

# **REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE PART II**

## **Summary**

This report provides an update on the work of Hampshire County Council's Select Committees from April 2009 to March 2010. Highlights of each Select Committee's activity are set out below:

### **Policy & Resources Select Committee**

1. The Policy & Resources Select Committee began its year with representatives of the committee hosting a conference in April 2009, involving representatives from all Hampshire's District and Borough Council's Scrutiny Functions. Workshops were held to discuss how Hampshire could respond to impending legislation, for example powers to scrutinise Crime & Disorder issues. Links with district/borough council colleagues have been maintained, resulting in the establishment of a Hampshire Scrutiny Members Network, which met for the first time in January 2010. Feedback from this event was positive, as members appreciated finding out about issues each other had scrutinised, and areas likely to come under scrutiny in future such as the Local Area Agreement. It is intended to develop this network during 2010.
2. The committee has also continued to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the review of the Scrutiny Function undertaken in 2007/8, including the development of a media protocol that appropriately reflects the role of scrutiny. A light touch scrutiny review of recruitment and retention of staff was undertaken in April 2009, and issues highlighted will be monitored in 2010. This committee also embarked upon an in-depth review in February 2010, regarding ensuring access to key services during severe winter weather. This will continue during 2010.
3. Reacting to new legislation affecting the scrutiny function has continued to be part of this committee's remit, which this year included consideration of a protocol for managing issues raised with a scrutiny committee as a 'councillor call for action'. Legislation affecting scrutiny has continued to develop, and will continue to be monitored in 2010.
4. In addition to the above reviews, the Committee's work programme has included regular attention to, and follow up of, topics within the Committee's terms of reference, such as business continuity planning, recession measures, and the County Council's relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector. Work has also been undertaken on monitoring aspects of relevant department budgets and performance bi-annually, which will be carried through to 2010/11.
5. In March 2010, a presentation was received from an organisation supported by a grant provided by the Executive Member for Policy & Resources. This provided accountability for this funding, by demonstrating the value added by the organisation, in support of the County Council's aims and objectives. The

committee intends to continue to monitor organisations that receive grants in 2010/11.

### **Children And Young People Select Committee**

1. The Children & Young People Select Committee began 2009/10 having recently concluded two reviews, 'recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and headteachers' and the 'school exclusions review'. The former review was concerned to address an anticipated period of high turnover due to retirements and the need for the County to signal Hampshire as a desirable area to live and work. The exclusions review focused on the need for innovative approaches to inclusion. Members were pleased to hear of successful work which had been piloted in parts of the county. Since the Committee received the report, the rate of exclusions in some areas has seen a decline; however other areas remain more resistant.
2. Following the County Council elections in June 2009 the composition of the Committee changed, retaining some experienced members from the previous Committee and welcoming newly elected Members to the Council. Under the chairmanship of Cllr Stephen Reid the Committee expects to maintain a constructive balance of support and challenge in its relationship with Children's Services. It will attempt to study challenging areas in depth with a view to presenting policy options to the Executive Member.
3. In May 2009 a workshop was held on 'short breaks, palliative care and carer services for children with severe disabilities'. The event was well attended, and was ably led by Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children. The workshop demonstrated the continuing active support that the Committee has for the more vulnerable children in Hampshire, and of its commitment to seeing every child in the county reach its full potential.
4. The Committee also agreed to work with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a joint review of therapy services for disabled children. A joint Review Panel was established in July 2009. Members of the Panel have visited special schools and held 'select committee' style witness sessions, taking evidence from NHS, Children's Services, parents, and others in order to understand as fully as possible the issues that needed to be addressed in its report. The report is expected to be completed in April 2010.
5. In addition to focused work such as reviews, the Committee's work programme has included regular attention to, and follow up of, topics within the Committee's terms of reference, such as real time scrutiny of items such as the Hampshire Young Carer's Strategy. Work has also been undertaken on monitoring aspects of relevant department budgets and performance, which will be carried through to 2010/11.
6. Following John Coughlan's temporary secondment to Haringey following the Baby Peter tragedy, the Committee asked him to report on lessons that Hampshire might be able to learn. His report was well received and thought provoking. One outcome of the tragedy is that the number of young people taken into care has risen and this has placed pressures on the budget.

7. Regular pre-scrutiny of Executive Member decisions and regular information briefings have helped to complement the above work, supporting a well balanced work programme for the year.

### **Culture Communities And Rural Affairs Select Committee**

1. The Culture Communities & Rural Affairs Select Committee began its year with the completion of the review of "hard to reach" groups and the way in which the County Council and other partners seek to engage with them, to encourage awareness and take-up of services. The report from this review including recommendations, was endorsed by the committee in July 2009. The recommendations were accepted by Cabinet in September 2009, and further work was requested regarding how certain recommendations might be implemented. The committee will be monitoring the work being done to implement the recommendations, with a view to reporting back to Cabinet in 2010.
2. The committee has also continued to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the review of Library Services, including the development of a strategy for the future of the library service.
3. In addition to the above reviews, the Committee's work programme has included regular attention to, and follow up of, topics within the Committee's terms of reference, such as the rural delivery action plan, learning outside the classroom and departmental strategies. Work has also been undertaken on monitoring aspects of relevant departmental budgets and performance, which will be carried through to 2010/11.
4. Members of the committee developed their understanding of services the Culture Communities and Rural Affairs Department provided through visits to the Runways End Activity Centre and one of the county's Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Lymington & Keyhaven nature reserve. Presentations have also been received at each meeting from organisations supported by grants provided by the Executive Member for Culture & Recreation, which provides accountability. Regular pre-scrutiny of Executive Member decisions has also complemented the above work, supporting a well-balanced work programme for the year.

### **Environment And Transportation Select Committee**

1. The Environment & Transportation Select Committee began its year with follow up to the major scrutiny reviews from 2008/09: Transport in the Community and the State of Hampshire's Roads. This involved consideration of the Executive response to the recommendations, and identification of aspects the Members wished to continue to monitor. This was built into the work programme for the year, allowing continuing oversight of outcomes in relation to identified recommendations, and on-going challenge.
2. The Members continued the in-depth scrutiny of Road Infrastructure and Housing Growth, and completed this work in July 2009. The Committee also carried out a light-touch scrutiny of Flooding in Hampshire, which has been taken by the Chairman to the National Flooding Scrutiny Learning Network

and is awaiting feedback from the relevant Executive Member. A new topic for indepth scrutiny is due to be selected in July 2010.

3. In addition to focused and light touch reviews, the Committee's work programme has included regular attention to, and follow up of, topics within the Committee's terms of reference, such as real-time scrutiny of street lighting, winter maintenance and waste management. Work has also been undertaken on monitoring aspects of relevant department budgets and performance, which will be carried through to 2010/11.
4. Regular pre-scrutiny of Executive Member decisions, engagement with outside bodies and regular information briefings have helped to complement the above work, supporting a well-balanced work programme for the year.

### **Safe And Healthy People Select Committee**

1. The Safe and Healthy People Select Committee has undertaken a variety of work during the year, including questioning and exploring areas of interest and concern relating to the Committee's terms of reference, pre-scrutinising matters from the Executive decision programme for Adult Services and Regulatory Services, and monitoring the strategic management of performance in relation to Adult Services.
2. In depth scrutiny has been progressed on the topics of age-proofing mainstream public services and engaging with older people in Hampshire, as part of the wider issue facing the county of preparing for an ageing population. These reviews will be completed in May 2010, and a new topic for in-depth scrutiny will be selected at the Committee's June 2010 meeting.
3. The Committee have assumed responsibility for the scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships, following the Police & Justice Act 2006, and held their first Crime themed meeting in July 2009. Relationships have been established with the Police Authority, and topics such as sex trafficking and prostitution have been subject to scrutiny. The next Crime & Disorder scrutiny meeting takes place in June 2010.
4. In addition, scrutiny monitoring of progress with the implementation of aspects of the Access to Services for People with Alcohol Problems review has taken place during the year; this has allowed Members oversight of the suggestions for improvements identified in the review, and the opportunity to make further comments and additional challenges.
5. Members have also kept abreast of national policy change impacting on the work of Select Committees in general.

## **Further Detail**

A full summary providing further detail of the topics covered by each Select Committee is available here:

[http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemssummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item\\_ID=1921&cancel=n](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemssummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item_ID=1921&cancel=n)

**KEITH CHAPMAN**  
**Chairman, Policy & Resources Select Committee**