

**REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

*The Committee met on 20 April 2016*

**1. Scrutiny of the Integrated Plan Proposals 2015-16 and Future Years:  
Feedback**

1.1 The Committee was asked to consider a report providing details of feedback from both Members and officers following the scrutiny of the Integrated Plan Proposals (IPP) 2016/17 – 2019/20. Members noted the feedback as detailed in the report and the consensus was that the overall process should remain the same with a few refinements to improve next year's IPP scrutiny. These are summarised below:

1. provision of written guidance for Lead Members; and
2. a preference for one set of IPP papers.

Members also agreed that:

- there would be a different Chairman for each portfolio group; and
- Portfolios with multiple strands would remain as this year when being scrutinised.

1.2 The Committee suggested options for improvement to the IPP scrutiny process. The items discussed were as follows:

- The Chairman of each Portfolio scrutinised to be present at the second meeting of the IPP scrutiny meeting to ensure the feedback received from Graduate Trainees represented the outcomes of the Group
- For the IPP scrutiny to be carried out over a two day period, i.e. a group of four portfolios over one morning session and a group of four portfolios over a second morning session, allowing extra time in each afternoon to discuss outcomes with the Chairman of the Portfolio scrutinised, Graduate Trainees and officers.

1.3 Responses to the information requests by Members during the IPP scrutiny process have been received and circulated to Members of the Committee.

1.4 The Committee noted that if fewer information requests had been formulated it would have given officers more time to deliver a focussed answer for those information requests which were related to the Council's budget. The Committee asked for the information requests relating to budget issues to be answered before the Council's budget meeting and others being answered when time

permitted. The Committee agreed that the information requests would be presented to the February meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it would agree the ones that would be passed to officers as information requests.

- 1.5 The Committee agreed that the following scrutinies, proposed as a result of the IPP scrutiny, would be included in the Committee's future work programme:
- (i) To review Hertfordshire's Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC's) and commercial waste facilities to ensure greater compatibility and cooperation between the public and private facilities; and to prevent the unauthorised use of the HWRC's for disposal of commercial waste clarifying the cost to the Authority; and
  - (ii) To review the Community Protection Directorate's preventative work to other services (for example, Public Health) by reviewing the costs, effects and benefits to other services and the predicted wider cost savings
- 1.6 A lunchtime seminar on Corporate Parenting will also be organised and all Members of the Council will be invited to attend [to be deferred until after May 2017 and included as part of the Member Induction programme (see paragraph 6.1 below)].

[See paragraph 7 below for decisions reached regarding arrangements for the IPP scrutiny café 2017].

## **2. Scrutiny Recommendations: Update**

- 2.1 The Committee received a report providing the Executive Member responses to the scrutiny recommendations made by the 'Care Pathways Topic Group'; 'Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Topic Group' and the 'Scrutiny of the Integrated Plan Proposals 2016/17 – 2019/20'.
- 2.2 The Executive Member response to the scrutiny recommendations made by the 'Ringways Highways Service Team Contract Topic Group' was received. The 'Monitoring of Recommendations' Topic Group has been requested to consider the action taken on the recommendations arising from the scrutiny in due course.

## **3 Scrutiny Work Programme**

- 3.1 The Committee has considered its future work programme, noting those scrutinies recently concluded and those scheduled for the forthcoming period.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed to add a further two scrutinies to its work programme, as set out above at paragraph 1.5.
- 3.3 The draft scoping document for the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board yearly scrutiny was also noted.

#### **4. Scrutiny Recommendations: Update**

- 4.1 The Committee received a report providing the recommendations from the 'Herts Care Quality Standards Topic Group'.
- 4.2 Members noted that the Executive Member responses to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Topic Group and the Executive Member responses to the scrutiny recommendations to the IPP Scrutiny 2016/17 – 2019/20 had been received. Action taken to implement all scrutiny recommendations will be reviewed by the 'Monitoring of Recommendations' Topic Group in due course.
- 4.3 Members of the Committee were concerned at the lack of progress with regard to the review of the Council's property assets requested as part of the IPP Scrutiny 2016/17. Members voiced their frustration that the review would take so long to be carried out, especially as the Council was actively seeking ways to save money. The Committee has asked that its concern be conveyed to the relevant department.
- 4.4 The Committee noted the IPP scrutiny Executive Responses to the Suggestions to Cabinet or Panels and expressed disappointment with the overall quality of the responses provided. The Committee agreed that future IPP Suggestions would concentrate on how the budget proposals presented would achieve the Integrated Plan intentions. Members discussed making the IPP Café Suggestions more specific, including focussing on when and how any savings would be achieved. It was considered that the process for monitoring the Executive Member Responses to Suggestions needed to be more effective.

#### **5. Children in Care Council (CHICC) Update**

- 5.1 The Committee received an oral report on the outcome of the Children in Care Council (CHICC) Topic Group, which was carried out by Children Looked After (CLA). Members noted that focus of the scrutiny was the 'Stability of Placement for Children in Care'.
- 5.2 The scrutiny-type session focussed on three specific questions raised by CHICC asking county council officers:
- What work had been done in the last year to create more placements and what was the outcome of this?
  - What interaction was there between Hertfordshire County Council and young people and what were the outcomes of these discussions?
  - What plans were there to increase the number and stability of placements?
- 5.3 Members were pleased to note that the scrutiny had received input from a number of young people and that a full report with recommendations would be circulated in due course. The Committee agreed the recommendations should be presented to a future meeting of the 'Monitoring of Recommendations' Topic

Group to demonstrate to the young people that their concerns and efforts are taken seriously by Members and that their scrutiny is viewed as of the same value and importance as one undertaken by councillors.

## **6. Scrutiny Work Programme**

6.1 The Committee has considered its work programme and agreed to amend it as follows:

- a) 'Public transport issues specifically the support to disabled users' scrutiny to be retitled 'Disability support for bus users';
- b) the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board 2016 theme will be neglect;
- c) the Crime & Disorder 2016 focus will be scamming;
- d) 'To examine the effectiveness of Public Health Services in the community' scrutiny to be retitled 'To examine how Public Health are continuing to be effective in light of funding cuts to the department's budget';
- e) Children's Centres scrutiny to be moved back to summer 2017;
- f) 'To scrutinise Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service future cost savings and the impact on service delivery as a result of any re-organisation and changes to terms and conditions of employment' scrutiny to be retitled 'To undertake a scrutiny of Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service to include a review of what savings have been made to date and what further savings can be achieved';
- g) 'To review the Community Protection Directorate's preventative work to other services (e.g. Public Health) by reviewing the costs, effects and benefits to other services and the predicted wider costs savings' scrutiny to be retitled 'To scrutinise Fire & Rescue preventive work with Public Health, establishing the effects and benefits'; and
- h) Member Information System (MiS) and Corporate Parenting lunchtime seminars to be postponed until after the 2017 elections.

6.3 The Committee agreed to remove 'The County Council's changing demographics' from its work programme as it would be addressed via the Health Scrutiny and Overview and Scrutiny Committees' budget scrutiny cafés.

6.4 The draft scoping documents for the 'Disability Support on Public Transport' Topic Group, 'Flooding Management and Strategy' Topic Group, 'Library Services Strategy' Topic Group, and 'Herts Waste Partnership' Topic Group were also received. The Committee amended the scope for Disability Support in Public Transport' to cover buses only and agreed to the Topic Group being retitled to reflect this change (see 6.1 a) above).

## **7. Confirming the approach to the IPP Café 2017/18**

7.1 The Committee was provided with an opportunity to consider an alternative approach to the IPP Scrutiny 2017/18 and future years. It was noted that a number of Members were in favour of extending the IPP Scrutiny Café over two days; with four portfolios on each day. However, following discussion in relation to chairman and graduate trainee feedback, lack of attendance at the briefing session on the day of the scrutiny café and the amount of time required to draft the IPP Scrutiny report, the Committee agreed to continue with the current

approach and to look at changes that could be made to enhance the scrutiny café in future years.

- 7.2 The Committee agreed to the proposed change to amalgamate the separate IP and IP scrutiny papers into a combined set of IPP papers including IPP questions.
- 7.3 Members were asked to consider the focus for the OSC meeting in December 2016 and noted that Chris Hayward, Executive Member for Resources, would be invited to the December meeting of the OSC to inform the Committee of the expectations of the IPP Café scrutiny.

**TERRY HONE**  
**Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**July 2016**