

REPORT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE POLICY AND CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**COUNCILLORS: Jim Shorrock
Derek Hardman**

**LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:
Denise Park**

Municipal year and Annual Review

We have reached the end of a very successful municipal cycle for Scrutiny. This year has seen Scrutiny continue to utilise pre-decision scrutiny and a more collaborative and appreciative approach by each Committee. This has ensured that the Corporate Plan is delivered and the Executive held to account to ensure best use of resources in challenging circumstances.

The progressive work of Scrutiny Members over the last few years throughout a period of unprecedented austerity has ensured that the Council has been able to focus on key lessons learned to assist with the delivery of its services whilst ensuring value and best practice in everything it does.

The Annual Review of Scrutiny was held on the 4th April 2016 to allow Members to contribute to the review of the Scrutiny year and consider future challenges facing the Council and the Borough. I will present the outcomes of the annual review at the June Council Forum meeting.

Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At the last meeting of Policy and Corporate Resources, the Committee discussed with the Executive Member for Resources the latest budget position update and received an update on proposed changes to the advice services. Members also considered the end of year work programme reports for all the Committees and the good work achieved by Members through the municipal year.

Completed areas of work for Policy and Corporate Resources have included; pre decision scrutiny on the Capita Contract, looking at the Council's Digital vision, reviewing implications of welfare reform from a resources perspective, challenging the Executive on the Council's budget and reviewing the Council's RIPA and CCTV policies.

Children's and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Children's and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its last meeting invited representatives of Transdev to their final meeting of the Municipal year, with the company's service provision for Young people being a key area of debate. Members also received a report from the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group on its work completed this year together with a series of recommendations for their attention. The Committee noted their end of year work programme report formally agreed the recommendations to be presented to the Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 21st March 2016.

Other completed areas for the Committee has included detailed reviews on, Prevent and Channel: Child sexual exploitation, reviewed Universal Credit for Care Leavers, Improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. Members have also revisited 2 legacy items, Transdev Recommendations and the School improvement service.

Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its final meeting, the Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report from the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen on homecare services within the Borough. Detailed discussions took place around the reports key findings with Members agreeing to endorse the 8 recommendations made by Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen.

The Committee also received an update on the uptake, challenges and work of the Blackburn Trussell Trust Foodbank. Members noted their end of year work programme report and agreed their recommendations for the 2015/16 municipal year.

As in previous years, the Committee has decided to continue to undertake a collaborative approach to its reviews.

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At the last meeting of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members completed their work programme for 2015-2016. This included finalising recommendations for their Scrutiny review into Car Parking and the Council's Growth Agenda.

The Committee has conducted successful reviews into selective landlord licensing, parking enforcement in the Borough, partnership work with Blackburn College, the Town Centre Capital projects and the Council's Growth Agenda.

At the beginning of the municipal year all Scrutiny Committees were asked to look at and consider key risks faced by the Council. It has been pleasing to note that all the Scrutiny Committees can demonstrate that in light of the ongoing challenges and cuts the Council faces, Members have considered and revisited the risks identified by the Executive Members at the beginning of the municipal year; to see if they remained the same, had become more or less of a concern, or in an ongoing era of austerity, new risks to portfolios had arisen during the course of the year. This has provided Members with assurance and oversight of the increasing difficulties the Council faces in continuing to deliver services.