

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 29 April 2014

12

Title: Scrutiny Committee 2013/14 Review and 2014/15 Plan

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report provides an overview of what the scrutiny committee has looked at during 2013/14 and the proposed work programme for 2014/15.

Recommendations

2. The Scrutiny Committee considers potential areas for review in 2014/15.

Financial Implications

3. None.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

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

5. During 2013/14, the Scrutiny Committee has received reports and presentations from a number of outside bodies including the East of England Ambulance Service, Essex Police, West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS England. The subject areas covered were:
 - a. GP accessibility in growth areas.
 - b. Current GP provision and patient ratio.
 - c. Changes to NHS England and the CCG.
 - d. Ambulance cover, emergency response times in rural areas and ambulance station closures.
 - e. Police and Crime Commissioner (update from Scrutiny Committee Chairman)

6. The committee has also scrutinised a number of internal services and service change proposals. These include:
 - a. Council owned car parks.
 - b. Planning performance.
 - c. Housing Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
 - d. Septic tanks.
 - e. Rural Broadband.
 - f. Dog Fouling.
 - g. Local Plan.
 - h. Highways Strategic Partnership.
 - i. Airport related parking.
 - j. 2014/15 Budget proposals including HRA, Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Programme 2014/15 - 2018/19, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Reserves, and the General Fund.
 - k. Statutory Services (on-going).
 - l. Trade waste contracts and pricing.

7. The committee created a Task Group to investigate the provision of council owned car parking within the district. The review included usage, capacity, ticket options and impact on businesses. Evidence was gathered through consultation with the public and analysis of usage and income data supplied by the North Essex Parking Partnership.

The Task Group made recommendations including:

- Further investigation into a 30 minute free parking at all car parks except Swan Meadow, instead of free parking after 3pm.
- Facilitate the establishment of a parking rebate scheme for Stansted Mountfitchet by local businesses and retailers.
- Discontinue the 4 hour tariff at The Common car park.
- Improve signage.
- Review with NEPP the reliability of data.
- Investigate patterns of usage further, specifically in areas of development.

- Ensure that car park capacity is accessed and fully understood at planning stage with proposed mitigation clearly set out.

The report was recently considered by Cabinet and it was agreed that the scrutiny report should be further considered alongside a cabinet review of car parking capacity within district centres, which will be presented at Cabinet in due course.

8. The Scrutiny Committee has previously indicated it may wish to consider the following topics in 2014/15:
 - Day centres
 - Tenants scrutiny panel –on-going
 - Swimming pool provision
 - East of England Ambulance Service
 - Rural broadband implementation update
9. A scoping document for each review will be produced and presented at the scrutiny meeting in advance of the full report. The document outlines the areas to be covered and will enable Members to confirm it meets their expectations.
10. The scoping document will be supplied to outside bodies for external reviews. The organisations will be asked to supply a written report for Members to review prior to the meeting. If the report does not satisfy the terms of reference in the scoping document, then the outside body will be invited to the following scrutiny meeting.
11. In addition to the scrutiny reviews there will also be other areas of planned work coming to the Committee, including a preparatory report on the budget process in November, followed by all budget reports in February.