

Report title: Scrutiny Activity		Agenda Item 15
Report to: Full Council		
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the scrutiny activity which has taken place from February 2018 to date.
- 1.2 The Council's Policy and Scrutiny Committees have continued to be busy, with a diverse work programme across all four committees, against a backdrop of challenging budget pressures, compounded by uncertainty due to the shifting national political environment.
- 1.3 In addition to the summary below, the Appendix to this report details the key scrutiny activity undertaken, and demonstrates the positive outcomes achieved, aligned to the Organisational Strategy. Rather than detailing the work undertaken by each individual committee, a cross cutting approach has been taken to identify these outcomes, in order to demonstrate the collective delivery that has been achieved.

2. Executive Summary of Activity

Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee – Chairman Councillor Mike Mackrory

- 2.1 The Committee has had regular reports and presentations around the financial management of the Council, this includes reviewing the budget before it is presented to Council, the half year reports and the reserves.
- 2.2 A Task and Finish Group was established to review the procurement of the Council's Resourcing services which are currently outsourced, prior to the expiry of the current contract in September 2019. The recommendations arising from this review were well received and have accordingly been considered within the process undertaken.
- 2.3 The Committee has worked jointly with the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a substantial Task and Finish Review of the Ringway Jacobs Contract. Further information about this work is detailed in paragraph 2.12.

Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee – Chairman Councillor Jill Reeves

- 2.4 The Essex, Southend and Thurrock Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee has responded to the public consultation undertaken by the Sustainability and

Transformation Partnership (STP). The Essex and Suffolk Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee has actively engaged with its STP to discuss the final proposals for subsequent consultation.

- 2.5 The Committee has considered the recruitment and retention issues being faced in health and social care. To date discussions have been held with STP representatives, Health Education England, Essex County Council and commissioner and provider representatives, which have focussed on understanding the scale and nature of the challenges being faced.
- 2.6 The HOPSC has discussed current A&E pressures and seasonal planning with both the Ambulance Service and acute hospital trusts in Essex, insisting on operational level personnel attending so that the discussion could be at that level rather than a strategic level.

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee – Chairman Councillor Malcolm Maddocks

- 2.7 In response to a referral from Full Council, the Committee has started to look at the development of a multi-agency strategy to confront drug gangs, knife crime and county lines. To date the Committee has spoken to representatives from the Youth offending Team, Essex Police and the Office of the Police, Fire, Crime Commissioner.
- 2.8 The Committee has started a review of the contract placed with Virgin Care and Barnardo's to provide pre-birth to 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support services, including the Healthy Child Programme, Healthy Schools Programme, Family Nurse Partnership and Sure Start Children's Centres. The Committee has also spoken to the sub-contractors under the contract.
- 2.9 The Committee has been reviewing issues around the relationships Essex County Council has with adult social care providers. Additional responsibilities imposed by the Care Act around market management and sustainability means that the quality of those relationships is critically important.

Place Services and Economic Growth Policy Scrutiny Committee – Chairman Councillor Ian Grundy

- 2.10 The Committee conducted a wide-ranging piece of task and finish work looking at air quality. Three sub-groups considered public health and technology, planning, and highways and transportation, engaging with a diverse range of sources from across the public, private and community-voluntary sector. The final report was well received by Cabinet and the recommendations were commended as being informed, constructive, and ambitious.
- 2.11 The Committee conducted a review of the Independent Property Review Commission (IPRC), scrutinising progress since the Commission published its findings in respect of the fire safety of ECC's property portfolio. The Commission outlined 14 wide ranging recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Leader and cabinet and voted through by Full Council in May 2018. As part of the review, members acted as a critical friend, conducting an in depth and informed analysis of progress against these recommendations.

2.12 As referenced in paragraph 2.3 members joint work was undertaken with members of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a joint task and finish review of the Ringway Jacobs/Essex highways contract. The investigation looked specifically at four areas: Perception of highways performance, contract key performance indicators, the quality of repairs conducted by Ringway Jacobs and the supply chain, and benchmarking against similar arrangements in other local authorities. An in-depth report was produced, outlining twenty-two constructive recommendations.