

Rutland County Council

Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21



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Foreword

The municipal year 2020/21 saw us in the eye of a global pandemic and compelling financial pressures caused, in part, by a significant reduction in funding. The Council has sought to identify options to reduce net cost in an extraordinarily reactive environment and growing demand for Council support and services.

The twin pulls of COVID-19 and increasing financial pressures placed a heavy burden on our officers as they were redeployed to deliver a sustained response. Scrutiny continued to function and kept a mindful eye on the additional burdens imposed on officers and worked to provide a framework to better manage workload whilst maintaining positive relationships.

In addition Scrutiny Committees had to adapt to a new way of working with the move to virtual meetings.

Given the challenges brought about by the Pandemic this has still been a busy year for the Scrutiny Commission and this report details the variety of topics that have been considered by individual scrutiny committees throughout the past municipal year.

Outside of the scheduled scrutiny meeting programme, the Scrutiny Commission has met regularly in order to coordinate the work of Scrutiny, to share best practice and to develop the work programme in accordance with the Scrutiny Commission Terms of Reference. This Annual Report meets with constitutional requirements, but it also gives the opportunity to reflect on the year and recognise achievements, whilst thinking about how we could do things differently. Included in the 'Looking Ahead' section are our proposals on how to further improve Scrutiny at RCC and we look forward to developing these further with input from members before bringing a paper forward to full Council early in the municipal year 21/2022.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Scrutiny function this year including all Members of the Council, Officers, partners and the public.

Scrutiny Commission

The Scrutiny Commission is made up of the three Chairs of Scrutiny. As Chairs we have met regularly during the municipal year 2020/21 and discussions have included developing Annual Work Plans, introducing planned pre-meets to organise and explore questioning to make the most of available meeting time and exploring the development of an Executive Scrutiny Protocol. The Scrutiny Commission have also taken the opportunity to brief each other of the work and meetings of their individual Scrutiny Committees, and used the meetings to learn from each other to develop best practice. The Scrutiny Commission is supported by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Joanna Morley.

The East Midlands Councils Scrutiny network provided scrutiny members with the opportunity to share knowledge, work programmes and information, as well as providing an opportunity to explore national developments concerning scrutiny.



Councillor Paul Ainsley
Chair Children and Young
People Scrutiny
Committee
Chair of the Scrutiny
Commission



Councillor June Fox
Chair Growth,
Infrastructure and
Resources Scrutiny
Committee



Councillor Sam Harvey
Chair Adults and Health
Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny in Rutland - Overview

In summary the main purpose of Scrutiny set out in Part 5 of the RCC Constitution is to:-

- Develop policy
- Hold the Cabinet (Executive) to account
- Carry out investigations into specific issues
- Provide a means for consulting the community, service users, service providers and other interested parties.
- Act as expert witnesses on services
- Scrutinise external bodies providing services to or affecting the community.

At Rutland the Scrutiny function is split between 3 committees:

- Adults and Health
- Children and Young People
- Growth, Infrastructure and Resources

Each of the Scrutiny Committees scheduled 5 ordinary meetings throughout the 2020/21 Municipal Year, plus the meetings held to scrutinise the budget which are held in January. An additional meeting was held in April to examine the necessary budget savings before consideration by Cabinet.

Further details of the topics considered by Scrutiny, along with the outcome of reviews can be found below.

Summary of items considered

Children and Young People

Date	Topic	Brief Details
August 2020	Ofsted Improvement Plan	Report No.101/2020 from the Interim Director for Children's Services and a presentation from the Children In Care Council.
	Annual Work Plan 2020-21	Discussion on substantive items for scrutiny and inclusion in the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme for the municipal year 2020-21.
November 2020	Participation And Engagement Strategy	A presentation on the development of a new Participation and Engagement Strategy from the Participation and Engagement Lead Officer. A presentation from care leavers on the work of the participation group and the care leavers' offer was also given.
	Children's Services Improvement Plan	A verbal update on the Children Service's Improvement Plan from Dawn Godfrey, Director of Children's Services.
January 2021 Joint meeting with Adults and Health	CQC Review Of Safeguarding And Looked After Children's Health Services Rutland: 2019	A presentation from Janette Harrison, Designated Nurse, LLR CCG Safeguarding Team, Chris West, Director of Nursing and Quality Leicester City CCG, Neil King, Head of Safeguarding LPT and Michael Clayton, Head of Safeguarding UHL on the issues raised in the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Review of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Health Services Rutland: 2019 and the action plans arising from them.
Jan 2021 Joint meeting with Adults and Health	Revenue And Capital Budget 2021/22 And Medium-Term Financial Plan	Cabinet Report No.08/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources.
	Treasury Management Strategy And Capital Investment Strategy	Report No.161/2020 from the Strategic Director for Resources.
	Fees And Charges	Report No. 05/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources.
Mar 2021	Send Services And Inclusion	Report No.47/2021 from the Director of Children's Services. (Pages 5 - 20
	Children's Services Performance As At End Of Quarter Three 2020-21	Report No.48/2021 from the Director of Children's Services.

	Review Of Annual Work Plan	Review of items for inclusion in the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme.
Apr 2021	Budget Savings 21/22	Report No.61/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources
Joint meeting		

Chair's review (Cllr Paul Ainsley)

The first part of the municipal year was dominated by activities that arose as a result of the OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services which was reported in March 2020. The resultant improvement plan is having a positive impact and has resulted in a strong early help service for children and families and an effective front door and assessment service. Improvements are ongoing and scrutiny has asked for regular verbal updates and that selected KPI's are made available on a quarterly basis.

In January 2021 a joint safeguarding meeting was held with Adults and Health to receive a presentation from Rutland Health Service providers in response to the significant number of questions raised by the committees on receipt of the Action Plans that sought to address concerns outlined in the CQC Review of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Health Services Rutland 2019. It is anticipated that a further meeting will be held in the municipal year 21/2022 to receive updated Action Plans.

Budgetary pressures and the need to effect reductions in services resulted in a further joint meeting with Adults and Health to examine potential budget savings in the light of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

As was noted in the foreword, COVID-19 and budgetary pressures have also resulted in a significant increase in workload for officers.

Growth Resources & Infrastructure

Date	Topic	Brief Details
August 2020	Statement Of Community Involvement	Report No.97/2020 from the Interim Strategic Director of Places.
October 2020	Biodiversity Task & Finish Group	Report No. 128/2020 from the Biodiversity Task & Finish Group
	Planning For The Future White Paper	Report No.121/2020 from the Strategic Director of Places
	Parking Strategy	Report No.121/2020 from the Strategic Director of Places
	Members My Account	Verbal update from the Strategic Director of Resources
	Annual Work Plan 2020-21	Discussion on substantive items for scrutiny & included in the GIR Committee work plan
January 2021	Revenue And Capital Budget 2021/22 And Medium-Term Plan	Cabinet report 08/2021 from the Strategic Director of Resources.
	Treasury Management Strategy And Capital Investment Strategy	Report 161/2020 from the Strategic Director of Resources
	Fees And Charges	Report No. 05/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources.
February 2021	Rutland Local Plan Update	Report No.32/2021 from the Strategic Director of Places
	HIF Contract	Report No.36/2021 from the Strategic Director of Places.
	Annual Work Plan	Discussion on substantive items for scrutiny & inclusion in the GIR Committee work programme
April 2021	Revised Budget 2021/22	Report No.62/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources

Chair's Review (Councillor J Fox)

Most of the municipal year has been dominated by activities that arose from the lengthy consultation and engagement process of the Rutland Local Plan and Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). This has been the focus of most of the Strategic Director of Places' work and subsequent review by the scrutiny committee.

This along with COVID-19 and budgetary pressures has resulted in a significant increase in workload for officers and the need to constantly review the 2021-22 budget and the savings being sought.

Adults and Health

Date	Topic	Brief Details
24 Sep 2020	Adult Social Care Service Response To Covid 19	Presentations from the following areas: Care Homes, those shielding and the Carers Service.
	Experience Of Health And Social Care In Rutland During The Covid 19 Lockdown	A presentation from Dr Janet Underwood, Chair of Healthwatch Rutland
21 Jan 2021	Joint Meeting with Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	
	CQC Review Of Safeguarding And Looked After Children's Health Services Rutland:2019	To receive a presentation from LLR CCG Safeguarding Team
27 Jan 2021	Joint Meeting with Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	
	Revenue And Capital Budget 2021/22 And Medium-Term Plan	Cabinet report 08/2021 from the Strategic Director of Resources.
	Treasury Management Strategy And Capital Investment Strategy	Report 161/2020 from the Strategic Director of Resources
	Fees And Charges	Report No. 05/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources.
1 Apr 2021	Future Development Of Prevention And Wellbeing Services In Rutland	Report No: 136/2021 from the Director of Adult Social Services
28 Apr 2021	Revised Budget 2021/22	Report No.61/2021 from the Strategic Director for Resources

Chair's Review (Councillor S Harvey)

The pandemic has dominated agendas throughout the Adults and Health sphere, we have also had to cancel meetings as a direct result. Our first meeting was dominated by a reflective look at our services in the first lock down. We were able to recognise the efforts of all our staff, partners and communities in the efforts taken to keep everyone safe.

Unusually two of our meetings were in private session, the first, a CQC safeguarding report that was a collaboration with our colleagues in Children's Scrutiny, as a result of a previous scrutiny meeting, allowing for some detailed debate and scrutiny. The second was because of procurement regulations. Work remains ongoing on both of these topics.

The LLR Joint HOSC has seen a busy schedule, dominated by the UHL Reconfiguration Consultation. Which will be returning to the agenda in the next municipal year 21/22. The audit issues will also be reheard.

The forthcoming year will have a busy agenda as we look forward to the post pandemic world, and the development of the new Integrated Health System (ICS) forming a closer partnership between health and social care. Both the 'place' and 'neighbourhood' parts will be scrutinised by the committee.

Joint Health Overview Scrutiny

In addition to the items above, we are also part of Joint Health Overview Scrutiny with our colleagues in Leicester City and Leicestershire. The purpose of Joint HOSC is to scrutinise Health issues that impact across the whole of the LLR area.

3 Jul 2020	Covid response	Link to papers and minutes: http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1182&MId=6295&Ver=4
	Prior Year Adjustment to UHL Trust Accounts	
	UHL Acute and Maternity Reconfiguration	
23 Sep 2020	Covid 19 Update	http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1182&MId=6326&Ver=4
	NHS 111 First	
	Director of Public Health Update on Covid 19	
15 Oct 2020	Step Up to Great Mental Health	http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1182&MId=6341&Ver=4
	Liaison Mental Health Services	
	Transforming Care – LD and Autism	
	Building Better Hospitals for the Future	
14 Dec 2020	UHL Reconfiguration Consultation	http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1182&MId=6387&Ver=4
	Covid-19 Vaccine in LLR	
	Impact of Covid-19 on Dental Services in LLR	
	EMAS Clinical Operating Model and Specialist Provision	
05 Mar 2021	System Update: Winter Pressures and NHS 111 Update	http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1182&MId=6509&Ver=4
	Covid -19 Vaccination Programme	
	UHL NHS Trust Audit	

Task and Finish Group: Biodiversity

RCC Full Council resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group to inform the review and development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Rutland at its meeting on 12 September 2019.

The Group intended to report back to Council on its findings in the early part of the 2020-21 municipal year but the Pandemic meant that this was pushed back. The delay was further compounded as the Lead expert officers supporting the review left the Council

The Group however continued to meet and developed the principles to form a Biodiversity Strategy; these are outlined below. Further events overtook the Group's work as a Climate Action Group was established by the new Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Cllr Stephenson and it was decided that the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group's recommendations, together with their research and findings would dovetail and feed into the work of the Climate Action Group and their wider remit.

The Group's recommendations are as follows:

1. Biodiversity in Planning:

Ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced within the planning system in Rutland and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance.

2. Biodiversity Data:

Ensure that up to date biodiversity data is available and used appropriately to support this approach

3. Green Spaces:

Increase and diversify wildlife interest in green spaces and provide access to sites of wildlife interest for all sections of the community

4. Non-native invasive species:

Take action to deal with invasive non-native species, prioritising where these are present on sites of wildlife importance; or where these are on land under RCC control and threaten habitats and species of importance or the coherence of habitat networks

5. Priority Habitat and Species Targets:

Contribute to the achievement of the Priority Habitats and Species Targets relevant to RCC's functions and areas.

6. Awareness raising:

Make every attempt to ensure that employees and members of RCC are aware of the importance of and need to safeguard, enhance and promote Biodiversity through RCC's activities.

7. Wider understanding:

Promote wider understanding and enjoyment of Rutland's wildlife and habitats

8. Involvement:

Promote active interest and involvement in wildlife issues at the local, national and international levels by all sections of the community, at home, in the workplace, in schools as a leisure activity and as part of the local economy.

Working Group: Future Development of Prevention and Wellbeing Services in Rutland

Following a meeting of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee on 1 April 2021 the Committee resolved to set up a working group to undertake a needs assessment that would feed into the development of prevention and wellbeing services in Rutland. The work of this group is ongoing and will report back to the Committee later this year.

Looking ahead

Following the Select Committee findings on Scrutiny and the new guidance that was issued to Councils in May 2019 the Commission have been considering how the guidance can be adapted and most effectively implemented to suit Rutland's particular arrangements and local circumstances. The focus has been to ensure that the Scrutiny function at Rutland County Council is effective and able to demonstrate measurable and positive outcomes with regard to its impact on the Council's Governance and decision making processes and importantly that it works towards enhancing the delivery of services to the Rutland Community.

The Scrutiny Commission will be bringing a paper forward to Council early in the municipal year 21/2022 to help shape a shared view of the way ahead. The paper will focus on the following:

- Work plan development and the prioritisation of items
- Ensuring that avenues exist for scrutiny to get involved in the policy development process.
- Effective planning of the scrutiny committee workload
- Agenda Item development
- Task and Finish group reviews and their sign off process.
- Evidencing the impact of scrutiny

Further information

If you would like further information about Scrutiny, please use the contact details below:

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