

Meeting of the Council – 19th April, 2021

Report of the Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2020/21

Purpose

1. To consider the annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2020/21.

Recommendation

2. That the annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2020/21 be received and noted.

Background

3. The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, as set out in the [Constitution](#), require an annual report to be submitted to the Council. It is a function of the Board to make reports and recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of overview and scrutiny functions.
4. The Annual Report for 2020/21 is attached. Minutes and outcomes of all Scrutiny Committee meetings can be accessed online via the [Committee Management Information System](#).
5. Discussions have commenced on the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2021/22 municipal year. The attached report contains various items that will need to be carried forward into the Programme for 2021/22.
6. The Council has a flexible approach to developing the Annual Scrutiny Programme to incorporate any additional topics that might arise during the year for Scrutiny Committees. In carrying out their individual work programmes, Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs have considerable discretion to adapt their approaches to carry out the scrutiny reviews allocated to them.

7. The Council has recognised the importance of retaining an annual review and report process. This is to ensure that the arrangements continue to align themselves to the needs of the Council and that the scrutiny arrangements remain adaptable and flexible to changes in circumstances.
8. During the past year, proposals have been developed concerning the future designation of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The necessary recommendations to formally establish Scrutiny Committees for the 2021/22 municipal year will be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20th May, 2021.

Finance

9. The costs of operating the Council's scrutiny arrangements are being contained within existing budgetary allocations.

Law

10. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.
11. Scrutiny powers relating to health are included in the Health and Social Care Acts 2001 and 2012, and associated Regulations and statutory guidance. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gives the Council powers to scrutinise the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables local authorities to scrutinise other partners. Much of this legislation is consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.
12. The Council's scrutiny arrangements are set out in Article 6 of the [Constitution](#) (Scrutiny Committees) and the associated Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules.

Equality Impact

13. Provision exists within the scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

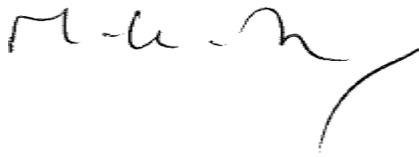
14. Any human resources/organisational development issues are referred to in individual reports on the items concerned.

Commercial/Procurement

15. Reports to Scrutiny Committee meetings include a Commercial/Procurement paragraph to consider if there is any impact to trade and/or a positive/negative impact on our customer base. Consideration is also given to compliance with Contract Standing Orders and Procurement legislation.

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

16. Reports to Scrutiny Committee meetings include a paragraph concerning the impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of the Borough's citizens. This is consistent with building stronger, safer and more resilient communities in line with the Dudley Vision and to protect our residents' physical, and emotional health for the future.



.....
Mohammed Farooq
Lead for Law and Governance
(Monitoring Officer)



Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2020/2021



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



Welcome from the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Councillor Chris Barnett



This annual report gives a summary of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees during the 2020/2021 municipal year.

Effective scrutiny is an important part of the Council's democratic governance arrangements. We need to make sure there is proper accountability and transparency in the way the Council conducts its business.

The Council has faced significant challenges arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21. This has included adapting the way that Councillors (and others) have carried out their essential governance responsibilities. Although some meetings were initially cancelled, Scrutiny Committees recommenced as soon as possible. Meetings were held virtually to ensure that robust Member-led scrutiny continued during the crisis. The Council should be commended on its efforts to maintain scrutiny during unprecedented times when important decisions were made impacting on the lives of residents and the places they live. Councillors play a vital role in informing and bolstering the Council's response in the communities they serve.

Scrutiny has a number of key roles. These include holding decision-takers to account, contributing to policy development, reviewing performance, undertaking scrutiny inquiries and making recommendations for improvement.

Scrutiny work must be viewed in context with the pressures faced by the local authority and our partners. We must make the best use of resources by focussing on key priorities.

We are continuing to work on improvements to scrutiny in 2021/22 and beyond. These improvements will be driven by nationally recognised good practice, statutory guidance and the views of elected members based on our local experiences.

Work to develop the scrutiny programme for 2021/22 is taking place over the next few months. All elected members will have the opportunity to contribute to this.

I commend this annual report to the Council. I would like to place on record my appreciation of all the hard work and support given by Councillors, Officers, Partners and members of the public who have contributed to our scrutiny work during 2020/21.

Full details of Scrutiny Committee meetings, including agendas, minutes and reports, can be viewed online by accessing the [Committee Management Information System](#).

Alternatively, please contact Democratic Services on 01384 815238 or e-mail democratic.services@dudley.gov.uk.



**Chair -
Councillor
Ray Burston**
(May 2020 to
January 2021)

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Chris Barnett**

2020/21 Muncipal Year

Our role is to oversee and co-ordinate the Council's overview and scrutiny functions. This includes approving and monitoring the Annual Scrutiny Programme. The Board undertakes reviews of any specific items that are referred to it and makes recommendations to the relevant decision takers.

Two formal meetings of the Board were held on 25th November, 2020 and on 1st February, 2021.

Update on Annual Centre's Healthcheck Survey

The Board considered work undertaken to monitor the vacancy rates of retail units within the Borough's strategic centre, town centres, district and local centres and the potential impact of vacant retail units to the Council's finances. The report also provided an overview on the work being undertaken to support the recovery of the Borough's Town Centres and High Streets more generally, particularly given the impact of the Pandemic.

In considering this item, it was suggested that an audit of properties in the Borough be undertaken providing information on those businesses that were thriving and those that were struggling to enable further scrutiny of the issue. It was acknowledged that employees were working from home potentially releasing office space for conversion to residential dwellings/apartments.

The need to have an appropriate infrastructure for people to live in was recognised together with a reliable public transport network which could reduce the use of cars having a positive environmental impact. Although the investment in Brierley Hill was welcomed, it was suggested that smaller amounts of monies in smaller Town Centres could provide positive change for local communities and funding should be sought and allocated in this regard.

Further details were requested to enable the appropriate Scrutiny Committee to consider the matter. The Head of Planning and Regeneration acknowledged the comments made and indicated that wider intelligence of business usage could be looked at.

Outcome:

- *That a further report providing details as indicated above be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee in the next Municipal Year.*

Future Designation of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Board considered a report of the Monitoring Officer on the future designation of Scrutiny Committees for implementation in the 2021/22 municipal year.

Outcome:

- *That recommendations be included in the annual review of the Constitution concerning the re-designation of Scrutiny Committees for adoption in the 2021/22 municipal year, together with the establishment of a regular meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs.*

West Midlands Combined Authority Investment

A report was considered on the regeneration schemes coming forward which might seek the support of West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) funding.

Outcome:

- *That a report on the Black Country review conducted by the West Midlands Combined Authority, specifically relating to Dudley, be presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee in due course and that the relevant Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member(s) be invited to that meeting.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Board considered proposals of the Cabinet on the preliminary medium-term financial strategy.

Outcome:

- *Proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, together with comments made by Scrutiny Committees, were submitted to the Cabinet and Full Council in February and March, 2021.*

Other Items Considered in the 2020/21 Municipal Year

- *Annual Scrutiny Report 2019/20 (this report was considered and approved by electronic means and submitted to Full Council in July 2020)*
- *Feedback from Scrutiny Committees*

Ongoing items for further consideration

Items that require further scrutiny, to be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2021/22, are listed below:

- *Update on Annual Health Centre's Health Check Survey (specifically the future of Town Centre retail units given the impact of the Pandemic)*
- *West Midlands Combined Authority Investment - Black Country Review*



**Chair -
Councillor
Anne Millward**

Annual report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

2020/21 Municipal Year



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Parmjit Sahota**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters relating to the Directorate of Children's Services and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Children's Services COVID-19 Updates

Throughout this Municipal Year, Members have considered the impact on and responses to COVID-19 within Children's Services. These verbal updates have provided detailed information on critical services being maintained during the pandemic, including the monitored visits undertaken to determine which children needed to remain in school following the first lockdown.

There has been the provision of devices and ICT equipment to children in care in order that they could maintain learning during lockdown. The summer school provision that was available to children in care was presented to Members.

Following the ease in restrictions, Children's Services have supported children and young people to return to school.

An Improvement Plan was endorsed in relation to Children's Social Care and improvement work is continuing.

An Ofsted focused visit took place in December 2020 when Ofsted evaluated the experiences and progress of children and young people, taking account of the Covid-19 context, and how well children and young people were helped and protected.

The Department for Education (DfE) continued to supervise children's social care and safeguarding. The targets set by the DfE which were to be achieved within a three-month timescale relating to refreshing the Children's Services Improvement Board and revising the Improvement Plan were considered by Members.

Outcomes:

- *The Committee continued to scrutinise and monitor the services provided by Children's Services, critical and otherwise, together with improvements within Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the Youth Offending Services.*
- *Members requested the Director of Children's Services to provide an analysis of the types of referrals into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).*

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to submit details of the Department for Education review in May 2021 to a future meeting of the Committee.*

Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The Committee considered this report which made particular reference to statutory and corporate complaints. It was noted that the data included SEND Services.

Members raised concerns in relation to response times to complaints and requested that these be addressed together with the reasons for the late responses.

Outcome:

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to devise an Action Plan regarding the concerns raised by the Committee and to share that Action Plan with Members.*

Children's Services Complaints: Response Times Action Plan

The actions taken, and processes that had been put into place to improve complaint response times within Children's Services was presented to Members, together with a referral and follow up Action Plan.

Outcomes:

- *The revised process and actions put in place to improve complaint response times were endorsed by the Committee.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to submit regular updates in relation to complaint response times to future meetings.*

Early Years Transformation Academy in Dudley

Members considered a report on the partnership progress through the Early Years Transformation Academy, and the 'critical first 1001 days vision' and Dudley's Implementation Plan, to support transformation of the maternity and early years system, and contribution to maternity and early years outcomes.

Outcome:

- *That the issue of vaping and the effect on unborn children be scrutinised once data becomes available.*

Elective Home Education (EHE)

A report providing Members with a position statement around EHE in the Authority area up to July 2020 was considered by the Committee. It was confirmed that the Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that all children of school age receive an education.

It was accepted that EHE had increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with some parents feeling anxious in relation to their children returning to school, however this had become a national issue.

Outcomes:

- *Members acknowledged that the full review of EHE services was being carried out to ensure that support was provided appropriately, including a review of the existing EHE staffing levels and the relationship between EHE support and other Education, SEND, Public Health, Connexions, Children Missing Education and Social Care Services.*
- *The Director of Children's Services agreed to prepare a letter on behalf of the Chair, to the Secretary of State for Education, highlighting the grave concerns of the Committee in relation to the increasing numbers of those applying to home educate their children, and that the area of EHE was largely unregulated.*

Summer Provision and September school update

Members considered the overview of the summer provision in Dudley; an analysis of secondary and college provision; an analysis of Virtual School events and of the Dudley Performing Arts (DPA) events, together with a summary of the Local Authority's support for schools in September 2020.

Outcome:

- *That Special Schools and their provisions be carried forward as an item for Scrutiny with respect to the support for schools in September 2020.*

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

A report was considered providing assurances on the effective functioning of the Safeguarding and Review Service, that had operational line management of Independent Reviewing Officers for children subject to Child Protection Plans, and effective care planning for Children in Care.

Outcome:

- *Members requested that as part of the children and young people's reviews, the IRO's be requested, by the Service Director of Children's Social Care, to consult with children and young people in order to capture the voice of the child and improve and develop services.*

Fostering and Permanence Service Update

Members considered a report in relation to Dudley's Fostering and Permanence Service, and it was noted that adoption for children was located within a Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption@Heart. Details of the different placement settings for 635 children in care in Dudley were provided to Members.

Outcomes:

- *Further updates in relation to Dudley's Fostering and Permanence Services to be submitted to future meetings.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to provide clarification in relation to the number of children who were in fostering to adopt settings, for fostering purposes only, or were to be adopted.*

Children in Care and Care Leaver Service – Care Leavers Update Report

The scope and detail in relation to Dudley Care Leavers, together with the Care Leavers Strategy and the means of keeping in contact with Care Leavers during the pandemic was considered by Members.

Outcomes:

- *Members requested that the report be submitted to a meeting of the Children's Corporate Parenting Board.*
- *The Acting Director of Children's Services was requested to:-*
 - *Refer the suggestion to encourage those who are awarded contracts with the Local Authority to offer apprenticeships to care leavers, and the possibility of consulting with Housing colleagues to achieve this, to the Children's Corporate Parenting Board.*
 - *Provide Members with data in terms of percentages of care leavers attending further education or obtaining employment, and the outcomes for those young people.*
 - *Provide Members with details of Young People's Advisors*
 - *Consider the possibility of utilising the Council's former Children's Home in Brierley Hill for a base for young people to meet their Young People's Advisors.*
 - *Provide Members with a breakdown of the number of females and males not in education, employment or training.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee considered the Council's medium-term financial strategy with an emphasis on proposals relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference, specifically Children's Services.

Outcome:

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to provide further information to Members relating to the home to school transport pressures, and how the budget savings in relation to the review of the home to school transport for SEND children, the managed step down from external residential placements and the movement of external placements into internal residential placements were to be achieved.*

Education Report

Members considered a report on the Education Strategy, Interim Ofsted Visits, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), the Alternative Provision Strategy, Illegal off-rolling and the Dudley Virtual School.

Outcomes:

- *The Head of Education Outcomes and Inclusion was requested to provide Members with the data in relation to the number of children attending mainstream school with SEND.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to raise the issue of completing the Equality Impact Assessments within reports accurately in the future.*

Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group (DSCPG) Annual Report 2019/20

Members considered the three main priorities for the Partnership and noted that there would be a review of the Service to ascertain whether it was fit for purpose moving forward for the following 12 months and to ensure that the structure was effective and efficient to protect children from harm.

Outcomes:

- *Members requested details of the processes for reporting safeguarding issues in relation to both children and adults.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to arrange training for Elected Members in relation to safeguarding children and adults.*

Other Items Considered in the 2020/21 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Development Working Group

- Early Years Transformation Academy

Future items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in 2021/22 are:-

- Early Years Transformation Academy
- School Readiness
- Children's Services Updates
- Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report - 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- The Effect of Vaping on Unborn Children
- Elective Home Education
- Special Schools and their Provision with respect to Support for Schools
- Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report - 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021
- Fostering and Permanency Services
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Education Report
- Dudley Safeguarding Children Partnership Group - Annual Report 2020/21
- Update on the Children and Young People's Plan - January 2021 to January 2022.



**Chair -
Councillor
Tim Crumpton**

Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee



**Vice-Chair -
Councillor Ed
Lawrence**

2020/21 Muncipal Year

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Chief Executive's Directorate and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Attendance Management

The Committee considered staff absence levels and the application of the Attendance Management Policy within the Directorates, which had been adjusted in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Outcomes:

- *That the Committee be furnished with the results of the Employee Survey undertaken during 2020 for information.*
- *The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, has written to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Team in recognition of ongoing work undertaken during the pandemic.*

Benefits – Financial and other Support (including Covid-19) and the work of the Corporate Welfare Reform Group

Following a request by the Committee, a report was submitted on the various elements of support provided by Dudley Council and an update on work specifically relating to COVID-19 and the work and future plans of the Corporate Welfare Reform Group.

Outcomes:

- *An Annual Report on Benefits will be considered for inclusion for future Annual Scrutiny Programmes.*
- *The Head of Revenue and Benefit Services was requested to e-mail all Elected Members outlining the process in claiming benefits.*
- *The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, has written to the Revenue and Benefits Team in recognition of ongoing work undertaken during the pandemic.*
- *A recommendation has been made to the appropriate decision taker to consider allocating additional staffing resources to accommodate the expediential increase in applications received and support required for Dudley residents.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the year. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and respond to questions asked by the Committee. In the light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Committee considered the specific impact of the pandemic on corporate performance indicators.

Outcomes:

- *Detailed scrutiny has been undertaken of specific performance indicators that are reported as 'below target' with responses provided by relevant Directorates.*
- *Future Performance Reports to be modified to include trend graphs, service exception reports and actions taken to improve future performance, following comments and input made by the Committee.*
- *A training session on Procurement to be piloted at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting (see below).*
- *A further update to be provided on the work undertaken in relation to Corporate Complaints. An update was circulated to Members via e-mail on 9th February, 2021.*
- *An update to be provided in respect of the work undertaken on a Dudley Career Pathway in relation to social workers and comments made by the Committee to be shared with the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.*
- *An update to be provided to the relevant Scrutiny Committee on progress made by Children's Services on the Key Performance Indicators on a corporate level.*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Arrangements within the Council

The Committee received an overview of the current arrangements in place for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the Council, together with the outcomes of the independent equality review and progress made in addressing the areas identified for further action.

Outcomes:

- *That the Future Council Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider including six monthly progress updates on Equality and Diversity in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2021/22.*
- *A training session on Diversity and Inclusion be considered for all Elected Members.*

Planning Services – Public Consultation

Following a request by a Member of the Committee, during scrutiny of the Corporate Quarterly Performance Report, the Committee received a supplementary report on the processes and procedures in place for the Planning Service in respect of public consultation and involvement in the planning process.

Outcomes:

- *The Director of Regeneration and Enterprise was requested to implement measures to enable all Elected Members to have the opportunity to respond to the two Government Consultations “Planning for the Future” and “Changes to current Planning System”.*
- *A ‘Planning for the Future’ Members Seminar was held virtually on 22nd October, 2020. Contributions from Members helped to shape the Council’s response to these consultations.*

Procurement and Social Value Presentation

Following a request by the Committee on 1st July, 2020, a pilot training session on procurement was provided to enable Councillors to perform their roles effectively including an overview on procurement, rules, social value and achievements at Dudley, the role of Councillors and the procurement response to Covid-19.

Outcomes:

- *That a virtual community event targeting local businesses on procurement opportunities and support available be explored and arranged.*
- *A training session on procurement be provided to all Elected Members, together with an information card to assist Members in supporting local businesses.*
- *That the Commercial and Procurement Consultant create a report of businesses within the Dudley Borough that had been awarded contracts through the procurement process and circulate to the Committee for information.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2020/21 Municipal Year

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Strategic Direction of the Council
- Social Value Policy for Dudley MBC – Consultation

Ongoing Scrutiny Items

Items that require further scrutiny and/or inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2021/22 are listed below. Subject to the approval of Full Council, these items will fall into the remit of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee in 2021/22:-

- Local Government Association Peer Review Outcomes and Learning
- Digital Transformation

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2021/22:-

- Benefit Services Annual Report
- Equality and Diversity – six monthly update



Chair -
Councillor
Dave Tyler

Annual report of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

2020/21 Muncipal Year



Vice-Chair -
Councillor
Chris Neale

Our role involves the scrutiny of local health and associated services, as a contribution to the Council's community leadership role and in line with our statutory duties. This includes the scrutiny of local NHS bodies and matters falling within the portfolio responsibility of appropriate Cabinet Members.

Scrutiny review of the Council and partners response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Committee was given the priority task of undertaking a full scrutiny review of the Council and partners response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Specially convened meetings were arranged to which the Chairs/Vice-Chairs of all Scrutiny Committees were invited. Although the review was undertaken whilst the pandemic was ongoing, Council Directorates and Partners contributed positively to the scrutiny review.

Outcomes:

- *A comprehensive and detailed report on the outcomes/recommendations of the scrutiny review was considered by full Council on 30th November, 2020. The report and recommendations were fully endorsed by the Council.*
- *The full report is available on the internet by following this link: [Council and Partner Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)*

Local and National COVID-19 Developments – Updates

Throughout the municipal year Members received verbal updates on the current and national position on the COVID-19 Pandemic. The updates provided detailed information on infection rates within the Borough and regionally and the impact of the pandemic on healthcare services, as well as outlining the steps that were being taken to contain the outbreaks.

Dudley Integrated Care Provider (ICP) – Update on Regulatory Processes and Contract Mobilisation

The Committee considered an update report on the development of Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust – the Dudley Integrated Care Provider (ICP), formerly known as the Multi-Specialty Community Provider (MCP). Due to the impact of COVID-19 and pre-approvals within the NHS not taking place, further updates were deferred to the next municipal year.

Outcomes:

- *The current position in relation to the development of the Dudley Integrated Care Provider – Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust was noted.*
- *That the Director of Adult Social Care be requested to provide a written response to the query relating to the possible future inclusion of adult social care within the ICP, in relation to services adapting to decreasing resources throughout the contract period and whether this would involve an expectation of a decrease in services and if not the case, how this would be envisaged.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing and Director of Adult Social Care on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2023/24 as approved by Cabinet on 17th December, 2020, with emphasis on proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference. During consideration of the report, the difficulties experienced in setting a budget due to the uncertain position caused by COVID-19 and the constantly changing financial situation was noted.

Outcomes:

- *The Cabinet and Council were requested to consider the concerns and comments made by the Committee with regard to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2023/24 as follows:-*
 - *The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the integral contribution of adult social care to protecting lives and delivering the critical care to the most vulnerable residents of the borough. The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee notes the sustained failure of Government to produce an adult social care green paper and provide a sustainable and safe footing upon which to deliver future care. The Committee asks for a cross party representation to Government to prioritise adult social care as we emerge from the pandemic, cease short-termism and 'hand to mouth' funding as an urgent priority.*
 - *The Committee is also concerned about adult social care in Dudley delivering significant budget savings whilst the pandemic continues to devastate the community and asks the Cabinet to re-consider this.*
 - *The Committee offers its full support to the adult social care workforce who have operated so bravely and selflessly throughout the pandemic alongside so many Council employees.*

Breast Screening Programme Dudley, Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire

An update report on the quality of breast screening in Dudley, Wolverhampton and South West Staffordshire was considered by the Committee.

Outcomes:

- *The update report on the quality of breast screening in Dudley, Wolverhampton and South West Staffordshire was noted.*
- *That the Chief Operating Officer be requested to provide an updated action plan to include the proposed timeline and planning schedule for dealing with the backlog of cases to Members of the Committee.*

Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2020/21 Municipal Year

- The future of commissioning in the Black Country and West Birmingham
- Covid-19 Scrutiny Review – Progress Tracker
- Annual Adult Safeguarding Report 2019/20 and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DOLS) and Impact of new Safeguarding Arrangements
- Dudley's Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Annual Review

The following items will be considered by the Committee on 22nd April, 2021:

- The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust's Emergency Department Quality Improvement Update
- Dissolution of the Section 75 Mental Health Agreement between Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust and Dudley MBC
- SUCCESSOR Programme Update
- Transforming Care Programme Update and Risks

Future items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items that require further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2021/22 are listed below:-

Updates requested on:

- Impact of the Telecare Digital Strategy support
- Dudley Integrated Care Provider (ICP) Update
- The future of commissioning in the Black Country and West Birmingham

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2021/22:-

- Violence Prevention Strategy
- Review of the Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board
- Director of Public Health and Wellbeing Annual Report
- Health Protection Annual Report
- Local and National Covid-19 Developments
- Quality of breast screening in Dudley, Wolverhampton and South West Staffordshire.
- NHS Quality Accounts
- Medium Term Financial Strategy



**Chair -
Councillor Matt
Rogers**

Annual Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

2020/2021 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair –
Councillor Alan
Finch**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the former Place Directorate and currently the Directorates of Public Realm, Regeneration and Enterprise and Housing and Community Services and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Amendments to the process and spend for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Funding

The Committee considered a report on the proposed approach to the spend of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Funding.

Outcome of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 9th July, 2020

- *A presentation be provided to all Members of the Council on the proposed approach to the spend of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Funding with a view to considering and discussing further options.*

The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 23rd September, 2020, agreed:

- *That the rolling forward of remaining CIL monies for consideration of spend be approved.*
- *That the transfer of up to £60,000 Capital and Revenue Infrastructure CIL receipts to Shell Corner Partnership following receipt of costings and completion for public realm improvements to Shell Corner, be approved, and if work is not completed by September 2022, the monies be made available to alternative projects.*
- *That the transfer of £8,367.91 Capital and Revenue Infrastructure CIL receipts to Black Country Radio, following receipt of detailed costings and completion of works for studio equipment relating to the new digital studio, be approved, and if work is not completed by September 2022, the monies be made available to alternative projects.*
- *That the revised CIL Instalments Policy (September 2020) be approved.*
- *That the revised CIL Instalments Policy (2020) be adopted with effect from 24th September 2020.*

The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension

Members considered updates on the progress with the delivery of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (WBHE).

At the meeting held on 29th January, 2020, it was agreed that a six monthly update on the WBHE project be provided to Members.

Outcome:

Place Scrutiny Committee – 24th September, 2020

- *A report and presentation from representatives from organisations associated with the WBHE, together with “real life” examples of local residents that had already benefited from the project, engagement strategies, focusing on the more deprived areas of the Borough and key outputs and indicators of the project and how these would be monitored, be provided to the Committee in three months’ time.*

Place Scrutiny Committee – 28th January, 2021

- *A detailed response to the Ward Councillors for Castle and Priory be provided on details and plans of the new interchanges and re-routing of various bus routes associated with the project.*
- *Further information be provided to Members in relation to the economic benefits of the WBHE.*

Potential improvements to Smestow Valley Dis-Used Railway Line

The Committee considered a report on work undertaken to date and the potential for future improvements to the Smestow Valley dis-used railway line.

Outcome:

- *The report was noted and future opportunities for further development and improvement works to the route going forward were supported.*
- *That detailed designs and cost estimates for the improvement works to the Lines walk from Pensnett to Himley be provided to Members.*
- *That all potential funding streams, including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and prudential borrowing be explored, to allow the improvement scheme to proceed timeously within the next twelve to twenty-four months.*
- *That relevant Scrutiny Committees be updated annually with progress, along with local ward elected members for Brockmoor and Pensnett.*

Air Quality Monitoring in Dudley Borough

Members considered a report on the current position with respect to air quality monitoring within Dudley Borough and compliance with the National Objectives for Air Quality.

Outcomes:

- *The continuation of air quality monitoring to show the general improvement in air quality across the Dudley Borough be supported.*
- *That enhanced air quality monitoring at locations where poor air quality was suspected and to demonstrate that measures to improve air quality had been successful, be supported.*
- *The measures being undertaken to improve air quality be supported.*
- *That data identifying air quality trends in Brierley Hill and other areas of improvement be circulated to Members.*
- *That the Environmental Health Manager be requested to make enquiries to identify what assistance was provided to self-employed taxi drivers/operators and circulate information to Members.*

Street Cleansing Service

The Committee considered a report on the Street Cleansing Service delivered by the Directorate of Public Realm.

Outcome:

- *The measures being undertaken to further improve the service and standards of cleanliness across the Borough be supported.*
- *That figures in relation to the associated and ongoing costs in relation to the Travellers Site at Budden Road be provided to Members.*

Housing Allocations Policy

The Committee considered a report on the review of the Housing Allocations Policy.

At the Cabinet meeting on 31st October, 2019 it was agreed that a cross-party Member/Officer Working Group be established to consider the Housing Allocation Policy. The Working Group was established in November 2019, which included consultation with people on the housing waiting list. Consultation was completed on the proposals, as identified by Working Group, and the policy was considered further at the Cabinet meeting on 15th March, 2021.

Outcomes:

- *The information contained in the report, and presented verbally at the meeting, was noted and the proposals identified by the cross-party Working Group were submitted to the Cabinet for consideration on 15th March 2021.*
- *That illustrations highlighting various housing options available based on housing stock and affordability be prepared and circulated to Members to inform them on how the system, in terms of purchasing properties, would operate.*

Housing Maintenance Grey Fleet

The Committee considered a report on progress regarding the replacement of the grey fleet vehicles utilised by the Council's Housing Maintenance Team.

Outcome:

- *The measures being undertaken to further improve the service through the effective management of vehicles used by trade operatives be supported.*

Housing Board Update

The Committee considered a report on the role and activity of the Housing Board.

Outcome:

- *That, subject to the establishment of Working Groups at the first meeting of the 2021/22 municipal year, further consideration be given to recommend the Council to appoint non-voting Co-opted Members to represent the Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association on the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in the 2021/22 municipal year.*

Homelessness Prevention and Response

The Committee considered a report on the current position in relation to homelessness in the Dudley Borough.

Outcome:

- *That development of the Homelessness Annual Report and Homelessness Strategy in the new municipal year, to maintain sight of the approach and response to homelessness in the Dudley Borough, be supported.*

Housing Market: Affordable housing and potential assistance to first time buyers to access the housing market

The Committee considered a report on the current position in relation to affordable housing and potential assistance to first time buyers to access the housing market.

Outcome:

- *That figures in relation to affordable rented accommodation on a ward by ward basis throughout the Dudley Borough be provided to Members.*

Other Items Considered by the Committee in the 2020/21 Municipal Year

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Review of Housing Finance
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Housing Investment

Ongoing items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items requiring further scrutiny or to be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2021/22 are listed below:-

- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Six monthly reports)
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Review of Housing Finance
- Waste Strategy
- Highway Maintenance, to include information on potholes and the general condition of roads in the Dudley Borough

