network) could be adjusted to provide a level of connectivity to communities impacted by bus service reductions and it was confirmed that further work had begun with voluntary agencies to attempt to enhance and develop community transport and voluntary transport options. Members expressed disappointment at the low rate of responses from borough and district councils and local MPs. Following a vote by the Committee it was agreed that the decision be implemented as set out in the original Decision Notice. The impact of the changes will be scrutinised going forward.
18. On the 12 September 2017 the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee considered **Staffordshire's Libraries' Strategy**. The report detailed the current and proposed Library Offer and Members' views were sought on the principles to determine where community management or self-service should be an option and on the principles proposed for the future planning of the mobile and travelling library service. It was anticipated that proposals would go to Cabinet in October and a period of informal consultation commence in November/December 2017 followed by public consultation commencing in January 2018. Principles for the Mobile and Travelling Library Service were presented. Members reflected on the experiences in their own areas and expressed concerns regarding the reduction in the level of service, fall in visits and issues and raised public safety concerns regarding the self-service proposal. A further update on the future role and relationship with South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) was requested. Members in those areas where libraries were managed by SSSFT were encouraged to have discussions regarding the progress of the contract at their Local Member Priority Group Meetings. Members considered that there could be more imaginative solutions developed and were pleased to see libraries developed as community hubs. Attention was drawn to the impact that the mobile and travelling library service had on health and well-being, life skills and social cohesion.
19. At the meeting in September the Committee also scrutinised the **Safer Roads Partnership** which was set up in 2001 with the aim of bringing partner organisations together to reduce road casualties. An additional breakdown of accident data and fatalities by district was requested and it was queried if Community Speedwatch schemes could be expanded across Staffordshire, if they could be asked to detect and report drivers on mobile phones and if the Cabinet Member would lobby Westminster regarding road safety issues.

Members suggested an update on road safety in the Members' bulletin. This was included in the bulletin which was circulated on 3 October 2017.

20. A report on **flood risk management** (FRM) was presented to the Committee on 10 October 2017. This included the role of the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority for Staffordshire and the collaborative working arrangements for providing flood risk management services to Walsall, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Councils that yielded an income of £0.5m over 3 years. A bidding scheme was opening for communities to deliver small scale flood alleviation projects and applications for up to £5,000 per location could be used for works, studies or projects that mitigate known flood risk in an area. Further detail was given on land drainage work and the role of the local authority as statutory consultee for planning applications and how the Council prepared for a major flood event. Members received a schedule of priorities for the coming year that included the setting up of local flood risk management groups in some areas and asked for detail on timelines and outcomes. The impact of climate change and human behaviour on planning arrangements was noted. Members asked for details on the role of the local Member in the case of a major flood event and asked for a crib sheet that they could keep handy. The Committee were subsequently referred to pages 12-14 of the "Major Incident Guidance for Members" on the Members' Intranet, and were provided with an excerpt of the section relating specifically to their role. Members were concerned about the impact that local planning and development decisions were having on flooding and the relationship with Severn Trent and United Utilities. Members were asked to report local issues to the floodteam@staffordshire.gov.uk. The Cabinet Member suggested a further update on partnership working to involve the utility companies and agreed to review the role of the Council as a statutory consultee on planning matters.
21. A briefing note had been circulated to Members on the **Staffordshire History Centre** and Head of Archives was in attendance at the October meeting to answer questions. At the suggestion of the Committee a display on the History Centre was put on to coincide with Full Council in December 2017.
22. On the 14 November 2017 the Committee scrutinised the outcomes of the first phase of the **Countryside Estate Review** which aimed to effectively and sustainably manage the countryside sites going forward. In early 2015, ten alternative delivery models were consulted upon and refined down to four preferred options. It was reported that there had been some delays in the implementation of Phase 1 and the Cabinet Member proposed the introduction of a car parking strategy for all countryside sites; exploration of the offers at Marquis Drive Visitor Centre and Chasewater; evaluation of existing contracts to identify savings; review of the Countryside Stewardship Schemes and development and implementation of a new operating model for the management and maintenance on country parks and public rights of way to ensure that the MTFs saving of £0.6m was met by 2018/19. Members heard that steps were being taken to offset operating costs including the introduction of car parking charges on larger sites. Members queried what was being done to mitigate the impact of inconsiderate parking at Chasewater and it was confirmed that a number of regulatory measures were being introduced (and would be monitored) and a car

parking strategy was being developed. Members requested a more radical vision for both Chasewater and Marquis Drive and reflecting back on site visits undertaken in August 2015 expressed disappointment that nothing had been done to address the issue of the exclusivity of the catering contracts with Entrust and the impact this was having on innovation. The Cabinet Member elaborated that this matter was being reviewed as part of an overall review of the Entrust contract and that a management solution was being explored for the countryside estate. The Committee will receive an update on the matter in April 2018.

23. The Committee also considered in November the progress in regard to the implementation of recommendations made to the Cabinet Member following a review of **Infrastructure +** which is the strategic public-private partnership providing synergies in the holistic management and improvement of physical public infrastructure across Staffordshire, and received an update on the plans to spend the extra £20m of highways investment. A presentation on gully emptying was provided. Members reiterated the need to keep them involved and informed of the highways plans on their patch. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the work that had taken place to date and that more work needed to be done in this regard using My Staffs App where appropriate. Members wanted to see a more concerted approach to quality control. An update will be presented to the Committee in June 2018.

24. On the 15 December 2017 the Select Committee received a report and presentation on the work and progress of the Staffordshire County Council **Economic Growth Programme**. The Committee heard that despite a strong reliance on sectors which could have been particularly vulnerable to the recent economic downturn, Staffordshire's economy had coped well. The County Council was playing a key role in helping to achieve the ambitions of the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP), which was seeking to create 50,000 jobs and increase the Gross Value Added (GVA) of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire by 50% over a ten year period. Since the Programme commenced in 2014, eight employment generating projects with a total value of over £130 million had been completed, and Members considered the details of two case studies which had been successfully delivered as part of the Programme, Redhill Business Park and Bericote Four Ashes. Members queried the effects of leaving the EU and the possible loss of skilled people and raised concerns that young people moved out of the County to attend university and did not return. The Cabinet Member responded that it was important to create and promote an environment where well qualified people would want to stay, with the provision of affordable housing, well paid employment opportunities and accessible transport. In respect of the 19,000 increase in jobs between 2011-2016, a member queried what categories of employment these included and what proportion of these were considered to be better opportunities. It was confirmed that this figure included part-time employment, and that it was difficult to define "quality". It was agreed that more information on this, and how jobs created are measured, would be brought back to the Committee. Members queried the demand for additional business parks and it was confirmed that there was demand, but that once the sites were made available the responsibility for filling them lay with developers. In relation to overseas markets, members questioned the value of Trade Missions. The Cabinet Member explained that as

an alternative, the Property Garden Village at Swynnerton provided a good platform to showcase Staffordshire to a wider European audience.

25. In December the Committee also considered the work and progress of the **Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP (SSLEP) EU Funding programme** which formed an important and integral part of the County Council's Economic Growth Programme. The County Council was a key stakeholder in the EU Funding programme through the delivery of its own funded projects and programmes and also working with key external partners. The EU Funding programme was managed, on behalf of the SSLEP, on a day to day basis by the County Council's External Funding Manager, in partnership with Stoke on Trent City Council, working closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Members were informed that Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire's performance so far in committing and delivering EU Funding activities would place them well in preparing for future funding arrangements and that one of the options to replace EU Funding was the government's plan for a UK Prosperity Fund. The government's recently published Industrial Strategy had made some references to future funding arrangements beyond BREXIT and a Green Paper on the Shared Prosperity Fund was to be published early in 2018. Members raised a number of questions around the level of rigour which was applied to applications for funding, and stressed the importance of the need for measurable outcomes and were informed that the process was underpinned by the LEP Strategic Plan and criteria, it was heavily regulated, and that the ultimate penalty was that the funding would be clawed back. It was queried how the process did not contravene competition law, and Members were assured that an important consideration of applications was the displacement effect. Members also questioned whether any County Council taxpayers money was at risk, and were informed that the County Council's contribution to the process was in staff time. It was agreed that further updates be brought to the Committee on progress with the EU Funding programme, together with details of the preparations for continuing support from UK growth programmes once EU Funding is no longer available; and that case studies be brought to the meeting of the Select Committee to be held on 4 April 2018.

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee



Councillor John Francis
Chairman Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

26. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee has met formally on four occasions this municipal year.
27. On the 13 June 2017 the Committee considered a presentation on the remit of the Committee, including children's and adults safeguarding and community safety. It was felt that the issue of Localism had evolved into PHP and therefore

fell within the remit of Corporate Review who considered the progress of this initiative in November 2017.

28. At the 13 July 2017 meeting the Committee received an update on the **Children and Families System Transformation Programme**, which aims to address the challenges identified within the children's social care system and the broader children's system. A report was presented on the proposed changes to the operating model and associated working practices and progress of the pilot projects. Whilst supporting the system transformation and place-based approach, Members queried the identification of children and families who needed very early help; the risks associated with home schooling and the operation of District Advisory Boards. Further details on the pilot schemes were requested, including anonymised case studies, and it was commented that the offer of four to six weeks of support may not be long enough for some families. Members stated that they would prefer to have had pre-decision scrutiny on the matter, but asked that their comments be fed into the Children's Improvement Board meeting due to be held on 24 August 2017.
29. In July the Committee also discussed the proposed changes to the **Public Analyst and Scientific Services Laboratory**. Members had a number of concerns regarding the proposals, including, the long term cost and quality of using private laboratories to deliver the service and the lack of detail in the report on which the Committee could form a view, particularly around cost analyses. Members asked that other attempts be made to reduce costs including exploration of further redundancies and the possibility of a joint service with local authorities that still have a public analyst and scientific service. The Chairman had received a communication from Jeremy Lefroy MP requesting deferment of the decision pending consideration of a number of options that he had detailed. A summary of the Committee's discussion was sent to the Cabinet Member for consideration and Members asked that they be consulted again before a final decision was made.
30. Following the pre-decision scrutiny of proposed changes to the Public Analyst and Scientific Services Laboratory, Corporate Review met on 8 August 2017 to consider the **Call In** of the Cabinet decision relating to the services that the in-house laboratory should be closed to reduce the county council's operating costs and that the County Council should appoint a Public Analyst and Agricultural Analyst from any of the five remaining Local Authority laboratories or alternatively appoint one/more employed by an approved private sector company. The departments within the County Council which had used the in-house laboratory facility would use an external laboratory offering the best value for money. The Leader of the Opposition detailed reasons for the Call In. The concerns raised by Committee Members prior to the decision being made and the fact that confidential financial papers were referred to the Cabinet Member relating to the decision that had not been made available to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee. Following an in-depth discussion it was agreed that the decision should be implemented as set out in the original decision notice.
31. On the 26 September 2017 the Select Committee continued its ongoing scrutiny of the issue of **Child Sexual Exploitation** and viewed a DVD entitled "For the

Whole World to See”, produced by Burton and South Derbyshire College, which showed the possible consequences of sexting. Members consider this to be an excellent resource and undertook to encourage its use in schools as part of and recommended that the resource be included in governor training. The Select Committee also considered:

- the specific vulnerability of pupils within the LGBT community;
- the development of a new immersive 360 degree/smart phone technology app that gives a virtual reality video to help young people analyse the potential risks of a party;
- Catch22 providing low level CSE prevent interventions;
- the excellent comments from the recent Ofsted inspection of children’s services on the work with children at risk of CSE;
- the work undertaken by Staffordshire Police with regard to CSE, with Superintendent Tim Martin attending the meeting;
- the new process for the CSE Inter-authority audit on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group (SSRGB), where reports would be submitted to the Regulatory Services Group Manager, Stafford Borough Council, by 31 December, and a summary report from the audits being produced for the SSRGB meeting on 12 January 2018; and
- the Council’s passenger system and DBS checks for passenger escorts within this system.

32. In September the Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review into **Preventing Low Level Neglect of Children in Staffordshire** which was endorsed at the Select Committee meeting of 8 June 2016. The report was then submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People who at the Select Committee meeting of 8 July 2016 verbally confirmed he accepted the vast majority of the recommendations, with a formal written response and progress report on implementation of the recommendations at their 6 March 2017. Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his work in addressing the Working Group’s recommendations and requested an organogram showing the governance model for this area of work and identifying the relationship between the different groups involved.

33. The Committee on the 9 November 2017 scrutinised the **West Midlands Peer Review of Adult Safeguarding** including the actions taken in respect of the identified areas for development. The Select Committee considered in detail the changes to home care and subsequent tendering process. Members shared concerns over the difficulties created following an initial letter to service users and heard details of the activities undertaken to mitigate this. They commended the attempts to ensure continuity of care professionals for individual service users and the more open approach around the possible use of the Direct Payment System.

34. The Select Committee also considered in November **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards** (DoLS), having previously received details of DoLS in Staffordshire and the work undertaken to address the backlog created as a result of the 2014 Court judgement. The Committee were informed that nine Best Interest Assessors were now in place and that the backlog of high priority cases has been reduced. The rationale behind the decision to tackle high priority cases only was

discussed. Some concerns were expressed over potential costs over the possibility of mental health assessments no longer being funded by Health, which would be highlighted as a possible pressure in the MTFs going forward. The possible work load and cost implications of changes proposed in the Law Commission's published report and draft Bill from March 2017 which proposes changes to the legal framework of DoLS was scrutinised. In particular that this will be extended to settings outside of care homes and hospitals. However reassurances were provided that it was anticipated that no additional cost would be created as the assessments were expected to be undertaken through the existing case management structure.

35. The Select Committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to consider the **reasons for the increase in children coming into the care system, the impact this has on the Council and the mechanisms in place to prevent children coming into care**. After the preliminary work it was hoped that an inquiry day is scheduled to take place considering the issue on the 30 January 2018.
36. Outside of the formal meetings members who were new to the Select Committee undertook a visit to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to see first hand this multi agency partnership working, understand the rationale for creating this facility and the essential work undertaken there.
37. The Stronger Communities Strategy Group had produced a draft Community Safety Agreement which set out shared priorities between the County and District/Borough Councils. The Select Committee met informally in a workshop session on 31 July 2017 to review in detail the Draft Agreement. Their findings were then reported to the Strategy Group at their meeting of 13 September to inform the final Agreement.
38. On 14 August 2017 the Select Committee joined with members of the Police and Crime Panel and the Corporate Review Committee to consider the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) Local Business Case for joint governance of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Staffordshire. The consultation on the PCCs proposals closed at the beginning of September and this informal meeting gave an opportunity for Members to consider their response in detail. Their findings were formally reported to a special meeting of the County Council held on 31 August and helped inform the County Council response to the consultation.
39. At an informal meeting of 9 November the Select Committee met with the Customer Feedback and Complaints Manager to review the annual reports for both children and adult services. Members identified a number of key areas for further inquiry which they wished to be addressed at their December meeting. Following this meeting's cancellation (due to the adverse weather conditions) the Customer Feedback and Complaints Manager addressed the issues raised in a paper response, with Select Committee Members accepting the response with no further investigation requested.
40. Members have requested and received a number of briefing papers to help inform them on issues of interest, help manage their work programme and

identify whether further work was necessary. During this municipal year they have received briefing papers on: modern slavery; how to engage hard to reach communities; and the Community Safety Agreement (clarifying progress following their 31 July informal meeting).

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee



Councillor Johnny McMahon
Chairman Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

41. The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee has met on seven occasions over the last six months and has considered a range of County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioning intentions, proposed changes to NHS Trust services and performance results.
42. In June the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee considered the present health scrutiny arrangements in Staffordshire; received a presentation regarding the County Council's role in delivering health and care services in Staffordshire and gave preliminary consideration to their work programme.
43. The Committee received a presentation regarding the Outline Business Case for **strategic collaboration between Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** at the 4 July 2017 meeting. The Select Committee scrutinised the plans and requested that the Chief Executives of both Trusts attend a future meeting. In August 2017, Trust representatives attended the meeting to discuss the organisations' proposals for greater strategic collaboration and the Committee received clarification and assurances on the matters previously raised. The Committee considered the issue again in December when an update on progress with regard to proposals for greater strategic collaboration through the acquisition of Burton Hospitals NHS Trust by the Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was provided. The Trusts had prepared a Patients' Benefits Case setting out the anticipated clinical benefits of the proposals together with the risks from a no-change scenario. The specific service areas which had been highlighted as benefiting from the merger included hyper-acute stroke, cardiology, renal medicine, radiology and orthopaedics. Members sought clarification of the Trusts' plans relating to (i) the impact on staff recruitment and retention; (ii) their ability to treat more patients locally; (iii) the future of Community Hospitals in Lichfield and Tamworth; (iv) Staffordshire's representation on the combined Trust's Board; (v) the co-ordination between the Trust and specifically the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and; (vi) the measures being implemented to ensure a smooth organisational change. Following detailed discussion it was agreed that the Committee would keep a watching brief on developments and that the representatives would be invited to attend a further meeting of the Committee to update them on progress being made towards the anticipated commencement date for the new arrangements.

44. At the 7 August 2017 meeting the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) - “**Together We’re Better**” approach was discussed, which sought to improve healthcare provision within the budgets available through greater co-operation between local health partners and residents. The Committee considered the STP’s involvement with the Cancer Care Programme; End of Life Care Programme and the Community Hospitals Programmes, together with proposals to strengthen clinical engagement; recruit Physicians Associates to support General Practitioners and hospital doctors and; establish a re-deployment team to match existing staff with vacancies across the area. The Committee agreed to receive updates from the STP on progress on “Together We’re Better” on a quarterly basis. Progress will next be reported to the Committee on the 30 January 2018.
45. A report from the Accountable Officer of the North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group was shared at the August meeting, on the implementation of the **Discharge to Access Model**, where by people who no longer require an acute hospital bed are provided with short term support to enable them to be discharged to their own home (where appropriate) or to another community setting. The implications for the provision of Community Hospital beds were discussed.
46. A report of the Cabinet Member for Health Care and Wellbeing regarding the re-commissioning of the Healthwatch Staffordshire Service was presented at the August meeting. Every area of England has a local Healthwatch, provided by independent organisations who listen to people’s views and share them with those with the power to make local services better. The report was not published by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
47. At the Committee meeting on 18 September 2017 proposals by South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) to acquire Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust (SSoTP) under their ‘Better Together’ initiative were discussed. Members scrutinised the proposals and held the Chief Executive of SSSFT to account in respect of his Trust’s plans for service improvement and to achieve financial sustainability under the proposals. The merger of the two Trusts was anticipated to be completed by 1 April 2018 and the Committee requested that the Chief Executive attend the Committee meeting in March 2018 to report on progress.
48. At the Committee meeting on 13 October 2017, a presentation from the Head of Commissioning at Stafford and Surrounds, Cannock Chase, South East Staffordshire & Seisdon Peninsula, North Staffordshire and Stoke –on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) updating the Committee on progress with regard to the CCGs’ Cancer and End of Life Programmes. Since the initial report on the Programmes had been made to their January 2017 meeting, the decision had been taken by the CCG to pursue their aims through the West Midlands Cancer Alliance and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability Plan, respectively. The Committee scrutinised the reasons for the changes and revised commissioning intentions and sought a progress update, at a future meeting.

49. On the 6 November 2017 the Committee considered the Executive's response to the final report of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee Working Group on **Preventing Obesity**. The Committee debated the Action Plan for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and agreed to monitor progress against the Plan, on a six monthly exception basis, until all the recommendations had been actioned.
50. In November the Committee also scrutinised the development of options for the **configuration of health services in the north of the County**, particularly in relation to community hospital provision. The CCG's were embarking on a pre-consultation engagement process with key stakeholders in order to inform proposals for formal consultation in early 2018. The Committee agreed to participate in stakeholder events to be held on 23 January and 14 February 2018. Councillors Atkins, Jones and Robinson will be in attendance.
51. A verbal report from representatives of University Hospitals North Midlands was shared with the Committee in November regarding **temporary changes to staffing models at County Hospital**, Stafford, in response to demand for specialist services. The Committee received strong assurances from the Trust that services and patient care at Stafford would not be affected by the changes.
52. At the 1 December 2017 meeting the Chief Executive of **University Hospitals North Midlands NHS Trust** discussed efforts to **achieve financial sustainability** after the Trust had been placed into Financial Special Measures by NHS Improvement in March 2017. Members learned that whilst the Trust previously had one of the largest NHS deficits in the country at £119m, the anticipated outturn position for the current year was £70m. The Trust had a Financial Recovery Plan in place and a refreshed 2025 Vision, however various external factors were contributing to on-going planned deficits including (i) long standing structural issues in the wider health economy; (ii) delays in the transfer of patients beyond the hospital setting and; (iii) the end of Transitional funding to support the re-configuration of the acute sector on north Staffordshire. It is anticipated that the Chief Executive of the Trust will be attending the Committee in March 2018 to provide an update.

Corporate Parenting Panel

53. Although Corporate Parenting Panel is not an Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is the means by which the County Council fulfils its responsibilities as a corporate parent. The Panel brings together councillors, senior officers in children's social care and partner agencies to consider key issues which affect looked after children and on occasion refers matters to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny.
54. Corporate Parenting Panel met on the 19 June 2017 and received induction training. The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children Services gave an overview of the role of a corporate parent including the legislative background, the structure of the service and the expectation on corporate parents. All members of the County Council are corporate parents but members of the

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to be real champions for looked after children. The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel which had been refreshed in 2017 was approved and Members noted the Corporate Parenting Strategy and were encouraged to become familiar with it.

55. At the 18 July 2017 meeting, Members received a presentation on **First Response** – the county-wide contact and referral service for all children who reside in Staffordshire from pre-birth to 18 years who do not have a social worker. The First Response Team (FRT) was based in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) alongside colleagues from Police, Child Health, Mental health, Probation, Adult Protection Teams, and the Stoke Referral team. Referrals were made to Specialist Safeguarding Units (SSUs) or **Local Support Teams (LSTs)**. The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) took responsibility for all referrals made to Children and Adult Services outside of normal office hours in real emergency, where there was a real and immediate threat to life, safety or liberty. LSTs are teams of experienced children's service professionals with a variety of backgrounds who provide a versatile but focussed programme of interventions with local children and families to meet their needs for early help. A windscreen threshold model is used to show how concerns are escalated as risks increase and how intervention then minimised risk and families became more resilient. LSTs work closely with families on the edge of care in partnership with other teams. Members acknowledged the effectiveness of the multi-agency approach which would support the Children's Transformation work.
56. In July Members also discussed issues around **home educating**. There was a requirement on local authorities to ensure arrangements for individual children were appropriate but there was limited opportunity for intervention and it was perceived as an area of weakness. Members also noted the **performance data** for May 2017. The number of children in care represented a significant cost to the authority but there were robust processes and procedures to safeguard and audits to check that the decisions being made around taking children into care were correct. If the safeguarding threshold above which children were taken into care were raised, then the local authority would have to accept greater risk around that child's safety. A Member asked about quality assurance of children's residential homes provided by private providers and it was clarified that these were regulated by Ofsted and it was confirmed that there was not a requirement for any provider to register their home with the local authority, many of which housed children from outside Staffordshire.
57. At the 21 August 2017 meeting, the Committee received a presentation on **Edge of Care**. They described the current assessment process and services that are in place to prevent children and young people coming into care for example, the Intensive Prevention Service; Reunification; Family Group Conference Service and Breathing Space Project. Members asked questions around the consistency of application of thresholds for entering care across Staffordshire; the availability of resources to sustain these projects; how the views of parents who did not live together (and siblings) were taken on board; whether contact was maintained with those who had left the care system and how many children and young people had re-entered the care system. Members went on to discuss the Performance Card. Members' attention was drawn to the increase in the number

of LAC, in particular in the 12-16 age group. Members asked that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (including Sustain+) be added to the Forward Plan for consideration as part of the Health and Wellbeing item on 23 January, and that the results of the recent Ofsted Peer pilot inspection be shared with them at the next meeting. Finally, Members had an update on the Children's Voice Project. A decision has been taken not to hold the Big Vote this year (an annual survey by care leavers of care leavers asking what the top two issues they faced), but to focus on addressing the concerns raised by last year's survey.

58. In September, detailed feedback was provided on the **Ofsted pilot Local Authority Children's Services Inspectorate**. Staffordshire, as a 'good' authority had agreed to pilot the new Inspection Framework which considered the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families; the experience and progress of children who need help and protection and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers and, achieving permanence. In all of these areas, Ofsted awarded a Good judgement. The Panel also received a presentation on the **Reviewing Officer Service** and received the annual report of the **IRO Chairpersons**. The Independent Chairpersons have a responsibility to for overseeing child protection conferences; review activity, care planning and reviewing arrangements for looked after children
59. In October the Committee discussed the **Throughcare Service**. The focus of the Service is to support young people in all aspects of their development with stable placements, health, education and preparation for the future. These elements are brought together in the young person's Care Plan and regularly reviewed. The young person's wishes and feelings must be central to the care plan. By April 2018 all local authorities would have to publish their '**Care Leaver Offer**'. The level of support to be provided by local authorities was still being worked through but the new legislation was intended to strengthen the corporate parent role.
60. The **Adoption Agency annual report** was also presented in October. This report addressed key areas of performance for the period to 31 March 2017. The Adoption Scorecard, published annually by the Government showed that on average, the time it took for a child entering care to being placed within a permanent stable adoptive family had reduced but continued to be some way off the Government target. Overall the picture for adoption in Staffordshire was one of sustained improvement. Performance during 2016-17 was very positive and the service was confident that that trend would continue.
61. At the 18 December 2017 meeting, a presentation was provided on the **Virtual School** annual report for 2017 describing progress against the priorities for 2017-18. The Ofsted inspection of Children's Services earlier in the year had identified variable quality in the Personal Education Plans (PEP) of all looked after children. The Virtual School aimed for each child to have a really good quality PEP. A priority had been around supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Every teacher with responsibility for looked after children had received training and this approach would now be widened to include training on the impact of attachment and trauma to a whole school. A further priority had been to maximise to best effect resources available and every plan had been scrutinised to ensure it added value.

62. The Report of the **Statutory Children's Complaints and Representations service** for the period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 was also presented in December. Despite an increase in feedback dealt with for looked after children and disability services and in numbers of complaints being investigated, the findings of those complaints continued to show that only a small amount have been found to be upheld. The Team listened to all feedback carefully and took every opportunity to learn from it. Compliments received in this quarter had significantly increased.

63. The Performance Card in December drew Members' attention to the continued **increase in the numbers of looked after children**. Members were extremely concerned about the significant pressures on staff and resources and received assurance that overburdened staff were supported.

Looking Ahead

64. 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.

65. 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.

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.

Link to Strategic Plan

66. 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

67. This is a summary of the work programmes of all of the Select Committees from May – December 2017. Full details of the work of the Select Committees' work including their work programmes and previous Outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Work are published on the County Council's website.

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