

# **Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/2020**

## Foreword



**Councillor Lisa Smart**

*Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Chair  
2019/2020*

*2019-20 has been a busy year for the five scrutiny committees and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in Stockport. Scrutiny committees have looked at a range of issues both within their formal meetings and as part of the scrutiny reviews. We started the year by making recommendations to the Cabinet about which portfolios sat most comfortably within the remit of the relevant committees. Scrutiny committees continue to review progress and performance, provide challenge to decision makers and contribute to the policy formation work taking place.*

*This year, we have built upon the work from previous years in looking at how we do scrutiny in Stockport. As part of that work we were pleased to welcome the Leader of the Council and the Council's Chief Executive to a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and we thank them both for their time. We were also pleased to welcome Kathryn Rees to the role of Statutory Scrutiny Officer and to work with her and colleagues on streamlining and improving the information shared with scrutiny committees to enable members to fulfill their role.*

*Scrutiny Reviews continue to be a valuable means of improving understanding and accelerating change in how the Council operates and I would like to thank all those councillors and officers who took time to participate and contribute to the review process. It was not possible to complete all planned reviews this year due to a number of factors including key staff turnover and, in the latter part of the municipal year, the Coronavirus pandemic.*

*I would also like to place on record my thanks to those scrutiny members for rising to the challenge of addressing some big and sometimes difficult issues. Particular thanks go to those members who have joined reviews and working groups where they have been needed to bring political balance.*

## How Does Scrutiny Work?

The Leader of the Council and Seven Cabinet Members are responsible for the strategic management and decision making of all Council Services. Every council which operates "executive arrangements" (those that have a Leader and Cabinet – such as Stockport Council) must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Overview and Scrutiny does not make decisions, it acts as a 'critical friend' to the Cabinet (and partners) and undertakes evidence-based reviews and makes recommendations to the Cabinet. It is an essential element of governance arrangements in the council and seeks to improve policies and services for the people of Stockport by encouraging openness and accountability about the way decisions are made. Overview and Scrutiny can scrutinise and review the work and policies of the council and hold Cabinet Members and Chief Officers to account for their actions. It can also be consulted by the Cabinet or the council on the development of draft policies, action plans and reviews. It can also call-in Cabinet key decisions and initiate reviews of council services, functions or policies. It is not a mechanism for the handling of individual complaints, intervening in planning applications or acting as an appeals mechanism.

Five Scrutiny Committees made up of non-executive councillors are ultimately responsible for calling and holding the Cabinet to account and taking a lead in reviewing policy and matters of strategic direction. They also consider other issues relating to services provided by the council and, in some cases, services provided by partner organisations. The Committees assist in shaping new policies and monitor performance information against the standards we have set ourselves. The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee co-ordinates the overall work of the scrutiny committees.

For the 2019/2020 municipal year, the Council appointed the following five Scrutiny Committees:

- Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee – 9 members
- Children and Families Scrutiny Committee – 10 members (plus 2 co-optees)
- Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee – 9 members
- Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee – 9 members
- Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 9 members
- Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee – The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is made up of the five Scrutiny Committee chairs.

Each year each the Scrutiny Committees typically undertake one or more Scrutiny Reviews that focus on a particular issue, considering it in greater detail than is possible at the programmed Committee meetings. These reviews are undertaken by a Review Panel and will normally last around six months and may include a

mixture of interviews with relevant officers, research of best practice elsewhere, meetings with service users and community groups and consultation with wider parts of the community.

## **Scrutiny activity during the year**

### **Performance and Resource Monitoring**

Each quarter the Scrutiny Committees monitor the performance of each of the Cabinet portfolios and the Council service areas that fall within the remit of that Committee. The performance is assessed against the priorities set out in each of the Portfolio agreements agreed at the start of the year. The Committees also receive reports on requests which cover the council services within their remit.

### **Scrutiny of External Bodies**

Overview and scrutiny committees have accumulated a number of powers to undertake 'external scrutiny' of specific additional bodies. These include:

- Provision for 'health scrutiny' – of health bodies and authorities. Local authorities have the power to scrutinise health bodies and providers in their area or to set up joint committees to do so. They can require members or officers of local health bodies to provide information and to attend health scrutiny meetings to answer questions.
- Provision for a 'crime and disorder committee'. These are mandatory committees for all local authorities, which must scrutinise the delivery of crime and disorder strategies. Authorities which are delivering these strategies and which are subject to a report from such a committee must respond to the report and have regard to it when exercising its functions. They are also subject to a requirement to provide information and attend meetings of the committee to answer questions.

### **Scrutiny Review Panels**

During the municipal year 2019/20 each of the Scrutiny Committees had planned to undertake at least one Review either individually or jointly with another scrutiny committee, but due to issues of officer resource and the Coronavirus pandemic, not all of the Reviews were completed. The up to date position in relation to each of the Reviews is summarised below.

#### Adult Social Care & Health – Diabetes Prevention Programme

The Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee selected to undertake a review looking at Diabetes and how the Council can do more to raise awareness

of diabetes and how to seek to support and how to make the best use of community facilities.

The panel was made up of Councillor John Wright (Lead Councillor) together with Councillors Angie Clark, Chris Gordon and Dena Ryness.

The Review considered:-

- The dangers of developing diabetes and how it can impact on a person's life;
- Lifestyle changes required to avoid the risk of developing diabetes;
- Ways of developing easier access to the programme and what the benefits of undertaking it can be; and
- How to increase publicity of the programme and its benefits for those involved.

The Review Panel met in February 2020 with key individuals with experience in the field who attended and presented information relating to the Diabetes Prevention Programme across Greater Manchester and specifically relating to Stockport.

The Review Panel agreed the following recommendations:-

1. Leaflets – due to the serious nature of Diabetes and the lack of information that is publicly available to communicate the effects and raise awareness, leaflets/publicity material should be placed across the Borough in public places e.g. reception areas, GP surgeries/practices etc.
2. Area Committees – to increase the public awareness and to engage with local residents it is proposed that an agenda item about Diabetes Prevention is placed on each of the Area Committee agendas for one cycle and Public Health be invited to present and answer any questions.
3. Council Motion – to seek cross party support for a cross party motion to be submitted to a future Council Meeting highlighting the importance of the Diabetes Prevention Programme and seeking the Council to agree a way forward of raising awareness.
4. TV Soap Dramas – to advise the national team and Diabetes UK to campaign for one of the TV Soaps to address the issue of Diabetes Prevention correctly and highlight the risks/challenges with Diabetes.
5. Scrutiny Committee – to request that the National Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP) update is included in the PRRR monitoring report to the Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee providing an update on the progress of the prevent programme.

### Children & Families - Supporting Young People's Mental/Emotional Wellbeing & Developing Resilience

The Children & Families Scrutiny Committee selected to undertake a review looking at supporting young people's mental wellbeing and developing resilience.

The panel was made up of Councillor Linda Holt (Lead Councillor) together with Councillors Laura Clingan, Yvonne Guariento & Becky Senior

The review was commenced with one meeting being held in February 2020, but was not completed during 2019/20 due to a combination of a lack of officer resource and the pandemic; it will be reviewed and completed during 2020/21.

### Corporate, Resource Management and Governance – Manchester Airport Group

The Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee selected to undertake a review looking at the Council's relationship with Manchester Airport Group.

The panel was made up of Councillor Tom Morrison (Lead Councillor) together with Councillors Lisa Smart, John McGahan, Charlie Stewart, Carol McCann and Wendy Wild.

The scope of the review was agreed but due to a combination of a lack of officer resource and the pandemic it was not proceeded with. Due to the effect of the pandemic on Manchester Airport Group the Review will not be proceeded with at this time.

### Communities & Housing - Domestic Waste Collection Service

The Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee selected to undertake a review on the Domestic Waste Collection Service.

The panel was made up of Councillor John McGahan (Lead Councillor) together with Councillors Mark Roberts, Kerry Waters, Matt Wynne and Mark Weldon.

The original impetus for the review had been a concern in relation to anecdotal reports of an increase in the number of missed bin collections over the summer period during 2019. The Panel heard evidence that a number of factors had contributed to this increase, including the partial closure of the Bredbury waste disposal facility, vehicle breakdowns and road closures. It was subsequently stated, that the number of missed bin collections had reduced and returned to its

pre-summer level, and as a result it was considered that there was no longer a fundamental issue that needed to be addressed by way of the Scrutiny Review.

However, the Panel did consider that there was merit in a further investigation of a number of underlying pressures on the Council's waste and recycling collection service as property numbers grew and some residents had more bins than they were eligible for.

The Panel therefore agreed to undertake a review based on the following two strands:-

- (i) Review and improve communications to encourage the four principles of waste management – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse Recycle.
- (ii) Review the management of black bins to ration delivery, recover unauthorised bins and collect bins no longer needed.

Following an initial meeting, the Panel subsequently resolved to oppose the proposed approach to the reduction in the number of additional and excess black bins thereby eliminating the second strand of the review from its scope. The Panel had then convened a further meeting to discuss the first strand of the review, however this was ultimately overtaken by the onset of the pandemic, and the pressures being faced by the waste collection service meant that the Panel was of the view that a further review of this area of work at that time should no longer be considered a priority. Accordingly, the Panel concluded its work at this stage.

### Economy & Regeneration - The Evening / Night Time Economy

The Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee selected to undertake a review of the Borough's Evening and Night Time Economy.

The panel was made up of Councillor Tom Dowse (Lead Councillor) together with Councillors Becky Crawford, Roy Driver, Colin MacAlister Charlie Stewart and Suzanne Wyatt.

The rationale for the review was to examine recent activity aimed at supporting a sustainable evening economy in Stockport town centre as part of the renaissance of Stockport town centre. Firstly, a draft 'Stockport Town Centre Evening and Night Time Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022' had been prepared which set out a shared vision for the evening and night time economy in the town centre. Secondly, in September 2019 the town centre had been successfully awarded Purple Flag status, a national accreditation scheme run by the Association of Town Centre Management.

The final report has been drafted and will be submitted to Members of the Review

Panel for consideration.

### Call-ins

There was one call-in in the 2019/20 Municipal Year. Executive Decision CAB179 'Ludworth School Expansion' was 'called-in' by Councillors Malcolm Allan, Tom Morrison and Becky Senior and considered by the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 6 August 2019 when it was:-

RESOLVED - (6 for) That Executive Decision CAB179 be referred back to the Cabinet for its reconsideration at the first available opportunity with a request that Sections 9.6.2 and 9.6.3 within the accompanying report be amended to incorporate the full schedule of proposed mitigation measures circulated in advance of the meeting, and with a further recommendation that the Cabinet amend its decision to include a third resolution stating:-

“(3) That the relevant Cabinet Members and officers be recommended to investigate and where practicable and appropriate implement the schedule of mitigation measures included within Section 9.6 of the report, subject to any necessary consultations, firstly as part of any planning application submitted by the Council to the Planning Authority and secondly in the formulation and determination of any package of traffic regulation orders subsequently drawn up to mitigate against its impact.”.

The Cabinet considered the 'call in ' at its meeting held on 20 August 2019 when it was resolved that:-

the referral by the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee of the call-in of executive decision CAB179 be noted and that the Cabinet reaffirms the following:-

- the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken in relation to the expansion of Ludworth Primary School be noted, and the approval given to its expansion from a 1.5 form entry to a 2 form entry (subject to planning permission)
- the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to ensure appropriate agencies undertake enforcement of existing traffic regulation orders in the vicinity of the school

and that in addition the following be agreed:



- the relevant Cabinet Members and officers be recommended to investigate and where practicable and appropriate, and where resources were available, to implement the schedule of mitigation measures included within Section 9.6 of the report, subject to any necessary consultations, firstly as part of any planning application submitted by the Council to the Planning Authority and secondly in the formulation and determination of any package of traffic regulation orders subsequently drawn up to mitigate against its impact.

### For Further Information

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