

APPENDIX



Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report 2014-15

Welcome to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, which explains the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) and its Task and Finish Groups during 2014-15.

Overview and Scrutiny is a vital part of Luton Borough Council's responsibility to its residents. All non-executive councillors are eligible to participate in the work of scrutiny, to hold the Council's Executive to account and help inform its decisions by reviewing and making recommendations to improve Council services.

Overview and Scrutiny also considers and makes recommendations on wider issues affecting the people of Luton. During the year it has worked closely with Community Safety Partnership, Free Schools, Luton Cultural Services Trust, Luton and Dunstable Hospital, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other public and private sector partners, who have all contributed to the well-being of the people of Luton. I take this opportunity to thank the great many officers from the Council, as well as partners organisations, who have, contributed openly and positively to scrutiny.

Finally, thanks go to all the Council Members who have participated in Scrutiny and put in substantial effort during the course of the year.

If you would like to contribute to overview and scrutiny, remember all scrutiny meetings are open to the public. If you want to find out more about overview and scrutiny, the Democracy Team will be pleased to supply you with more information. Contact details are listed at the end of this report."

Introduction

The last year has seen a continuation of challenges for local government. With a backdrop of reduced funding from Government this Council along with our partners are seeking ways to work more closely together. In this environment, the role of scrutiny is important and we have a clear responsibility to scrutinise the implementation of new approaches. In this report we have highlighted some of the significant activity that has taken place over the last year and considered the challenges to be faced over the next year.

The Chair of the Board in 2014-15 was Councillor Doris Hinkley (Liberal Democrat) and the Vice Chairs were Councillors Michael Garrett (Conservative) and Councillor Amy O'Callaghan (Labour).

Key Scrutiny Work in 2014-2015

APPENDIX

- **Working with External Partners and Local Communities**

Throughout the year, the Board received a range of reports and presentations from organisations and individuals from outside the Council to assist with overview and scrutiny work; these included Community Safety Partnership, Free Schools, Luton Cultural Services Trust and the Luton and Dunstable Hospital

- **Working with the Executive/Portfolio Holders**

The Board has continued to be actively involved with the work of the Executive, regularly scrutinising the Executive's Forward Plan, which remains a standing item on the work programme. Monthly meetings are also held with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Chair also has the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with the Leader of the Council, to discuss corporate issues facing the Council. The Executive Member for Finance has a standing invitation to attend the Finance Review Group.

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board has the power and responsibility to set up time limited task and finish groups that focus on a particular issue and consider it in greater detail than is possible at the Overview and Scrutiny Board. These reviews will typically last

around six months and will include a mixture of interviews with relevant Council officers and expert witnesses, research of best practice elsewhere, meetings with service users and community groups and consultation with the wider community. Membership of the task and finish group is drawn from all Members of the Council other than Executive Members and can be extended to include statutory and non-statutory co-optees and experts in the relevant subject area.

Outlined below is a brief summary of the work of the two standing sub-committees – the Finance Review Group and the Health and Social Care Review Group and the latest position in respect of current task and finish groups.

FINANCE REVIEW GROUP

The Finance Review Group (FRG) continued to sit in 2014/15 as a standing sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB). Its purpose includes:

- Enabling closer scrutiny of the Council's finances;
- Enhancing decision-making process on spending priorities;
- Overseeing public involvement to improve accountability.

During the year, the FRG continued to focus on and made comments and recommendations to the Executive on key aspects of the Council's Transformation Programme and budget performance around

APPENDIX

contingency reserves and risks, particularly on a number of high level capital projects. It also reviewed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) funding, how Active Luton, Luton Irish Forum and Luton Cultural Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Luton Rights and Luton Law Centre used funding provided by London Luton Airport Limited. It also scrutinised the overarching impact of measures to address budget pressures facing the council.

The FRG reported and made comments and recommendations to the Executive on a number of occasions, which was mostly noted and/ or accepted, to help them make well informed and transparent decisions. A further key area to be scrutinised is the long term financial sustainability of Luton Borough Council.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE REVIEW GROUP

The Health and Social Care Review Group (HSCRG), a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, continued to sit as the Council's arrangement for scrutinising health and social care services in Luton.

Its responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and scrutinising any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health and social care services in Luton;
- Holding to account all commissioners and providers of publicly funded healthcare and social care services, requiring them to listen and respond;

- Undertaking health and social care related topical reviews;
- Dealing with consultation relating to proposals for substantial service variation or development by NHS organisations, ensuring they are in the interests of local health services.

In the last year, HSCRG continued to monitor and review, commenting and making recommendations on a range of health and social care topics, including the following:

- Luton Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) re-procurement of Mental Health and Community Services;
- The Coroner's and associated services, in particular the non-invasive post-mortems pilot scheme designed to reduce delays for relatives making funeral arrangements in cases deemed suitable by the Coroner;
- Safeguarding, focusing on prevention of child sexual exploitation, following the revelations, e.g. in Rotherham;
- A number of adult social care items, including, Caring for Carers Strategy, Home Care Services, the Care Act, Loneliness and Social Isolation and the Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Strategy 2014 – 2017;
- The 'Better Together' programme and the Better Together Funding application, promoting integration of Health and Social Care Programmes;
- The East of England Ambulance Service Strategic Plan.
- The review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and

APPENDIX

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment;

- A number of Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) items, including, its Financial Recovery Strategy, Commissioning Intentions 2015-16, Five Year Health System Strategy, Urgent Care Service and Stroke Pathway Review;

Although there were no full scale task & finish reviews in 2014/15, HSCRG continued to monitor progress of its recommendations relating to previous reviews, including Discharge from Hospital, Infant Mortality and the re-provision of community transport.

A small scale task and finish review was undertaken into the proposals by Luton CCG to change the Repeat Prescribing System, during which time HSCRG encouraged partners to work closely together including Local Medical Committee (LMC), Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) and Luton Healthwatch. Despite some process issues, HSCRG was satisfied with the desired outcomes, including reducing medicine waste, improving patients' safety and making savings for re-investment in local services.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- The Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group commenced in February 2014 and concluded in December 2014.
- The Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group's final report and

recommendations highlighted concerns around domestic abuse training for all front line staff, advice on housing and benefits, access to information on where people can seek help and advice; raising awareness schools on health and unhealthy relationships which will also include coercive and controlling behaviours; and empowering residents from BME communities to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and to seek help and advice.

- During the course of the review the government extended the definition to include young people aged over 16 to raise more awareness among younger victims and to assist support services to recognise the different forms of domestic abuse which goes beyond physical violence. The government also changed the legislation in January 2015 to make coercive, controlling and threatening behaviour a criminal offence.
- All 13 recommendations were accepted by the Executive who commended the report and the hard work of the task and finish group.
- Progress on the recommendations will be monitored by the OSB through periodical updates.

NEW CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW GROUP (CSRG)

This new review group has been formed in recognition of the need to increase specific focus on matters affecting children and young people.

APPENDIX

L&D Hospital – Performance
of Medical Services

It will be responsible for matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of education and children's social care services in Luton.

The terms of reference for the new review group was considered at full council in July 2015 and approved by the OSB in August 2015. The first meeting of the CSRG will take place in September where dates of future meetings will be agreed along with a work programme.

CHALLENGES FOR 2015/16

The Overview and Scrutiny Board will continue to focus on the big issues affecting the town and to raise the profile and awareness of the Overview and Scrutiny process with our partners and Council Officers, to encourage participation and involvement. Scrutiny work programmes are developing well for 2015/16 and key issues have already been identified including:

- Indoor Sports Facilities
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Women and Girls Participation in Sport
- Housing Benefits
- Gangs and Guns Strategy
- Waste
- Social Work Practices
- The re-development of the Luton and Dunstable Hospital
- Review of the Proposal to move the Fracture Clinic at the L&D to the Edwin Lobo Clinic at the Luton Travelodge Hotel
- Review of the Provision of Patients Transportation at the

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EXECUTIVE - The Executive is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Executive Members have specific areas of responsibility eg: Housing, Environment, Adult Social Care.

CALL-IN - this is the process by which the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers whether a decision has been properly taken or is the right decision.

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS – Time limited groups set up by the OSB to focus on a particular issue, either Council responsibility or other partner agencies such as Health Trusts, and to make recommendations to Executive. Whilst the Executive is not obliged to support the recommendations, it has been shown that effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Executive support for reviews undertaken.

CONTACT

If you want to know more, or have any suggestions for scrutiny, contact us in the Democracy Team on 01582 546041 or email scrutiny@luton.gov.uk.