

**Meeting** Overview & Scrutiny Committee sitting as a Select Committee

**Portfolio Area** Leader

**Date** 8 February 2018



## SCRUTINY OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

**Authors** Stephen Weaver | 2332

**Lead Officers** Stephen Weaver | 2332

**Contact Officer** Stephen Weaver | 2322

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report is to remind Scrutiny Members of the timeline around the scrutiny of this issue to date. Following the LGA Peer Review feedback on the recent review of SBC Communications carried out in November 2017, report attached at Appendix A, Members will be invited to comment on the findings and recommendations and whether they wish to add any further recommendations of their own.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members note the presentation and report and recommendations of the LGA Peer Review.

2.2 That any further recommendations that Members wish to add to those that the LGA Peer Team have made are made at the meeting.

### 3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed Media and Communications as a scrutiny review item when it agreed its work programme at its meeting on the 16 March 2015.

- 3.2 Subsequently the Media and Communications Scoping document was considered and agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee when it met on 19 October 2015 (see attached Appendix B).
- 3.3 At a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2015 Members received a presentation from the Assistant Director, Corporate Services and Transformation and the Communications Manager. Following this, Members raised a number of points about Communications at which included:
- The importance of intelligence to pre-empt issues and proactively engage with local press.
  - The benefit of positive news, especially with regard to any developing issues which might be of concern to Stevenage residents.
  - The need to build and maintain relationships with local media agencies.
  - The need to exercise caution when using social media such as Twitter or Facebook.
  - The need to strengthen 'out of hours' coverage especially for social media comments.
- 3.3.1 Based on Members comments at the presentation and in accordance with the stated aims of the scoping document, to engage with an expert external critical friend, the Assistant Director agreed to approach the LGA to carry out an independent Peer Review of the Council's communications and Members agreed to keep their review on hold pending the outcome of the Peer Review.

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report or Member review.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.2 There are no direct legal implications to this report or Member review.

## **APPENDICES**

- A Appendix A - LGA Peer Review feedback on the recent review of SBC Communications
- B Appendix B – Media and Communications Scoping Document