

Annual Report to the Council from the Scrutiny Committee

The following report highlights the main areas of work the Scrutiny Committee has undertaken in 2012/13.

The Committee's work falls broadly into two categories. We have studied and challenged the work of external bodies whose services impact the residents of this district and also looked at services provided by Uttlesford District Council itself.

External Bodies

During 2012/13 the Scrutiny Committee received reports and presentations from a number of outside bodies. I would like to pass on the Committee's thanks for the way these organisations have engaged with us and ensured representatives have been available to attend our meetings.

Bodies that we have looked at over the course of the year included the East of England Ambulance Service, Essex Police, Essex County Council's Highways department and West Essex PCT (now NHS England). The subjects we have covered include:

- GP accessibility in growth areas
- Ambulance cover, emergency response times in rural areas and station closures
- GP provision and the future of the PCT
- Police station closures, staffing cuts and the impact on crime figures and response times
- The impact of Highways reorganisation, the programme of road repairs for the Uttlesford District and the departments' interaction with our Highways Panel

Internal services

In addition to the above, the Committee also scrutinised a number of internal services and service change proposals. Part of its annual work programme involves examining the Council's proposed budget before its submission to Cabinet and the Committee gave considerable time to this matter, particularly the Housing Revenue Account and what the changes in the funding of local authority housing meant for the Council and its tenants.

As well as budget scrutiny, the Scrutiny Committee also discussed:

- Elements of the Local Plan
- Jubilee Fund
- Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- New waste collection arrangements

- Homelessness
- Car park charges
- Enforcement of fly parking

Ongoing work

During 2012/13 following an initial discussion about car park charges, the Scrutiny Committee has set up a task group to look at parking and the provision of spaces in the district. This work is underway and the task group will be reporting its findings back to the Committee later this year. The Committee will then need to decide whether it should make recommendations to Cabinet based on these findings. The Committee has set its work programme for 2013/14 and will be looking at a range of internal and external issues during the year.

The Committee will build on the work it has already started around GP accessibility and provision and ambulance cover in 2013/14.

I would like to give my thanks to the way that all members of the Committee have engaged with the scrutiny function in 2012/13 and also to Adrian Webb, Richard Auty and especially Victoria Taylor for the invaluable officer support they give the Committee. Mr Chairman, I present this report for acceptance by the Council.

Cllr Elizabeth Godwin
Chairman, Scrutiny Committee