



Chair -
Councillor
Tim Crumpton

Annual report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

2020/21 Muncipal Year



Vice-Chair -
Councillor Ed
Lawrence

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) 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 the 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.*

Planning Services – Public Consultation

Following a request by a Member of the Committee following 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:

- *That 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 shape the Council's response.*

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 the Councillor 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.*
- *The 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

Ongoing Scrutiny Items

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and 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

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

- Benefit Services Annual Report