

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

X

**COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 10.00AM**

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X

**SCRUTINY OF THE INTEGRATED PLAN 2017/18 – 2019/20: Report of the
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

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1. Purpose of the draft Report

1.1 To inform Cabinet and County Council of

- (a) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny of the integrated plan (IP) 2017/18 – 2019/20; and
- (b) the comments and suggestions made by the Committee as a result of that scrutiny.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20 December 2016, prior to its formal scrutiny, the Committee received a briefing from the Director of Resources, who provided Members with an authority-wide overview of resources, pressures and key issues for the Council for 2017/18.
- 2.2 The Committee's scrutiny of the Integrated Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 was conducted over two days; commencing on 26 January 2017, when it gathered its evidence and concluding on 2 February 2017, when it agreed its comments and suggestions for Cabinet's consideration. These are set out in section 3 of the report below.
- 2.3 The evidence gathered by the eight portfolio groups has been divided as suggestions to cabinet, scrutiny proposals, queries to be answered at OSC (2 February 2017), identified risks, IP group notes and potential service developments.

3. Committee Suggestions to Cabinet

3.1 That Cabinet gives consideration to the following:-

- 3.1.2 The Committee suggests that the proposal to make a £60,000 saving on strategic planning whilst demand for the service is increasing should be reviewed.
- 3.1.3 The Committee cautions against any further reduction in Highways officer support to members as they serve as local champions for residents.
- 3.1.4 The Committee raised concern over a £160,000 budget gap as a result of the decision made by the Police and Crime Commissioner to remove the Police contribution to Alcohol and Drug treatment of young people within the Probation Service.
- 3.1.5 In establishing libraries as community hubs, success is predicated on the need for long-term volunteers. There appears to be a lack of progress in attracting volunteers and an alternative model to that of volunteerism may need to be identified.
- 3.1.6 That the Resources & Performance Panel receives regular reports showing the income streams produced by property development by Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire County Council owned property company in development.

4 The Leader of the Council and relevant Executive Members are asked to respond to these comments and suggestions prior to Full Council meeting on 21 February 2017.

5 Identified risks

- 5.1 The Committee endorses the identification of the increasing shortage of home care services which is a significant and ongoing concern.
- 5.2 Children's Services are increasingly focused on preventive approaches and is aligning resources accordingly. The Committee identified difficulties measuring the outcomes of preventative activities in Children Looked After/Families Safeguarding services especially in early years provision. Members were concerned about the advice given to families just below the threshold. Whilst the Committee is confident in Children's Services due to its previous track record, external factors remain a concern.
- 5.3 There is a potential risk of key partners and commissioned suppliers failing to provide the agreed level of support and that Hertfordshire County Council has to step in. Hertfordshire County Council has to ensure that partners deliver the services commissioned. A specific concern is the budgetary pressure on schools leaving them unable to purchase Children's Services. [Although raised as a Children's Services issue this has cross cutting implications]
- 5.4 The risk of knock-on effects on families and children should there be a rise in unemployment. This was identified as a major concern by the Executive Member. However, it was not regarded as a major risk due to evidence

provided by Children's Services of its resilience to a degree of economic hardship.

- 5.5 The need to be aware of uneven levels of co-operation in District and County relationships in relation to planning issues. [Cross cutting]
- 5.6 That the negative consequence of apprenticeships not being appropriately understood by the general public needs to be addressed. Hertfordshire County Council should promote apprenticeships as more than an alternative to unemployment and highlight that, in some cases; apprenticeships can be as useful as a degree.
- 5.7 Changing market conditions in home to school transport.
- 5.8 Lack of coordination of the planning effort across the county. [cross cutting]
- 5.9 Difficulty in recruiting professional staff, especially planners. [cross cutting]
- 5.10 Failing to take advantage of the opportunities provided by new technology.
- 5.11 Hertfordshire County Council must ensure that qualified experts are utilised when negotiating contracts; for instance when Highways contracts are re-negotiated. [cross cutting]
- 5.12 There are multiple risks if Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs) funding ceases e.g. decline in overall physical and mental well-being; community nursing services burden, greater need for care homes, less time allocated to preventative work, pressure on doctors etc.
- 5.13 In establishing libraries as community hubs, success is predicated on the need for long-term volunteers. There appears to be a lack of progress in attracting volunteers and an alternative model to that of volunteerism may need to be identified.
- 5.14 To make the most of Hertfordshire County Council property the Committee discussed a review of property assets to create a property company that is 100% owned by Hertfordshire County Council. To affect this there is a query as to whether Hertfordshire County Council has staff with the commercial skills to make robust property deals.
- 5.15 "Top-slicing" of business rates by central government may lead to Hertfordshire County Council receiving less money than expected due to transfer of funds to less affluent areas of the country. The Executive is aware of this and is engaging with government through LGA with an expectation of further consultation.
- 5.16 An additional consequence of "top slicing" is the need to mitigate council tax for small businesses leading to further reductions in income for Hertfordshire County Council.

6 Information to be provided to OSC Thursday 2 February 2017

- 6.1 There has been an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) over the last 12 months. This has recently reduced; however there is potential for future increase, especially if child traffickers find new ways to bring children into Hertfordshire.
- 6.2 How confident are we that the Recycling & Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) will be granted planning permission? What are the financial and service implications for Hertfordshire County Council should planning permission not be granted? This to include the amount that Hertfordshire County Council would be contractually obliged to pay Veolia.
- 6.3 What is the likelihood of the Fire and Rescue Service being transferred from Hertfordshire County Council to the Police and Crime Commissioner? What could the financial and service implications for Hertfordshire County Council's Community Protection function be? To include the effect on Trading Standards given the current close working with Fire and Rescue Service. What are the implications of losing the current levels of collaboration?
- 6.4 How much, both in cash and percentage terms, does Hertfordshire County Council receive from proceeds of crime money as a result of work conducted by Trading Standards?
- 6.5 More detailed information to be provided of the Authority's current contingency plans if the proposed RERF at Hoddesdon does not, for any reason, go ahead. Including what the cost implications might be.
- 6.6 If access to the new RERF site requires the upgrading or amending of the highway in any way, who would be responsible for this?
- 6.7 There is an increasing need for school places at all phases. How will school expansions be achieved in light of the difficulty in obtaining sites of sufficient size?
- 6.8 Primary schools want to retain autonomy and therefore, may not wish to join into an MAT (multi academy trust). What can Hertfordshire County Council do to support them to join a MAT?
- 6.9 How does the Council propose to deal with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) demographic pressure in Children's Services?
- 6.10 What is the impact and risk of restructuring and reshaping the Music Service?
- 6.11 The budget saving of £390,000 has been made in the current year from ceasing to support Transport for London (TfL) bus services. There are concerns that TfL may reduce the service in the future. What are the statutory responsibilities of TfL to provide services outside of Greater London into Hertfordshire? The Committee is concerned that services may

not continue or will terminate on the County boundary. What is the role of Hertfordshire County Council in monitoring this activity?

- 6.12 What mitigations are in place to reduce the time taken by the Highways and Legal teams to turnaround paperwork for planning and Section 106 matters?
- 6.13 Please provide more information on the process of completing paperwork for enacting traffic regulation orders in line with the Highways Locality Budget. How long does this process take and how much paperwork is involved? Are there any schemes in place to circumvent the amount of time taken? [Traffic Regulation Orders Monitoring of Recommendations progress report]
- 6.14 How much money is allocated to the maintenance and improvement of carriageways and footways for next financial year? This to broken to show carriageways and footways separately with capital and revenue for each. Further, what was the amount spent on the maintenance and improvement of carriageways and footways in the past 4 years?
- 6.15 How much money is set aside for the winter maintenance budget in the next financial year?
- 6.16 Further financial details to be provided about the income generated from digital vs. physical books/services. [This could be picked up at the Library scrutiny]
- 6.17 To make the most of Hertfordshire County Council property the Committee discussed a review of property assets to create a property company that is 100% owned by Hertfordshire County Council. To affect this there is a query as to whether Hertfordshire County Council has staff with the commercial skills to make robust property deals.
- 6.18 Explore the possibilities of creating apprenticeships across the Authority including offering to existing employees. Hertfordshire County Council should foster closer working with other organisations e.g. district councils, charities, University of Hertfordshire.

7 Committee Comments

7.1 Adult Care & Health

- 7.1.2 The Committee expresses its support for the manner in which Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care & Health team have conducted themselves in relation to recent proposed withdrawal of funding from Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group.

7.2 Children's Services

- 7.2.2 The portfolio is undertaking a culture shift towards preventing problems before they arise and via partnerships e.g. the voluntary sector. There are

ambitious targets, yet the Committee believes Children's Services is well placed to achieve these subject to external forces.

7.2.3 There have been fluctuations in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) numbers over the last 12 months.

7.2.4 There are changes to SEN services, with an emphasis on transition into adulthood, and challenges in continuing to support to this group.

7.3 Community Safety & Waste Management

7.3.2 The Committee recognises and discussed the increasing demographic pressures facing both services across the county and the ways in which these could be addressed.

7.3.3 The Committee recognises the benefits that partnership working and collaboration has brought to both services, and wishes this to continue in future.

7.4 Enterprise, Education & Skills

7.4.2 Concerns were expressed that school expansions will be affected by the difficulty of finding sufficient sized plots of land in green belt areas on which to build schools.

7.4.3 Primary schools need to be supported in moves to multi academy trusts

7.4.4 The efficient management of home to school transport may need more radical methods to achieve further reductions.

7.4.5 There are increasing demands on SEN services due to demographic growth pressures.

7.4.6 There is a need to promote improved public understanding of apprenticeships as valued and not only as an alternative to unemployment. In addition, how can members of the armed forces be included in apprenticeships moving forward?

7.5 Environment, Planning & Transport

7.5.2 Hertfordshire County Council could show more leadership when working with the district and borough councils in formulating local plans and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in particular. [Cross cutting theme]

7.5.3 A short and medium term vision to encourage bus use is required.

7.6 Public Health, Localism & Libraries

7.6.2 The Committee strongly supports the principle of the Locality Budget scheme and the good work it supports within the community. It very much encourages its continuation.

7.7 Resources & Performance

7.7.2 The Committee established that Hertfordshire County Council will meet the apprenticeship levy by attracting new apprentices and also by offering to existing staff. Lower and higher-level apprenticeships will be offered.

7.7.3 Members questioned what impact greater community involvement has had on resources and costs.

7.7.4 Members considered when it is appropriate to access reserves if current income does not support services (Invest to Transform budget)

7.7.5 Hertfordshire County Council should look for every opportunity to use the Invest to Transform fund to improve efficiency and quality of frontline services.

8 Proposed future scrutinies

8.1 The Committee proposes that the Herts Healthy Homes scheme is extended to include other statutory and voluntary services, including the Neighbourhood Watch. That a review of the Herts Healthy Homes initiative is undertaken. [work programme autumn 2017]

8.2 To undertake a review of the provision of day services

8.3 To undertake a review of the integrated budget of mental health services

8.4 Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board annual scrutiny considers self-esteem amongst teenage girls as its 2017 focus

8.5 The Committee welcomes the decision by the Executive Member to bring forward the Alternative Financial Model review, and would like to be informed of any findings and results. [This will be addressed by the Monitoring of Recommendations Topic Group when it receives a progress report on the Herts Waste Partnership scrutiny].

8.6 To investigate the effect of green waste charges introduced by some borough/district councils on the volume of residual waste collected. [This will be addressed by the Monitoring of Recommendations Topic Group when it receives a progress report on the Herts Waste Partnership scrutiny].

8.7 To scrutinise whether or not there is a connection between the partial closure of Household Waste & Recycling Centres and an increase in fly-tipping.

- 8.8 Undertake scrutiny of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to consider the risk associated with maintaining good relationships with train companies and network rail from the LEP perspective.[LEP scrutiny]
- 8.9 To establish whether the nine Delivering Special Provision Locally Areas are performing consistently across the county.
- 8.10 Review of the effectiveness of the Herts Infrastructure and Planning Partnership.
- 8.11 Review the Intelligent Transport Solutions project to determine its success or otherwise.
- 8.12 To review approaches to identify and prosecute individual drivers and or organisations causing damage to verges in accordance with the Highways Act 1980.
- 8.13 More information to be provided on the process for completing paperwork to enact traffic regulation orders in line with the Highways Locality Budget. How long does this process take and how much paperwork is involved? Are there any schemes in place to circumvent the amount of time taken? [Traffic Order Orders scrutiny Monitoring of Recommendations follow up]
- 8.14 The Committee would like Health Scrutiny Committee to undertake a scrutiny to ensure that both East & North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valley CCG develop the same pathways for patients who are at risk of ill health. Greater effort should be made to identify the core, most effective pathways to improve health outcomes. To ensure that there is consistency across the county e.g. social prescribing is offered by GPs to a greater or lesser degree depending on locality
- 8.15 Scrutiny of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service needs to be fast-tracked. Date needs to be set in the new committee cycle at the first available opportunity after the election.[autumn 2017]

9 Information note

- 9.1 Outline the functions and remit of High Impact Gangs.

10 Potential service development

- 10.1 The Committee recommends the development of accessible pathways for self-funders and personal budget holders to access council services. This could provide benefits to all parties.
- 10.1.2 There is a need to develop the range of accommodation for care leavers in county in partnership with districts/boroughs
- 10.1.3 To review the advice and guidance provided to families just below the threshold.

- 10.1.4 The Committee would like to reinforce that it is the Council's responsibility to encourage recycling across the county and to explore how Hertfordshire County Council can work more closely with the districts and boroughs to achieve this.
- 10.1.5 The Committee believes it would be helpful to assess the cost and benefits to the Authority of Fire and Rescue Service staff being trained in medical trauma care when responding to ambulance call-outs in cases where they could provide a faster response time than the NHS. The Committee would like to be informed of any findings.
- 10.1.6 The Committee was pleased to note the savings achieved by the Day-Crewing initiative, and would like to hear more about how far this could be expanded. It was made clear that operational capability is to be prioritised over savings.
- 10.1.7 To consider the viability of disposing of business and commercial waste as well as household waste to provide an additional income stream.
- 10.1.8 To investigate the effect of green waste charges introduced by some borough/district councils on the volume of residual waste collected.
[Monitoring of Recommendations Herts Waste Partnership progress report]
- 10.1.9 There is a need to reduce the current expense of home to school transport. More radical methods should be considered to reduce this e.g. running a bus service or setting a joint venture for schools to buy into, or transferring some responsibility onto schools for ensuring that pupils can make their way to school.
- 10.1.10 The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) identified a £2.1 billion figure for the market size of tourism potential in Hertfordshire. In order to benchmark this effectively it will be beneficial to have a figure for the value of the same market in Essex although it may prove that these two Counties are not a comparable.
- 10.1.11 Urgently develop and promote the coordination of planning and CIL strategies to ensure the future infrastructure needs are met across the county and beyond.
- 10.1.12 To investigate the use of modern technology to drive modal shift.
- 10.1.13 Planning applications must provide more clarity on local planning decisions, including any points of objection raised by Highways.
- 10.1.14 Information must be communicated in full to the public, so to manage customer expectations (i.e. via Horizons), that the immediate priority is road safety rather than aesthetics.
- 10.1.15 The Committee suggests that the Highways Portfolio prioritise the maintenance of cycle paths and footways.

- 10.1.16 That the use of volunteers to conduct minor maintenance i.e. cleaning road signs is further investigated
- 10.1.17 Greater integration is required between the Public Health Department and CCGs to better understand the contributions and pressures of both parties and stimulate even greater partnership working. Concerns have been raised about specific financial contributions from the CCGs relating to obesity (of which only £30,000 has been contributed), and the decline in the bid to share in the funding of CAMHS workers within Public Health.
- 10.1.18 Once the Public Health ring-fenced budget is wholly removed, there will be an increased need to bid for funding from Sports England, the Innovation Fund etc. Opportunities to innovate should be sought at the earliest stage across the Public Health domain.
- 10.1.19 The Committee suggests that the Library Service should seek alternate funding e.g. to set up a direct debit to allow people to donate to the Library Service. Furthermore, there should be increased momentum to maximise revenue streams via the archive services, family heritage and retail opportunities both online and within libraries.
- 10.1.20 There is a need for greater communication between all tiers of local government. In particular, Town and Parish Councils should be better informed of consultation activities, co-production initiatives, petitions etc.[cross cutting]
- 10.1.21 The Committee is aware of work towards integration of data, IT systems and expertise to achieve efficiencies. Members were disappointed at the perceived lack of progress of the Hertfordshire Civil Service
- 10.1.22 A mechanism should be developed whereby existing shared services between districts and between county and district/s are highlighted, and the financial and quality benefits can be seen in order to encourage further back-office sharing of services.

11. Background

- 11.1 As agreed by Members, the Committee received background and contextual information from the Director of Resources at its meeting in December 2016. The Director's report provided the Committee with an authority-wide overview of resources, pressures and key issues for the Council for the forthcoming period. As well as providing the Committee with the information necessary to inform its scrutiny, the briefing also provided Members with an opportunity for preliminary discussion on the Council's draft Integrated Plan and to identify some of the issues they wished to explore further during the scrutiny process.

11.2 As in previous years, the Committee's formal scrutiny was conducted over two days; the first of which was used to gather evidence; the second to agree its findings, conclusions and suggestions to Cabinet etc.

11.3 The Committee divided into groups to gather its evidence. For this purpose the Council's service/budget areas were divided into 8 groups, based on the portfolios of each Executive Member:-

- 'Children's Services'
- 'Community Safety & Waste Management'
- 'Highways'
- 'Public Health, Localism & Libraries'
- 'Adult Care & Health'
- 'Enterprise, Education & Skills'
- 'Environment, Planning & Transport'
- 'Resources & Performance'

11.4 All Members of the Council were notified of the scrutiny and were invited to attend. A number of Members took up this invitation and, with the Chairman's agreement, participated in the 'evidence gathering' part of the scrutiny.

11.5 The Committee reconvened on 2 February 2017 to agree its comments and suggestions for Cabinet's consideration.

12 Suggestions from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

12.1 The Committee's comments and suggestions on the draft Integrated Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 are set out in section 3 of the report above; they will also be considered by the Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel at its meeting on 10 February 2017. The Panel's comments will be reported to Cabinet.

13. Financial Implications

13.1 The financial implications of the Integrated Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 are as set out in the Integrated Plan are also being considered at the Committee's meeting Thursday 2 February 2017.

14. Equalities Implications

14.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

14.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

14.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

14.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken on the draft Integrated Plan proposals 2017/18 – 2019/20 and this is included within the Integrated Plan proposals also being considered at this meeting.

15. Conclusion

15.1 Cabinet is asked to take into account the comments and suggestions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering the Integrated Plan proposals.

Background Information

Reports & Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings held in October 2016 and December 2016