

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 16 May 2017

16

Title: Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

Author: Cllr Alan Dean, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

Item for information

Summary

1. This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee in 2016/17 and asks the committee to consider the 2017/18 work programme.

Recommendations

2. None

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. The Scrutiny Committee membership has now been in place for 2 years. At the start of each year the Committee consider its work programme, which is added to throughout the committee cycle.
7. The main areas of the committee's work in 2016/17 were as follows:
 - Reviewed planning obligations, focusing on two key elements; the ways of funding infrastructure and the Council's systems for monitoring and enforcing obligations.
 - Pre-scrutinised the Local Council Tax Scheme 2017/18 and provided advice to Cabinet.
 - Began an assessment of Uttlesford's working relationship with Essex County Council, concentrating on the Highways service, and more specifically on two main areas of concern; the reporting of maintenance issues and progressing projects submitted by parish councils.
 - Reviewed the proposed Building Control Partnership between authorities in Essex for a shared building control service and made a recommendation to Cabinet not to proceed.
 - Considered alterations to the call-in procedures and made suggestions to the Constitution Working Group that were adopted.
 - Assessed the first part of a review into Grants, surrounding governance arrangements.
 - Reviewed a proposal on whether to sign up to the four year extension to the joint agreement with the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) and made recommendations to agree in principle that UDC commit to NEPP and provided some areas for potential improvements.
 - Commissioned the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to review progress on the emerging Local Plan to date. Considered the main issues highlighted within the report and an action plan to address weaknesses in the process, which set out the Officers' response to the report's findings. This matter will be kept under review.
 - Scrutinised the draft 2017/18 Budget and provided feedback to Cabinet.
 - Reviewed the Quiet Lanes initiative and established their current application in Uttlesford.
 - Pre-scrutinised the Equality Scheme, and made recommendations to Cabinet.
8. In addition to the main areas of work listed above the committee formed a Task and Finish Group to conduct a detailed review of Enforcement. The purpose of the review was to determine whether Enforcement services were meeting the expectations of the Council and stakeholders and whether those expectations were realistic.

9. The Enforcement final report was considered by the committee at its meeting on 6 September 2016. After a detailed discussion the committee agreed to submit the report to Cabinet. Cabinet received the report at its meeting on 26 October 2016 and Resolved that “a further report on the council’s enforcement service be considered at a future Cabinet meeting, with the report to reflect on some of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Review of Enforcement”.
10. That report was received at Cabinet on 12 January 2017 and the following recommendations were approved:
 - the corporate customer charter be updated
 - an overarching corporate enforcement strategy be developed supported by enforcement policies for:
 - benefits
 - debt recovery
 - development management including building control
 - environmental health
 - licensing
 - litter, fly-tipping, flyposting, abandoned and untaxed vehicles
 - taxis and private hire operators
 - regular reports with a schedule of cases be generated and distributed together with management information for performance review purposes as soon as the database had been addressed
11. During 2016/17 the Committee also called in two Cabinet decisions, the Air Quality Action Plan and the Adoption of Street Naming and Numbering Policy.
12. Through the scrutiny of the Air Quality Action Plan, Cabinet agreed not to implement the decision taken on 15 September 2016 and Officers would continue to work on the plan taking account of the points raised at Scrutiny Committee, and the AQAP would be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting.
13. Officers are now reviewing the Street Naming and Numbering Policy further and will be referred back to Cabinet once this has been completed.
14. More recently the Committee agreed to establish a new standing item on the agenda, Status Report. This item keeps Members informed with progress of any outstanding scrutiny items/decisions.
15. Looking forward at 2017/18 the following topics were identified at the Scrutiny 2015/16 review as potentially being suitable for review in the longer term, but have not yet been timetabled:
 - A review of the cabinet system

- Budget consultation process, to consider the purpose and management of the budget consultation, and steer how it should be handled in the future
- Affordable housing provision
- Evaluation of controls in place regarding information provided by developers
- Possibilities around enhancing the council's recycling and waste collection scheme
- Pavement parking, to understand what can be done legally to prevent and enforce against pavement parking.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan implementation
- Commercialisation
- Pre scrutinise Day Centre Cabinet report

16. The Scrutiny Committee would welcome review suggestions from the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team.