

Meeting: COUNCIL

**Council Agenda
Item:**

12

Date: 16 JULY 2014

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2013/2014

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during 2013/14 be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 Overview and Scrutiny's role is to operate as an independent function of the Councils decision making process, by having overview of the Council's decision making, holding the Executive to account, having the power to "call in" decisions for reconsideration, undertake internal and external scrutiny reviews.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution requires that there be an annual report to Council on the scrutiny activity over the past Municipal Year (see Article 6.3 of the Constitution).
- 3.3 Following an internal review in early 2013 of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements, officers presented Members with 4 potential Scrutiny structures and from these options it was agreed by Council to constitute a Scrutiny Committee structure comprised of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three Select Committees (Community, Environment & Economy and Housing).
- 3.4 This report is a retrospective look at the scrutiny review work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the three Select Committees during 2013-14.
- 3.5 In addition to the Scrutiny studies the Committees have worked with their relevant Executive Portfolio Holders developing policies and considering

reports before their submission to the Executive. This report, however, focuses on the Committees' Scrutiny role.

- 3.6 In accordance with the Constitution the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also charged with scrutinising the Executive's proposals on Budget & Policy Framework items that go before Council for decision. The Committees also considered updates on Scrutiny studies that had been undertaken previously, examining the progress of recommendations and where appropriate following up on matters raised. On occasions individual Committees had also been asked to comment on formal consultations.

4. SUMMARY OF SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEWS FOR 2013/2014

- 4.1 Each Select Committee review made formal recommendations to the relevant Executive Member, officers and external partners. This process has been fully reported to each of the Select Committees and recorded in its agenda papers and Minutes. The following is a summary of the outcomes of each scrutiny review.

4.2 Community Select Committee – Review of Community Transport

- 4.2.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Select Committee Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, Cllr Ralph Raynor
- Head of Leisure, Environmental Health and Children's Services, Aidan Sanderson
- Leisure Manager, Geoff Caine
- Community Transport Officer, Paula Mills
- Ian Edwards, Community Bus Driver
- Mrs Sybil Graham and Mrs Barbara Swainston (Community Bus Users)
- David Neilan, HCC Integrated Transport Partnership and Angie Reynolds HCC Transport Access & Safety - Fleet Operations Team Leader

- 4.2.2 In terms of community transport provision in the town, there are 5 levels of service ranging from (1) Commercial Bus operators (free bus pass for pensioners); (2) CVS Volunteer Car Journeys (users pay mileage rates); (3) HCC Dial-a-ride (assisted service which users pay mileage rates); (4) SBC Community Transport (assisted service, users pay a flat rate fixed fee per journey) and (5) HCC Health Shuttle Bus.

- 4.2.3 The review considered the following issues:

- Who uses the SBC Community Transport Service?
- What service provision is there in the town?
 - Commercial Buses
 - North Herts & Stevenage CVS
 - HCC dial-a-ride

- SBC Community Transport Buses
- HCC Health Shuttle Bus
- Other community based groups who operate their own mini bus (9 in North Herts)
- Equalities & Diversity issues affecting the service
- SBC Community Transport is appreciated and seen as a lifeline for many users
- What could be done to improve the service?
 - Improved publicity and information about all of the Community Transport available
 - Promote the use of vouchers that family members can purchase to subsidise leisure trips & use of Members LCB funding
 - Corporate sponsorship
- Income Generation
- Alternative Delivery Models

4.2.4 The recommendations of this review were as follows:

4.2.5 That during the next round of priority based budgeting officers make a case for keeping the service not just on economic grounds but against the high social value that the service provides to its users. If the Executive proposes to make savings in this area during the 2015-16 priority based budget process then the Community Select Committee would request an interview with the respective Portfolio Holders and officers at an appropriate time during the budget process.

4.2.6 That officers investigate ways in which partners can work together to provide improved publicity with joint efforts to advertise all Community Transport that is available in Stevenage and the wider area as detailed at paragraph 3.6.

4.2.7 That officers consider looking at ways of making the Leisure Trips available to a wider group of users by investigating the possibility of adopting a voucher scheme as suggested at paragraph 3.7.

4.2.8 That officers consider approaching larger local businesses with regards to providing some corporate sponsorship to support the service as suggested at paragraph 3.8.

4.2.9 During 2014/15 officers should work with current community transport providers and other stakeholders where appropriate to investigate the feasibility of establishing an integrated delivery model which meets all of the client's needs possibly through a new or existing (if suitable) social enterprise.

4.2.10 That officers investigate the feasibility of using the Community Transport Buses beyond their existing hours of use for hire by Community Groups for further income generation.

4.2.11 A full response to the recommendations was received from the Portfolio Holder for Economy Enterprise and Transport, for brevity the following is a

summary of the response (the full response is available for inspection on request):

4.2.12 Officers will:

- (i) consider a methodology of how the social value of the service can be calculated and link this to the Priority Based Budget process;
- (ii) discuss with other community transport providers opportunities for improving publicity;
- (iii) investigate methods of introducing a voucher type scheme for Community Transport;
- (iv) consider external funding and sponsorship opportunities for the service including writing to all major companies in Stevenage offering sponsorship opportunities;
- (v) consider alternative future delivery methods for the Community Transport Service with other providers and stakeholders and discuss a future delivery model for Member's consideration; and
- (vi) look at opportunities for maximising usage and new income streams within the community beyond its current usage.

4.3 **Environment & Economy Select Committee – Review of Refuse & Recycling**

4.3.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr John Gardner
- SBC Head of Environmental Services, Lee Myers
- SBC Service Manager, Simon Martin
- SBC Performance Manager, Chris Dorow
- SBC Recycling Officer, Tim Fitzsimons
- SBC Environmental Campaigns Officer, Lizzie Moring
- Dacorum Borough Council Head of Environmental Services, Craig Thorpe as the reviews "critical friend"
- Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, Partnership Development Manager, Duncan Jones
- HCC Head of Waste Management, Matthew King

4.3.2 The review considered the following issues:

- Missed bins
- Inclement weather service disruption – improving communication
- Replacement or extra recycling bins

- Nappy collection service – recommending its removal and promotion of real nappy services
- The services performance regarding complaints
- Recycling in flat blocks
- Cardboard recycling and the effect of the Waste Partnerships decision to remove it from the green waste collection
- Reduce and reuse
- Recycling Campaigns
- How Equalities & Diversity issues are addressed regarding the service?
- Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's challenge re closer joint working

4.3.3 The recommendations of this review were:

4.3.4 That notwithstanding that each inclement weather incident produces a different outcome, that Officers look to draw together an agreed action plan that can be followed during inclement weather so that Members and the public are kept informed of the impact to services by such means as the use of roadside signage and text messaging and that this information is displayed prominently and updated regularly on the Council's web site.

4.3.5 That Officers investigate how the review's 'Critical Friend' from Dacorum Borough Council has managed to establish 5000 residents to sign up to the text scheme, with a view to increasing the Council's own parallel scheme, which would help during periods of service disruption.

4.3.6 That Officers report back to Members on the data trends that have been recorded with complaints following at least six months of using the Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) IT software.

4.3.7 That Officers further develop the Policy for missed bins. Officers to consider adopting the 'Critical Friend' Dacorum Borough Council's approach to missed bins, which involves classifying them as "justified or unjustified" as described at paragraph 3.2.1 The Policy could determine when and whether to revisit an unjustified missed bin at a time that is convenient to the service and therefore not incur any additional expense. Members recommend that officers use the experience described by Dacorum as a starting point for further developing the policy for missed bins, including recycling contamination, with a view to making savings in future years.

4.3.8 That the service continue to replace broken or stolen/misplaced bins but monitor patterns via the CRM from specific addresses for both commercial and residential to challenge any misuse of the service.

4.3.9 That Officers consider a pilot to provide a smaller residual waste bin to new properties or for replacement bins to encourage recycling.

4.3.10 That Officers consider withdrawing the disposable nappy collection service and making a direct cashable saving of £3,500 for the purple refuse sacks.

4.3.11 That Officers investigate alternative simpler vandal proof on street recycling facilities for the town centre and community shopping areas around the town to replace the current vandalised facilities.

4.3.12 That Officers provide Members with the results of the surveys currently being undertaken with residents of flats and tower blocks into the recycling available at these properties, acknowledging that funding for any amendments would have to be drawn from the Housing Revenue Account and noting that the surveys do not cover those living in privately rented, or owned, accommodation.

4.3.13 That Officers undertake a review of the cardboard recycling blue box service as the current receptacles are too small for most households needs.

4.3.14 A full response to the recommendations was received from the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration, for brevity the following is a summary of the response (the full response is available for inspection on request):

4.3.15 Officers will:

- (i) Write a policy document for collections during inclement weather, highlighting the need for flexibility in the decision-making process and including prompt communication with residents;
- (ii) Continue to prominently alert residents of service disruption. However, it is not currently possible via SBC ICT to offer the same service as Dacorum (the reviews "critical friend") whose residents have the option to sign up to their text messaging by sending a text message;
- (iii) Report back to Members on the performance of the service using the CRM to monitor complaints/service enquiries;
- (iv) investigate with IT piloting a simple mobile texting service which crews can use to report bins that are not out which would enable the service to use a "justified or unjustified" missed bin collection also encourage residents to property number their bins;
- (v) monitor request for receptacles via the CRM;
- (vi) as part of a whole service recycling review, consider the viability of offering smaller residual bins to new properties in a partial co-mingled collection;
- (vii) during this year end the nappy collection scheme as agreed through the savings process (all current users of the service will be communicated with about alternative options);
- (viii) replace existing recycling bins in the town centre with bins containing three sections, one for litter and two for recycling paper and cans and plastic bottles; and look at rolling out to other neighbourhood centres;

- (ix) survey all flat blocks regarding recycling facilities; and
- (x) look at options for collecting cardboard which will be linked to the whole service review of a partial co-mingled or fully co-mingled collection scheme.

4.4 Housing Select Committee – Review of Decent Homes

4.4.1 In conducting this review the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- A focus group comprising of residents of Silkin Court and tenants of different sized properties who had undergone Decent Homes Works from the 2 external contractors and the DSO
- Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Ann Webb
- Strategic Director Community, Matthew Partridge
- Assistant Director of Housing, Mike Haynes
- Head of Housing Property Services, Tony Campbell
- Housing Investment Service Manager, Allen Mortimer
- Resident Involvement Manager – Maureen Herdman
- Berni O'Regan, Customer Focus Manager
- SBC Decent Homes Project Managers – Paul O'Donnell (Wates) and Andrew Minter (Keepmoat)
- Project Management Representatives from Wates and Keepmoat - John Horkan (Wates), Graham Duncan and James Coatsman (Keepmoat)
- 2 SBC DSO Apprentices

4.4.2 The review considered the following issues:

- Site visits to properties having decent homes works carried out by the 2 external contractors and the DSO
- Site visit to Silkin Court
- Focus Group at Silkin Court involving residents of Silkin Court and tenants of individual properties that had recently had or were still having Decent Homes improvements carried out
- The role of the Wardens at Sheltered Schemes whilst Decent Homes works are undertaken
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Quality control of the Sub-contractors
- Redecoration and making good
- What Equalities and Diversity checks are carried out by Contractors and the DSO & SBC Housing Officers?
- The legacy elements of the Decent Homes Contract
- Development of Apprentices

4.4.3 The recommendations of this review were:

4.4.4 That officers consider ways of providing improved monitoring of works throughout the process.

- 4.4.5 That officers consider the current communication with tenants prior to and during works to see where improvements can be made to the current processes.
- 4.4.6 In an attempt to manage expectations, officers consider ways in which they can ensure that Tenants are made aware that carrying out Decent Homes works such as providing new kitchens, bathrooms, rewiring, new boilers and central heating systems will be disruptive.
- 4.4.7 That subsequent Decent Homes works at sheltered schemes should involve two Resident Liaison Officers and two Scheme Managers to improve resident liaison.
- 4.4.8 That a log book for resident's comments should be introduced when carrying out Decent Homes works in Sheltered Accommodation Schemes and that this should be reviewed on a daily basis by the Scheme Managers for feedback to the Project Manager.
- 4.4.9 Provision of an 'easy to understand' instruction guide (with practical assistance) for tenants regarding new equipment including heating systems and extractor fans should be provided.
- 4.4.10 That there should be daily sign off list for trades working in a property.
- 4.4.11 That the role of Sheltered Housing Wardens during Decent Homes works be reassessed by officers with a hope that this would lend additional support to the Wardens. The Housing Select Committee is of the view that expectations regarding the liaison role of the Wardens must be realistic.
- 4.4.12 That Housing Officers ensure that the contractors and the Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) are present when tenants are given the option to choose between conduit or chasing, which is signed off by the contractor and the RLO.
- 4.4.13 That the Clerk of Works for the BMO to carry out a site visit on the Decent Homes works carried out on Pitt Court that was completed under the previous Decent Homes contract and provide feedback on the completed works.
- 4.4.14 That Members support officers in pursuit of setting up a social enterprise with trainers such as North Herts College/Ridgmond Training or other interested training providers to provide apprentices to carry out decoration works.
- 4.4.15 That the legacy elements introduced in the Decent Homes Contract continue as a feature of future capital works programmes.
- 4.4.16 That officers revisit the EIA for Decent Homes with a view to refreshing the document using the new SBC template and procedure to ensure that the appropriate protected characteristic groups are addressed (Disability and Age) by 31 January 2014.

- 4.4.17 That officers continue to monitor 10% of the tenant profiling information sheets that the contractors currently undertake before carrying out Decent Homes works and report back to Members on this process.
- 4.4.18 That officers report back to Members during the 204/15 Municipal Year on the learning derived from responding to tenant's negative comments on their Customer Satisfaction Surveys as detailed at paragraph 3.6.2 in the report.
- 4.4.19 A full response to the recommendations was received from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, for brevity the following is a summary of the response (the full response is available for inspection on request):
- 4.4.20 A full response to the recommendations was received from the Portfolio Holder for Housing, for brevity the following is a summary of the response (the full response is available for inspection on request):
- 4.4.21 It was agreed that:
- (i) Contractors should provide increased presence on site with two staff trained in resident liaison being present throughout the period of works, with an SBC Project Manager attending on a daily basis;
 - (ii) as a direct result of the Scrutiny review communication with tenants was reviewed. Changes were made with tenants receiving visits prior to works commencing, to explain the process and during works, to ensure all is in order. Feedback from Sheltered Housing and from residents is that there has been a marked improvement in communication with better awareness of what is happening;
 - (iii) to help manage expectations, tenants are advised at the pre-works visit of the disruption that can occur and during works further visits are undertaken to ensure that tenants are being inconvenienced as little as possible;
 - (iv) as detailed at response (i) above, staff now double up when major works programmes are being undertaken at sheltered housing schemes whilst the contractor has two staff trained in resident liaison on site at all times;
 - (v) when carrying out Decent Homes works in Sheltered Accommodation tenants' comments will be logged and discussed with the SBC Project Manager on a daily basis;
 - (vi) the contractor will develop an 'easy to use' guide for the tenants at Gladstone and Shaftsbury Court in readiness for when the works are completed;
 - (vii) a daily sign-off list would be used at each property or scheme;

- (viii) all staff involved in the Decent Homes programme would be re-assessed, paying particular attention to that played by non-technical staff, such as scheme wardens/manager, in order to support them in their role whilst Decent Homes works are carried out;
- (ix) regarding the recommendation addressing the issue of electrical rewiring via conduit or chasing, it transpired that the works had been carried out earlier prior to the Decent Homes works. However, a qualified Building Surveyor will be taking on additional qualified staff over the next few months to ensure we have the capacity to undertake more pre and post-works inspections to avoid poor quality works;
- (x) the Clerk of Works for the BMO will carry out a site visit on the Decent Homes works carried out on Pitt Court. Wates are to re-visit the scheme at Pitt Court and change some of the conduit they fitted, whilst the BMO's electricians will correct all other problems;
- (xi) the setting up a social enterprise with trainers such as North Herts College/Ridgmond Training or other interested training providers to provide apprentices to carry out decoration works would be put on the Housing work-plan for 2014/15;
- (xii) Officers will build into any future procurement the need for contractors to leave a positive legacy;
- (xiii) the Equalities Impact Assessment be refreshed prior to 31 January 2014, as requested by Members;
- (xiv) officers would continue to monitor 10% of the tenant profiling information sheets that the contractors currently undertake before carrying out Decent Homes works and report back to Members on this process; and
- (xv) officers would report back to Members on the learning derived from responding to tenant's comments on their Customer Satisfaction Surveys and welcomed Members suggestions for a future redesign of the Satisfaction Surveys.

4.5 Statutory Crime and Disorder Committee – Community Select Committee – Review of the Community Safety Action Plan

- 4.5.1 In undertaking this meeting the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

Debbie Barker, SBC Community Safety Officer
 Cllr Richard Henry, Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities
 Nick Parry (SBC Chief Executive) and Chair of Responsible Authority Group
 Chief Inspector Richard Harbon, Stevenage Safer Neighbourhood Team,
 Herts Constabulary

Inspector Simon Tabert, Stevenage Safer Neighbourhood Team, Herts Constabulary

4.5.2 The Community Select Committee scrutinised the Stevenage Community Safety Partnership's, Community Safety outcomes for 2013/14 and the emerging Community Safety priorities for 2014/15.

4.5.3 The findings and key recommendations of the meeting were:

- Members noted that although the level of crime had generally fallen within Stevenage, domestic abuse and physical assault was still increasing
- Members appreciated the importance of crime reporting by victims but also acknowledged its challenges when it generated adverse publicity as this increased anxiety among residents
- Members considered the Draft Community Safety Action Plan 2014/15 and welcomed the fact that the outcomes of a survey, which asked Members to select their top 3 community safety priorities, were the same as the priorities in the Action Plan, albeit in a different order
- Members agreed the top community safety priorities for 2014/15 which are – (i) Domestic Violence (ii) Acquisitive Crime, robbery and theft from person (iii) Violent Crime, alcohol & drugs (iv) Hate Crime (v) Community Reassurance and (vi) ASB criminal damage and arson

4.5.4 Members agreed to revisit the priorities in the Autumn to measure progress of the action plan against the priorities and again in the Spring to look at the priorities for 2015/16.

4.5.5 As there is a statutory duty to carry out a Crime and Disorder review at least once a year monitoring of the outcomes of the review are picked up during the year.

4.6 Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Budget and Policy Framework Items:

4.6.1 Throughout the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out Budget and Policy Framework Scrutiny as required by the Council's Constitution, and also one off scrutiny of strategic issues.

4.7 Overview & Scrutiny Committee sitting as a Select Committee – Members' Expenses and Hospitality

4.7.1 In undertaking this meeting the Scrutiny Members received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- Cllr Sharon Taylor, Leader of the Council
- Scott Crudgington, Strategic Director (Resources)
- Stephen Hollingsworth as Independent 'Critical Friend' to the review
- Jackie Cansick, Constitutional Services Manager
- Maureen Nicholson, Members Services Officer

4.7.2 The review considered the following issues:

- Member Refreshments
- Conference & Training attended by Members
- Town Twinning
- Community Reception
- Mayoral Expenses
- Equalities and Diversity Issues
- Travel and Car Parking
- The views of the critical friend

4.7.3 The recommendations of this review were:

4.7.4 That the input into the review from Stephen Hollingsworth be noted and that the use of a 'critical friend' be encouraged in subsequent reviews.

4.7.5 That the real and symbolic value of the Mayor, and the level of support required to carry out this important role be recognised.

4.7.6 That the proposed realignment of staff and Member mileage rates under the Single Status agreement to those advised by HMRC as detailed in the report be noted.

4.7.7 That the reduction in the spending on Members refreshments as detailed in the report be noted.

4.7.8 That consideration be given to renaming 'The Community Reception' 'The Mayor's Community Reception' as detailed in the review report.

4.7.9 That any future policy regarding Mayoral transport should be supportive of a situation whereby the Mayor attending particular high profile civic functions should not self-drive as detailed in the review report.

4.7.10 That the Committee is supportive of a Leader led review into Town Twinning activities as detailed in the review report.

4.7.11 That there should be more publicity to advise Members of the availability of conferences and training events to assist Members development, as detailed in the review report.

4.7.12 That Members attending courses and conferences should be encouraged to share their experiences with all Members, perhaps through MMP sessions and where they consider the content to be of poor value they should be encouraged to give feedback to the provider.

4.7.13 That there should be (i) a review of the induction process for new Members especially with regard to expenses, allowances and support services so that new Members are clear as their entitlement to claim for and take advantage of training opportunities and (ii) new Members induction should consider teaming new Members with a mentor.

4.7.14 That all Members should have a Personal Development and Training Plan as detailed in the review report.

4.7.15 That the Carers Attendance Allowance be reviewed, particularly in respect of the ability to pay family members for performing caring duties and the monthly payment cap Plan as detailed in the review report.

4.7.16 Members and Member Services give due consideration to the Council's Green Travel Plan when selecting the most appropriate mode of travel to attend events.

4.7.17 A full response to the recommendations was received from the Leader, for brevity the following is a summary of the response (the full response is available for inspection on request):

4.7.18 It was agreed that:

- (i) The practise of inviting a 'critical friend' to help assist a review has been used for some time in Scrutiny and will, when appropriate, continue to be utilised in future reviews;
- (ii) the value of the Mayor is understood, fully supported and will continue to be in the future;
- (iii) Members mileage rates will align with HMRC rates from the 1 July 2014;
- (iv) the cost of the current approach to providing light refreshments before meetings is over 75% cheaper than if Members claimed meal allowances as defined within the Council's allowances scheme;
- (v) regarding considering renaming the Community Reception "the Mayor's Community Reception" the matter would be considered by Officers with the views of the sponsors taken into account;
- (vi) the current practice of the Mayors secretary undertaking weekly scheduling of the Mayors commitments, including appropriate transport arrangements for the event in question, would continue;
- (vii) the Leader led review into Town Twinning activities will commence this summer;
- (viii) there would be improved publicity to advise Members of the availability of conferences and training events to assist Member's development;
- (ix) Members attending courses and conferences should be encouraged to share their experiences with all Members. All events delivered to Members request feedback following training, at the point of delivery. All feedback is reviewed to provide quality assurance. Learning and

Development will contact individual Members to seek feedback and invite formal or informal sharing of knowledge;

- (x) within the new Members induction process information and guidance on expenses, allowances and support services will be built in to this year's programme. The promotion of a new Members 'Buddy' system is welcomed but is dependent on the willingness of existing Members to assume a role;
- (xi) regarding the recommendation that all Members should have a Personal Development and Training Plan, this is supported by the Member Charter, which suggests that there should be a Councillor led strategy for Councillor Induction and Development. All Councillors should be offered a PDP delivered through Council hierarchies. Further work is required to identify and decide who would be responsible for which reviews, with due account for succession plan. Learning and Development could provide supportive documentation should a formal process be agreed;
- (xii) The Carers Attendance Allowance be reviewed by the Strategic Director (Resources), who will investigate widening the eligibility of carer attendance allowance to family members; and
- (xiii) Members and Member Services give due consideration to the Council's Green Travel Plan when selecting the most appropriate mode of travel to attend events. However, a balance between cost, calendar commitments before and after events and green travel issues must be struck.

4.8 Monitoring outcomes from previous reviews

- 4.8.1 As well as undertaking their own specific reviews the Select Committees were invited to revisit previous Scrutiny reviews that fall into their area of interest.

4.9 One off meetings to consider strategic issues

- 4.9.1 The three Select Committees held one off meetings to consider matters that were of strategic importance to their areas, these included:

Community Select Committee –

- Francis Report – Response to HCC Survey regarding District Council's views of the HCC Health Scrutiny, 18 July 2013
- Stevenage's Commitment to Carers, 10 October 2013
- HCC Consultation on Child Poverty Strategy, 28 January 2014
- Public Health Discussion with HCC Director of Public Health, Jim McManus, 16 April 2014

Housing Select Committee –

- Tenant Engagement & Involvement, 13 June 2013
- The Impact on Housing from Welfare Reform, 25 March 2014
- Council relationship with Registered Social Landlords and the state of the local Private Rented Sector, 22 April 2014

5. OTHER ISSUES

5.1 Training

5.1.1 The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Select Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended a training session on Chairing Skills delivered by South East Employers Training.

5.1.2 A full programme of training for Select Committee Members has been arranged the first session for all Scrutiny Members is being held on Wednesday 23 July 2014.

5.1.3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Select Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended a Parliamentary Seminar arranged by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) which provided Members with an insight into the working of a Parliamentary Select Committee.

5.2 2014/2015 Scrutiny Workplan

5.2.1 The 2 Select Committees have agreed their Scrutiny work plan items for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

- Community Select Committee –Review of Private Rented Sector (Housing) & SoSafe RAG Community Safety Priorities/Action Plan Also, Members and Officers are currently giving due consideration to continuing the work started in 2013/14 with regard to a single Community Transport Provider
- Environment and Economy Select Committee – Tree & Hedge Review

5.2.2 In addition to undertaking all scrutiny of Budget & Policy Framework items and decisions of the Executive, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the capacity to undertake a “Select Committee” style meeting during the year if it so wishes.

5.2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the Council’s Forward Plan of Key Decisions and also consider all ‘Call-in’ requests in accordance with the Council’s Constitution as well as considering any Councillors Call for Action in relation to matters relating to Resources and any Petition appeals, in accordance with the Councils Petition Scheme, regarding matters relating to Resources or of a Corporate or Council wide nature.

5.2.4 A schedule of meetings for the 2 Select Committees has been arranged for the 2014-15 Municipal Year. These meetings will incorporate the scoping of

the review where Members will identify the areas they wish to cover during the review, who to interview, what evidence/background information is required and which Members will lead the questioning on a specific area. Meetings will also be arranged to revisit previous reviews to monitor actions.

- 5.2.5 Policy Development work will be undertaken as and when requested by Executive Portfolio Holders in consultation with Strategic Directors and Heads of Service.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

There is a budget of £2,500 to support study activities, site visits and specialist advice and training where necessary.

6.2 Legal Implications

Any legislative changes during the 2014-15 Municipal Year, will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the relevant Select Committee(s).

6.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Equalities and Diversity issues are considered at the scoping stage of each Scrutiny review with regards to questioning of witnesses and the collection of oral and written evidence. Also E&D issues are addressed in the final report for each review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 2000

Individual agendas and study material for each Scrutiny review undertaken by the Select Committees as described in this report are available for inspection.

The full Executive responses to the Scrutiny Reviews are available for inspection.

APPENDICES

None