



END OF YEAR 2013-14

SCRUTINY NEWSLETTER

April 2014



This is the end-of-year Scrutiny Newsletter for the year 2013-14. It includes performance information, shares best practice and highlights key aspects of the work of the Council's four select committees. There are links included to direct readers to further detailed information.

Select Committee Annual Survey Results

Select Committee members were invited to complete a short questionnaire in March 2014 to give their views on the scrutiny function. Thirty nine completed surveys were returned which is a 62% response rate. This is down from 2012-13 which had a response rate of 75%.

It is important to note that this is the first survey since the County Council elections in May 2013. Of the 63 Select Committee Members invited to complete the survey 26 were newly elected Members to the Council. There were therefore a large number of new Members to scrutiny which may have different experiences/expectations of the service. This should be taken into account when considering the survey results, particularly in relation to 2012-13 which was at the end of a 4-year term. This is borne out by the comments made in the survey, 4 out of the 5 comments received mentioned being a new Member and feeling that it is too early to assess effectiveness.

The responses about scrutiny were however largely positive. The table below summarises the information received compared to the results of the last two years. Text in green* shows an improved score from 2012-13 whilst red text shows a reduced score. There have been more reduced scores than improving scores.

One of the most significant areas of improved results was in relation to question 9; there are clear, measureable outcomes from the scrutiny process which has improved from 45% to 62%. This is a crucial improvement and highlights the focus on achieving outcomes from the scrutiny process. The most significant reduction is in relation to question 6; select committees are able to influence decisions appropriately. This question saw the most improvement last year so it is disappointing that the value of scrutiny in the decision-making process has declined but the results are still higher than in 2011-12.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
1. The select committee work programme reflects issues of greatest public concern/importance	67%	74%*	74%*
2. I have had reasonable opportunity to influence the work of the select committee(s)	62%	76%*	67%
3. The timing of select committee involvement in issues is appropriate	77%	69%	72%*
4. There is adequate input from external witnesses into the scrutiny process	64%	67%*	59%
5. The papers provided for meetings met my needs	67%	83%*	76%

6. Select committees are able to influence decisions appropriately	38%	69%*	46%
7. Scrutiny has had an impact on shaping and improving County Council services	69%	67%	50%
8. Scrutiny has had an impact on shaping and improving local health services	36%	38%*	Not asked in 13/14 survey
9. There are clear, measurable outcomes from the scrutiny process	49%	45%	62%*
10. I have had the opportunity to input into policy development	54%	45%	64%*
11. I have been able to commit the necessary time to undertake my role	82%	86%*	85%
12. There is good support from scrutiny support staff	97%	95%	85%

Members were also asked how useful they found the following areas of scrutiny work. The results are all encouraging although further work needs to be done to improve the Newsletters and Briefing Papers produced.

	Sum of very useful and useful (%) 2011-12	Sum of very useful and useful (%) 2012-13	Sum of very useful and useful (%) 2013-14
1. Your membership of Business Planning Group	46%	43%	86%*
2. Your membership of task forces / task and finish groups	77%	74%	100%*
3. Any lead roles you have undertaken (e.g. as a HASC liaison member / lead for your select committee on a specific issue)	46%	33%	79%*
4. Briefing papers (produced by scrutiny support staff)	90%	98%*	91%
5. Newsletters (produced by the scrutiny support staff)	62%	74%*	72%
6. The Members' Guide to Scrutiny	82%	76%	76%*

The results of the survey will help to focus the development of scrutiny in the future.

Performance Monitoring

In order to assess the effectiveness of Scrutiny, performance is monitored on a quarterly basis. Performance indicators have been established as part of the Business Planning and Scrutiny Review process. The table below shows the full year performance figures.

	CYPSSC	ECSSC	HASC	PFSC
Number of recommendations				
• Accepted	14	9	21	16
• Declined	0	0	0	0
• Awaiting a response	0	0	0	0
Number of Completed Task and Finish Groups	0	0	1	1
Task and Finish Group recommendations				
• Accepted			7	5
• Declined			0	0
• Awaiting a response			0	0

Number of call-in requests	1	1	0	0
Number of call-ins	0	1	0	0
Number of external witnesses	11	1	4	2
Number of public attending meetings (includes members of the public, press and other interested officers and members)	26	15	54	6
Member attendance at meetings	90%	84%	91%	89%
Topics from the Work Programme that link to the performance framework	13/17 76%	18/18 100%	12/15 80%	25/35 71%

The figures for number of recommendations, external witnesses and public attending meetings have fallen in 2013/14. This could be attributed to fewer meetings taking place as a result of the elections held in 2013 and the introduction of informal project days. The attendance figures have improved for all Committees from 2012/13.

There was only one call in heard during 2013/14, by ECSSC (see details below). The assumption is that if six Members support a call in and that the decision hasn't been previously scrutinised then the Business Planning Group of the appropriate Committee will agree to the request being heard by the full Committee.

In previous years performance has been compared against national data provided by the [Centre for Public Scrutiny](#). Unfortunately the data is not available at the time of producing this Newsletter.

What has worked well

2013-14 was the first year of a new Council. The number of new Members to scrutiny was large and therefore the results from the survey reflect the need for Members to embark on a steep learning curve in relation to the scrutiny process and the services covered by the Committees they sit on. Bearing this in mind the survey can be viewed very positively. The review of the year identified a number of areas across the Select Committees that have worked well. These include: -

- ✓ The timing of select committee involvement in issues,
- ✓ The support by scrutiny staff,
- ✓ The quality of discussion and decision-making,
- ✓ Knowledge and information provided by officers
- ✓ Involvement in smaller project groups such as Task and Finish Groups.

With any review there are always a number of areas that have been raised for further development and these will be considered and taken forward by Committees in 2014-15. The areas which will be developed include: -

- Improving the impact of backbench and minority party Members on policy and financial performance,
- The volume of time needed to understand the often complex issues scrutinised,
- Meetings need to be focussed with substantive items being allocated enough time to effectively scrutinise the issues,
- Increased clarity within reports presented for scrutiny.

Overview of Select Committees – Top issues scrutinised

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee (CYPSSC)

2013-14 Chairman – Richard Burrett

Children's Safeguarding Services	<p>The Committee considered the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and how learning from the inspection was being taken forward. IT asked the Business Planning Group to monitor the performance data in future and inform the Committee of any areas of concern.</p>
Alternative Provision College	<p>The Committee previewed a cabinet member decision on arrangements for establishing an Alternative Provision College model for providing education to young people with complex behavioural needs or medical conditions. The Committee was supportive of the funding arrangements and the guidance, as well as developing links with FE colleges for a more structured and accountable framework. The Committee also asked that the BPG be kept updated on the development of the funding model for the College</p>
Youth Service Provision	<p>The Committee previewed a cabinet member decision on the proposed reconfiguration of youth provision in the Bognor Regis area, hearing from witnesses affected by the changes. The Committee was supportive of the proposed reconfiguration, but urged the Cabinet Member to reutilise the Neighbourhood Centre for the development of a specialised service for young people, their carers and families, as well as working with local voluntary and charitable organisations to develop wider community services there.</p> <p>The Committee also considered the proposed savings programme for the youth service as a whole across the County, which included a reduction in the budget and consequent reconfiguration of the service.</p>
Learning Service	<p>The Committee considered the proposed different options for the future delivery of the Learning Service and highlighted the need to engage schools in the consultation. It also urged the Cabinet Member to consider the needs and attainment of children in special schools as solutions for the delivery of the special educational needs services were developed.</p>
Worthing Age of Transfer	<p>The Committee was consulted on the proposals to introduce a two tier system of education in Worthing, to replace the current three tier system. It was noted that this would bring Worthing into line with the majority of the rest of the County and that this was considered national best practice. The Committee supported the principles for the reorganisation, subject to the outcome of the consultation. The reorganisation is now going forward.</p>

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee (ECSSC)

2013-14 Chairman – Graham Tyler

<p>Aviation Policy and the Authority's Response to the Airports Commission Consultation</p>	<p>Local members most likely to be affected by any expansion at Gatwick were invited to attend and speak at the session, which was webcast. The Committee raised concerns about what it perceived to be unqualified assertions made in Gatwick Airport Limited's consultation document. It recommended that the Council refute those assertions which could not be substantiated.</p> <p>The Committee also raised concerns about the potential impact of any expansion at Gatwick, including noise pollution and air pollution, and the pressure on housing and the broader infrastructure. The Cabinet Member was able to strengthen his response to address the Committees recommendations.</p>
<p>Response to Consultation on a Development Consent Order for the Rampion Offshore Wind Farm</p>	<p>The Committee considered the overall conclusion in the draft Local Impact Report and draft Statement of Common Ground and scrutinised the Cabinet Member's draft response to the consultation on the Development Consent Order. Staff from E.ON attended to provide comprehensive evidence on the nature and scope of the scheme, and members whose divisions would be affected by the proposals were invited to attend and address the session.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed a clean energy development, and the level of local job creation. The Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member strengthen his response in respect of the compensation due to those (individuals, businesses, communities) affected by the proposed development. The Committee were also concerned that so much important detail (for example, the exact types of turbines proposed) had not been forthcoming, and asked E.ON to provide it. Members also expressed concern about various aspects of E.ON's public consultation, in the hope that future consultation would be improved.</p>
<p>Strategic Economic Plan and LEP Presentation - to endorse the development of Strategic Economic Plan, and its continued development prior to submission to Government</p>	<p>The Committee heard evidence from the Chief Executive of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) on the objectives and strategy of the LEP, and how the Strategic Economic Plan sat within these. Members were particularly concerned about the pressure placed upon the existing (and planned) housing stock and infrastructure, in the event that the planned levels of job creation were achieved. The Committee also explored the level of reliance upon a second runway at Gatwick, and were relieved to learn that there were contingency plans in the event that no second runway is built.</p> <p>The Committee also looked at the LEP's skills strategy, the second key aspect of its work. Members were encouraged to learn how of this work would be informed, and how was planned to be undertaken in partnership with colleges in the LEP area.</p>

<p>Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation - to consider the consultation feedback, and scrutinise how it is proposed to amend the Strategy in the light of the feedback.</p>	<p>25/09/13 & 20/11/13</p> <p>Members were very concerned about several aspects of the Strategy, but recognised the importance of working in partnership with the many stakeholders in successfully bringing about the strategy's objectives. For example, the legal responsibilities of riparian owners could be enforced by the County Council, but relied upon the efforts of district, borough and parish councils to ultimately compel landowners to deliver on their obligations. Members also identified developments in areas prone to flood risk as a source of significant concern and stressed the importance of planning officers working together to ensure that such development either did not take place, or took place with sufficient mitigating measures.</p> <p>The Committee supported the strategy. The Chairman of the Committee subsequently chaired a Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (comprising one member from each of West Sussex's local authorities) on flooding, and was able to inform this work with the ideas and views arising from the select committee's scrutiny.</p>
<p>Review of On-street Parking Charges</p>	<p>In a process spanning five months, the Committee undertook a comprehensive scrutiny journey, firstly undertaking scrutiny of the overriding parking strategy, followed by informal briefings and items at two formal meetings, to consider how the agreed strategy should be applied to on-street parking charges.</p> <p>Members were particularly concerned about the impact of increased charges on residents, town centre businesses and tradesmen, during the difficult economic climate. The Cabinet Member agreed to a freeze in charges for residents' first and second permits for 2014/15.</p>
<p>Call-in – Amendment to the Street Lighting Policy for Part Night Lighting Decision Report Call-in Request Addendum to Decision Report</p>	<p>While welcoming the potential savings which would be realised, members questioned the impact on crime and road safety in areas already operating part night lighting, and the impact on areas in which significant numbers of night workers were likely to live. The Committee was reassured to learn that flexibility in the street lighting PFI would allow future changes in circumstances to be accommodated, and that consultation down to town and parish council level had been undertaken.</p> <p>After robust questioning, the Committee supported the Cabinet Member's proposed decision</p>

Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

2013/14 – Margaret Evans

A&E Services	<p>At its meeting in October 2013, HASC recognised the significant pressures on A&E and emergency services and the fact that all NHS organisations were working hard to improve and maintain performance. However, it identified a number of areas of concern, including Ambulance Service performance in some areas, the need for appropriate mental health support in A&E and lack of public understanding of what services to access when.</p>
Dementia	<p>The Committee heard from the Alzheimer's Society, Carers' Support West Sussex, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (the mental health service provider) and the Mental Health Commissioning Team when it reviewed Dementia Services in West Sussex in October 2013. HASC welcomed the significant improvements made in recent years, but recognised that there were challenges to be met in ensuring that people with dementia and their carers have access to the right support and services. It asked commissioners to extend the Memory Assessment Service (set up in September 2012, to provide a comprehensive assessment, diagnosis and post-diagnostic support and treatment service) and also decided to scrutinise the new joint Dementia Framework (and a task and finish group will be doing this in spring 2014).</p>
NHS Short Breaks Services for Children with Complex Health Needs and Disabilities	<p>In 2012, HASC set up a task force to scrutinise options being developed by the NHS for the future of NHS funded short breaks services for children with complex health needs and disabilities in West Sussex. These options included the potential closure of the two NHS units providing short breaks in Horsham and Chichester and were subject to a formal public consultation process by the NHS. The Task Force made its final report to HASC in November 2013, when it reluctantly accepted the decision to close both these units and asked for assurance that appropriate alternative short breaks services have been put in place for all children currently using the services. The Task Force is reconvening at the end of May 2014 to review the implementation of the service change, and particularly the impact on children and their families/carers.</p>
Stroke Services	<p>HASC will be scrutinising the Sussex-wide review of Stroke Services during 2014-15 following its meeting in March 2014, when it raised concerns regarding the performance of services in West Sussex. It has asked NHS service providers and commissioners to particularly address the need for equity of service provision and outcomes; for best practice to be followed and shared by all NHS Trusts; and for better use of telemedicine.</p>

Adult Social Care	<p>HASC reviewed the performance of the Council's Adults' Services in January 2014, focusing particularly on choice and control (and the implementation/impact of direct payments); how social isolation is being addressed; and the development of advocacy services. It heard from witnesses representing carers' and service user organisations, and supported the work underway to further improve how the County Council meets adult social care needs. It asked that the redesign of Adults' Services should ensure that as much low level support as possible is available to prevent crisis and that advocacy should not be rationed.</p>
Care & Support at Home	<p>In March 2014, HASC supported plans developed by the County Council for the procurement of care and support at home services (traditionally known as domiciliary care) prior to a formal decision by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health. The Committee asked the Cabinet Member to take a number of issues into account as part of this decision, including the importance of quality and consistency in the procurement of these services; that travel times should be factored into contracts; that visit time/duration should be monitored; and the need for market development to ensure there is availability of service providers/carers.</p>
Proactive Care	<p>HASC reviewed Proactive Care in March 2014, a key joint programme between the County Council and the NHS to deliver integrated health and social care for vulnerable patients through multi-disciplinary teams. Whilst it recognised that this programme is still developing, it stressed the importance of monitoring whether it provides good value for money and leads to cost savings across the whole health and social care economy (but not at the cost of patient experience and outcomes). HASC will be reviewing progress again in a year's time (March 2015).</p>
Access to Primary Care	<p>At its meeting in March 2014, HASC looked at how the impact of housing developments across the county and the need for additional primary care services is being planned for and met; and whether people's ability to get an appointment with their GP is a factor in increasing A&E attendances. The NHS England Surrey and Sussex Area Team (which commissions Primary Care) outlined how services are delivered and plans for the future. They agreed to the Committee's requests to look at carrying out monitoring of GP practices' telephone systems; to ensure that care homes are not being charged for services covered by the General Medical Services contract; to monitor waiting times for GP appointments; and to provide an update report to the Committee's Business Planning Group in the autumn.</p>

Performance and Finance Select Committee (PFSC)

2013-14 Chairman – Deborah Urquhart

<p>Draft Budget and Performance Framework</p>	<p>PFSC have the over-arching role of scrutinising the budget and performance framework for the County Council. As part of this process a number of reports and presentations have been made to the Committee to enable Members views and concerns to be considered before the budget and performance objectives were approved. A financial landscape and strategy paper was presented in October to outline changes to the national funding regime and the impact of these changes on the County Council. The same meeting also received a report about the generation of extra income to support the County Council's finances.</p> <p>The draft commissioning intentions and plans were presented in December. The intentions outline the key areas of priority for the Council against a background of continuing reductions in public finances. It is therefore an important strategic document to inform and manage the direction and success of the Council. All Select Committees reviewed the intentions within their remit and any comments were fed through PFSC to the Cabinet for consideration and appropriate amendment. The performance framework, including the measures and targets to be achieved were presented to the March PFSC meeting. The Leader took the comments of the Select Committee into consideration before approving the final objectives and many of the targets were changed to provide clarity.</p> <p>The draft budget was presented in January 2014. Members raised a number of questions but ultimately endorsed the draft budget before approval at full County Council in February. The Committee endorsed the Council Tax freeze and reduction in external borrowing. It recommended that careful monitoring of the Better Care Fund and the "invest to save" projects takes place.</p>
<p>TPM</p>	<p>The Total Performance Monitor (TPM) is a monthly report around the budget and performance targets. It highlights any areas where budgets or targets are not being met. PFSC receive the TPM at each meeting. The item always receives a large amount of scrutiny challenge and Cabinet Members and officers often have to provide additional information to the Committee to justify a particular situation or response. There have been questions raised about the monitoring of capital expenditure which has contributed to changes in the system being introduced, the street-lighting contract, the in-year overspend in Adult Services budgets, the performance of the Community Highways Volunteer scheme and workforce monitoring figures.</p>

Grant Funding including grants to voluntary organisations	<p>The Committee considered the governance arrangements, allocation and consistency of the approach in relation to grants. It also examined whether there is sufficient awareness of the grants available and the engagement with the voluntary sector. The Committee heard from external witnesses who outlined their experiences and what changes could be made to processes to assist them in future. The Committee made a number of recommendations to improve the processes including; better information to signpost organisations to external grant funding sources, ensure consistency and accessibility of information, to establish a single portal of information for Members and applicants, to establish a formal feedback mechanism to ensure VFM and sharing best practice and that grant applications are considered within the overall commissioning intentions of the Authority.</p>
<p>Investment strategy changes to generate income</p>	<p>The Committee considered options in relation to opportunities to develop investments which would generate extra income for the County Council. This involved a change in policy to enable the County Council to acquire land or property for development purposes and to directly develop the County Council's own surplus assets for investment or onward sale.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to the principles established and also to the establishment of an arms-length company to manage the strategic estate. The committee asked to see detailed Business Plans to support the change in policy, including the objectives and targets to be met. The Committee wants to review these on an annual basis in order to monitor achievement of the objectives. The Committee asked that maximum care be taken in setting up a company to insure against any legal or financial claims.</p>
<p>Commissioning</p>	<p>As the County Council moves towards being more of a commissioning authority a number of reports were received around the commissioning strategy, intentions and plans and the governance of contracts. The Committee was supportive of the move towards commissioning but asked that Members receive training around commissioning and contract management so they fully understand their new roles and responsibilities. This training is currently being developed. The Committee also recommended that any unintended consequences of this move are carefully considered when investigating and developing commissioning in the market-place and that contracts remain flexible to ensure any emerging or changing needs can be met.</p>

Joint Scrutiny

Trial Joint scrutiny arrangements were established across West Sussex in 2010-11 to enable the County and District/Borough Councils to work together to scrutinise specific topics of common interest. All councils apart from Worthing Borough and Adur District took part in the trial arrangements. These arrangements were made a permanent arrangement in March 2013 after a review found the process had worked well. At the last Joint Scrutiny Steering Group held in March 2014 Members confirmed their support of the arrangement and asked the Chairman to contact Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils again to invite them to become permanent members of the arrangement.

The Joint Scrutiny Steering Group agreed in December 2012 to undertake a second joint scrutiny project. This project would investigate flooding issues across the County. The work was undertaken during 2012-13 with a report being produced in December 2013. The group looked at the key issues arising from the June 2012 flooding events, working arrangements, roles and responsibilities of partners and identified improvements in on-going flood risk management activities.

Task and Finish Groups

There are two cross-cutting Task and Finish Groups (TFG) in the 2013/14 work programme. Both of these have reconvened from 2012/13. The first is on Services for Young People, chaired by James Walsh, and the second is in relation to Carers, chaired by Morwen Millson.

Services to Young People

The Services to Young People: Preparing Young People for Work and for Life has reconvened for the next phase of its work (phase one having [reported](#) its conclusions and recommendations in March 2013). The Group continues to focus on supporting young people (age 16 – 25) into education, employment and training, and in this phase will concentrate on the advice, guidance, support and information provided by the County Council, schools and others in relation to skills, careers and behaviours. The Group will also consider the effectiveness of careers advice, work experience and apprenticeships schemes for young people, and links with businesses. The Group intends to report back to the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills and other Cabinet Member(s) as appropriate by the end of 2014 with its conclusions and recommendations. A copy for information will also be sent to members of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee and other Select Committee(s) as appropriate.

Carers

The Carers TFG reconvened in October 2013 for phase two of its work (phase one having [reported](#) its conclusions and recommendations in April 2013). The TFG's role is to assess whether the support provided to carers of all ages is appropriate and sufficient and to identify any areas for improvement. Phase two is likely to conclude in October 2014, and to date it has focused on young carers (previewing the Cabinet Member key decision on the Young Carers' Strategy); caring for people with mental ill health and dementia; workplace support for carers; and the impact of caring on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (BAME). It is meeting with GPs to examine their role in supporting carers and will be looking at the issues parent carers face and the financial impact of caring before making its final report later in the year. The TFG's phase one report was debated by the County Council in July 2013, and the TFG hopes that there will be opportunity for the County Council to consider its phase two findings in October 2014.

Task and Finish Groups (TFGs)

Each Select Committee can establish a Task and Finish Group (TFG) to look at a specific issue in more detail. The TFGs were monitored by PFSC in their over-arching monitoring role to ensure the highest priority areas are scrutinised. The latest monitor can be found [here](#) which gives details of each TFG and progress to date.

Future meeting dates

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
PFSC		1*, 16th		4 4*			3		4	22		18
CYPSSC			18			25		26		15		11
ECSSC		1*, 14	11	4*		18		19		14	25	
HASC			12				2	13		21		18

* joint meeting between ECSSC and PFSC.

Committee Membership 2013/14

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

Chairman [Richard Burrett](#)

[CYPSSC Membership](#)

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee

Chairman [Graham Tyler](#)

[ECSSC Membership](#)

Health and Adults' Services Select Committee

Chairman [Margaret Evans](#)

[HASC Membership](#)

Performance and Finance Select Committee

Chairman [Deborah Urquhart](#)

[PFSC Membership](#)

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Hard copies of any of the documents referred to in this newsletter are also available on request from Susanne Sanger. Further information is also available via the [internet](#).