

REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee met on 29 September 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

1. Scrutiny of the Integrated Plan Proposals 2018/19 – 2021/22

- 1.1 The Committee received a report providing details of the format for the Committee's scrutiny of the Integrated Plan (IP) proposals 2018/19 – 2021/22.
- 1.2 The Committee approved the timetable for the IP scrutiny as detailed below:
 - Tuesday, 19 December 2017 Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting in the Council Chamber. The Executive Member for Resources, Property and the Economy and the Director of Resources will present an overview of the current budget position and likely settlement for 2018/19 – 2021/22. Following the meeting there will be a short finance seminar by finance officers in preparation for the IP Scrutiny
 - Friday, 19 January 2018. There will be an IP briefing for Lead Members, Lead Officers, Executive Members and Graduate Trainees
 - Wednesday, 24 January 2018 IP Scrutiny Evidence Gathering day. It is expected that all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will participate for the full day
 - Thursday, 1 February 2018. The Committee will reconvene, discuss and agree the recommendations arising from its IP scrutiny to Cabinet. Lead Members of the IP scrutiny along with Graduate Trainees, Chief Officers and Executive Members will be expected to attend this session.
- 1.3 Members agreed that an invitation would be sent to all County Councillors in October inviting their participation in the scrutiny of the IP. It was noted that the proportionality for Chairmen of the 8 evidence gathering groups would be Conservative 5; Liberal Democrats 2 and Labour 1.
- 1.4 The Committee noted the list of IP pack questions set out in the Strategic Direction, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and agreed that they be used for the 2018/19 – 2021/22 IP Scrutiny.

2. Scrutiny work programme 2017 – 2018

- 2.1 The Committee has now agreed its work programme for 2017/18; full details of the changes and updates to the work programme are set out in the [Minutes here](#).
- 2.2 Members agreed that although the Grenfell Tower Report was not due to be published until Easter 2018 they were pleased that the 'Resilience Topic Group' would go ahead as it was based on the County Council's resilience and how it

would ensure business continuity if a major incident occurred effecting County Council services and the residents of Hertfordshire.

- 2.3 In relation to the Highways contracts scrutiny it was noted that the Liberal Democrat Group wanted this item to remain on the work programme. This was agreed, however the Chairman asked for a written response from the Liberal Democrat group to explain why it should remain on the work programme. It was agreed that a written response would be presented at the November meeting of the Committee for further discussion.
- 2.4 The Committee agreed to remove the following scrutinies from the work programme:
1. To undertake a review of the provision of day care services
 2. Review the implementation of the Care Act - focus on prevention
- 2.5 The Committee agreed that the:
1. 'Members Information Service – Members Seminar' be removed from the work programme
 2. 'Social Services interface with the NHS and options for integration to include input from health bodies' be changed from a lunchtime seminar to a Conference with invitations to district and borough councils and NHS partners.
- 3. Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service – Update following IP Scrutiny (2017) on responding to medical incidents and day crewed fire stations**
- 3.1 The Committee received an update on two initiatives undertaken by Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS) in relation to responding to medical incidents and day crewed plus fire stations.
- 3.2 Co-Responding to medical incidents. Members heard that co-responding was where emergency responders from the Fire & Rescue Services (F&RS) responded to 999 calls alongside the Ambulance Service. Co-responders have played a vital role in providing emergency patient care which includes treatment such as CPR and defibrillation, helping to reduce the number of cardiac related deaths in Hertfordshire. The trial covered 5 whole-time fire stations and 1 on-call fire station
- 3.3 The Committee heard that although the trial had been successful it had recently ceased due to the on-going national pay dispute; it was hoped it will be re-started once the dispute is resolved.. It was noted the desire of the majority of fire crews was to settle the dispute and continue with the co-responding service across the County.
- 3.4 Members heard that medical training for fire crews was not onerous as, since 2013, firefighters had received training in immediate emergency trauma care to support injuries to crews and the public during incidents and, in particular, road traffic collisions to improve patient survival rates. Ongoing training was also provided. It was noted that the 5 whole-time stations participating in the trial did

not incur any additional salary costs as firefighters were already on duty; however, there was a cost to the retained fire station in Tring as crew attending required their normal attendance payment per call.

- 3.5 Members agreed that the trial was an excellent initiative and it was a good service for the Fire & Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service and in particular the residents of Hertfordshire. However, Members did not believe there was sufficient data to establish the ratio of call outs in comparison with the Ambulance Service costs and also the cost benefits of each call out. Members were informed the complete data was not available due to the trial ending sooner than expected, although the National Joint Council commissioned a mid-trial report which covered a wide range of aspects including data. The Director of Community Protection and Chief Fire Officer undertook to circulate a link to the mid-term report published by the University of Hertfordshire and provide some additional data information to the Committee.
- 3.6 Day Crewed Plus Fire Stations. Members heard the Day Crew Plus system was an alternative method to the whole-time staffing of fire stations and this type of system was in place at three stations within the County. It was a more efficient use of its staff as it required half the amount of staff compared to the traditional whole-time crewing model. This system relied on volunteers as there was not yet a collective agreement in place, although there were financial benefits to doing so, total savings averaged £377,000 per station per annum; this equated to £1,131,000 across the three sites with further savings related to reduction in pre-arranged overtime to cover staff deficiencies.
- 3.7 Members noted there was initial investment of £350,000 per station which provided additional separate sleeping quarters (based on a Travelodge style design). It was also noted that the living quarters are for firefighters and their families, although Members heard that very few families used the living quarters.
- 3.8 In response from a Member query on identifying stress levels, Members were informed that HFRS was aware of stress and the impact of mental health issues across the Service and had signed up to the 'Blue Light Mind Programme' which gave support to managers to assist them in understanding and recognising situations likely to give rise to mental health/stress issues. Firefighters also received medical assessments every three years which included assessments for stress management.

David Andrews
Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
November 2017