

Scrutiny Annual Report 2020

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Contents

Contents.....	1
Chair's Foreword.....	5
Councillor Ana Pedersen.....	5
Chair.....	5
Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC)	6
OSC Membership.....	6
Responsibilities of OSC.....	6
Task and Finish Groups (TFG's)	7
Established Task and Finish Group - London Luton Airport Air Quality Impact Task and Finish Group.....	7
Members of the Task and Finish Group	8
Overview and Scrutiny Board.....	9
Public Involvement and Scrutiny	10
Scrutiny and Scrutiny Powers to Call-In Executive Decision; Achievements & Challenges	10
Key Scrutiny Work in 2019/20	11
Corporate Performance Quarterly Reports/Highlights of the year 2019/20 include	11
Annual Town Centre Footfall	11
Bed and Breakfast	11
Children Services Social Workers.....	11

Number of Children not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Figures	12
The percentage of Single Assessments completed within timescales (which is 45 working days from the start date)	12
Failing Schools	12
Number of Apprenticeship Placement in Luton.....	12
All Crimes and Anti-social behaviour in Luton.....	12
Performance management areas requiring improvement or areas further report has been requested by OSB	12
Other Areas of Discussions, Reviews and Achievements by OSB during 2019/20	13
Stuart Street – Dunstable Road – Highway Improvement on Congestion June 2019 Meeting	13
Reduction in the number of occupants permitted in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) August 2019.....	13
Scrutiny of SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership) November 2019 Meeting.....	13
Selective Licensing	13
Regulation of Social Housing January 2020 Meeting	14
Scrutiny Training – provided by Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) on 17th June 2019.....	14
Uptake	14
Overview and Scrutiny Board References to Executive Meetings – 2019/2020	14
The Overview and Scrutiny Board made the following recommendations to the Executive:	15
Executive Meeting on 22 nd July 2019.....	15
Executive Meeting on 13th January 2020	15
Selective Licensing	15
The Year Ahead	15
Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Committee (CDC) – 2 nd March 2020	16
CDC made the following recommendations:	17
Highlighted below are some of the areas of the CSP work, scrutinised by the CDC on 2 nd March 2020 include:	17
Overview of Bedfordshire Police’s collaboration with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire	17
Children’s Services Scrutiny Review Group (CSRG)	18
Work Programme 2019-20	19
Highlights of the year.....	19
Ofsted Inspection	19
Early Intervention and Prevention Transformation Programme	19
Universal Credit	20
Looked after Children and Sufficiency Strategy	20
2020/21 Items for Monitoring	20
Finance Review Group (FRG).....	21
Work Programme 2019-20	21
Key Topics Scrutinised - Finance Updates	22

Impact of the Revised Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme and Universal Credit / Housing Benefit:.....	23
2018/19 Provisional Revenue & Capital Outturn.....	23
The key highlights of the year in relation to the council's revenue and capital outturn were:	24
• In 2017/18 the council borrowed £100m	24
• In 2018/19 the council borrowed £50m	24
• The corporate accounts for borrowing costs, investment income, capital financing and corporate level grant funding had contributed a short term net gain of £5.6m to assist the 2018/19 outturn position.	24
• The cumulative monitoring for the General Fund in 2018/19 predicted an under spend of £1.016m.....	24
• In respect of approved central contingency budget, the final use of the central contingency budget was similar to the position reported in this year's financial monitoring.	24
Treasury Management Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2019	24
Charges for Burials & Cremations Including Full List of Additional Charges.....	24
Luton Council Share in Ownership of Home Connections Lettings LTD	24
Setting the Council Tax Base.....	25
Council Tax Reduction Scheme & Alternative Discretionary Support	25
The Finance Review Group supported the proposed revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Alternative Discretionary Support.	25
Data Protection Act 2018 –Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).....	25
Future Ready Programme – Discovery Phase.....	26
Scale of Charges	27
Update on DCO Planning Fees Through to Determination of Application.....	27
Scrutiny's Role as Accountable Body for SEMLEP.....	28
Debt Collection	28
Integrated Impact Assessments.....	28
Property Investment Performance	29
Continuous Scrutiny of the Transformation Programme	29
2020/21 Items for Monitoring.....	29
Health And Social Care Review Group (HSCRG).....	29
Highlights of the year.....	31
Access GP/Primary Care Services/ Primary Care Networks	31
Creation of a new single Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)	31
Merger of L&D Hospital Bedford and Hospital	31
Universal Credit - Impact on Luton	31
Older People Day Care Provisions/ Centres.....	31
Targeted Lung Health and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening	32
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	32

2020/21 Items for Monitoring	32
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Chair's Foreword



Councillor Anna Pedersen
Chair

This annual report gives an update of the work we have undertaken during 2019/20 and highlights some of its achievements and contributions to the Council's decision-making process. It also highlights some of the significant work it plans to undertake in the coming year 2020/21. This has no doubt been a busy year for Overview and scrutiny in Luton and more so, the coming year will be extremely challenging for our Council in terms of the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic and lockdown of regular activities nationally and locally since March 2020 to present. Evidently, there will be several issues brought by the disruption caused by it and the unprecedented impact it has had on our Council, will mean that we will learn to do things differently from now onwards.

However, in the face of the Pandemic, good overview and scrutiny is now more than ever before unequivocally important to the Council's decision-making process. Our Council must continue to serve the people of Luton and decisions will still have to be made with scrutiny playing its role as a catalyst and a critical friend. Scrutiny will need to remain active to oversee how the challenges unfold to understand the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on local people. Also, scrutiny will learn from the experiences of the past months and months to come and will continue to play a key part in ensuring that decision makers are held to account; that the voices of local people are heard; that ultimately robust and effective decisions are made for the improvement, quality and delivery of services to our community.

I would like to thank all Members and Officers that have contributed to the delivery of scrutiny work and indeed the Overview and Scrutiny Board's work programme. In particular, I wish to extend my gratitude to all Councillors and their commitment to cross-party working, alongside close affiliation with the Board. This meant a real collaborative approach to ensuring a robust democratic process in our Council and community at large.

Councillor Anna Pedersen

Signature

Chair

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is established in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and Councillor Anna Pedersen was appointed, Chair of the Committee in May 2019. Councillor Jeff Petts was appointed, as the Vice Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Anna Pedersen (Liberal Democrat) Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Councillor Jeff Petts (Conservative) Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee



OSC Membership

2. Its Membership consists of all non-executive members.

Responsibilities of OSC

3. The OSC main role is to appoint the four Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committees to carry out scrutiny functions and to promote the development of the scrutiny process in Luton. The Committee is also responsible for setting up time limited Task and Finish Groups as and when required to scrutinise items of interest in detail and make recommendations to the Executive.
4. The work carried out by the four standing sub committees and any Task and Finish Groups set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2019/20 is set out in the report.

Task and Finish Groups (TFG's)

5. Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups are time limited committees set up by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Task and Finish Groups Membership is drawn from non-Executive Members on expression of interest and does not have to be politically balanced. However, consideration is given to wider political representation. Sometimes it may be appropriate to co-opt people onto Task and Finish groups to provide specific professional or technical expertise to support the group. Views from co-opted membership may also represent the point of view of a particular sector of the community, etc.

Established Task and Finish Group - London Luton Airport Air Quality Impact Task and Finish Group

6. Air quality in Luton remain was an area of interest not only to scrutiny Members but also Luton residents, local groups and schools in Luton, etc. The Overview and Scrutiny Board consequently considered different approaches to scrutinise air pollution and its impact in Luton. As a way forward, the Overview and Scrutiny Board put forward a recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a time-limited task and finish group (TFG) to review some of the issues and concerns expressed by local people and to investigate the air quality impact within the vicinity of the Airport.

Councillor Terry Keens (Liberal Democrat), Chair of London Luton Airport Air Quality Impact Task and Finish Group



7. In the Overview and Scrutiny Report 2018/19 briefly reported the established task and finish group, which was set up by the OSC on 19th November 2018 with its first meeting on 12th March 2019. The delay was due to the Local Government Election in 2019 leading to the Membership of the TFG being affected and further delay commencement on 5th August 2019.
8. Councillor Terry Keens was re-elected Chair of the Task and Finish Group at the meeting on 5th August 2019 to lead the investigation.
9. The final Report and recommendations from the Review is due to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 3rd August 2020 for endorse and then to the Executive meeting on 14th September 2020 for approval.

Councillor Keens said;

"I wish to commend Members of the TFG for their commitment and contributions in seeing this review to conclusion. I was happy with the quality and interest of the committee members and extremely pleased with the quality of reports received from Officers of the Council and our partners from London Luton Airport Operations Limited, and the CHILL studies report from University of Bedfordshire. Their expert support in presenting an extremely technical topic in an understandable way was invaluable. I must also not fail to extend my thanks to the local interest and support received including schools that contributed to the process. The process took a bit longer than expected owing to other unexpected election commitments for the team and members in 2019 and Covid19 in 2020. Input from colleagues outside the core group added to the timeline, but ensured the accuracy of information as well as strengthening the recommendations. I am confident that the recommendations from the review will contribute to making a difference to the quality of air we breathe. Lastly my thanks goes to the Democracy & Scrutiny Officer who supported and facilitated the review who was very professional in her approach and did so with a good sense of humour."

Members of the Task and Finish Group

Cllr Terry Keens (Chair)

Cllr David Taylor

Cllr David Franks

Cllr Diane Moles

Cllr Yasmin Waheed

Cllr David Wynn

10. The Task and Finish Group was approved to run for an initial 6 months from 5th August 2019. However, members of the group asked for a further extension to enable more time for a thorough investigation and opportunity to interview witnesses. The Task Group met with many stakeholders and received expert's views and submissions including evidence received from the University of Bedfordshire on the ongoing 4 years CHILL Study, and support and advice from Partners from London Luton Airport Corporation Limited. Local residents, individuals, schools and head teachers including community groups also participated in the process.

11. The TFG have now concluded its investigation and is set to submit a draft report on its 19 recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for endorsement. Speaking on the completion of the review, Councillor Petts (Conservative) stated

"It is now time for us as a council to address the air pollution that is threatening the health of our children. Remember they are our future".

12. The final report is due submission to Executive meeting on 14 September 2020 for approval. Once approved, relevant services of the council and its partners are expected to respond and outline how they wish to address the recommendations. Thereafter, Scrutiny would commence monitoring of proposed actions to address the recommendations through its work programme and continuous reporting.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

Councillor Anna Pedersen, (Liberal Democrats) Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Board (OSB)



Councillor David Agleby, (Labour), Vice Chair

Councillor Jeff Petts, (Conservative) Vice-Chair



13. The Overview & Scrutiny Board (OSB) provides an overarching function to oversee and scrutinise any matters relating to general services for Luton and its residents, not covered by any other sub-committees prescribed in this report.
14. Once a year it sits and performs the function of Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Committee, in accordance with Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.
15. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met 6 times during 2019/20 to receive and discuss matters affecting the people of Luton. The Board made several recommendations to the Executive to consider in its role as the main decision making body. Listed below are the meetings, which took place;
 - 25th June 2019
 - 5th August 2019
 - 2nd September 2019
 - 19th September 2019
 - 2nd March 2020
 - 12th March 2020 – Additional meeting set up to accommodate additional item regarding Red Route Pilot in Luton

16. The Overview and Scrutiny Board invited senior officers of the Council and external partners and stakeholders to support the scrutiny process enabling robust scrutiny process. Throughout the year, Overview and Scrutiny Board requested the following items for submission to its meetings, some of which are annual reports

- Corporate Performance Quarterly Report (Quarter 1-4)
- Timeliness of Benefits
- Stuart Street – Dunstable Road Highway Improvements on Congestion
- Red Routes – Progress Update
- Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19
- Fly Tipping And Percentage of Decent Streets
- Reduction in the number of occupants permitted in HMOs
- Luton Lets (Progress Update in 12months time)
- Harnessing Momentum – The Council's Strategy for Arts and Culture And Creative Industries 2017-2027 (Report on People Power Evaluation Report)
- Scrutiny of SEMLEP (SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP- Overview) (Update Report in 12 months' time).
- Hitchin Road/Stopsley Way/Vauxhall Way Upgrade
- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Bus Passenger Transport Issues In Luton
- Regulation of Social Housing (Report Progress in 12 months' time & Report on Health and Safety Standards applied to Homeless Hostels and Temporary Accommodation Properties)
- Supplementary Planning Document (Affordable Housing)
- Pilot Red Routes in Luton

Public Involvement and Scrutiny

17. Public Involvement is a good element of good scrutiny and meaningful engagement with members of the public and it is acknowledged that this is an area, which needs looking at more closely to capture public interest and engagement. In terms of access to information, the Committee's agendas are published on the Council's website giving access to members of the public. Notices of meetings are also displayed on the Council's Notice Boards outside of the Town Hall so that members of the public can have sight of the meetings taking place. Copies of council agendas are also sent to the Library, but there needs to be a mechanism to captivate public interest. In the past year, the Board have invited contributions from partners and stakeholders at committee meetings with positive responses often received.

Scrutiny and Scrutiny Powers to Call-In Executive Decision; Achievements & Challenges

18. The Overview and Scrutiny Board through continuous scrutiny and monitoring of performance have made evidenced based recommendations and or advice, which help inform decisions made by the Executive. Scrutiny also builds its work programme around the Executive Forward Plan published every 28 days. The 'Call-in' Power of scrutiny (other than exempt decisions) provides a key check and balance mechanism to decisions made by the Executive. When scrutiny feels that a decision being made by the Executive needs to be scrutinised before it is implemented, it would use its powers to call in that decision and it would then have the opportunity to make recommendations, which the Executive may or may not take on board. It should be noted that

no decisions have been called in during 2019-20, which is evidence of a good relationship and collaboration with the Executive the Council's decision-making body. Against a complex and changing local government funding challenges, scrutiny function has largely operated with very limited resources in the last few years, however, Scrutiny has been able to make some recommendations that inform Executive decisions. It would continue to operate with available resources and to engage collaboratively as much as possible.

Key Scrutiny Work in 2019/20

Corporate Performance Quarterly Reports/Highlights of the year 2019/20 include

19. The Council's Corporate Performance measures help to improve its performance by identifying good practice and learning from others services that are doing better. The Council's quarterly performance reports ensures that the Council is focused on its key priorities, and that areas of poor performance are questioned. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has the key role to question areas of services that are not doing so well and ask questions as to why some are doing better than others. There is recognition that performance is wholly reliant on the identification of good performance indicators and every year, the Overview and Scrutiny Boards looks at these to ensure that the indicators are still fit for purpose and review or request new indicators when the need arises.
20. During 2019/20, the Board called for more detailed reports on areas identified as requiring improvements or performance measures causing concern. In some cases relevant Executive members or the Director of Service is called to explain the causes of underperformance and corrective action in place to address such areas of concern.
21. The Overview and Scrutiny Board received the following performance reports:
 - Quarter 4 - June 2018/2019
 - Quarter 1 - 23rd September 2019
 - Quarter 2 - 25th November 2019
 - Quarter 3 - 2nd March 2020
22. Below are some of the areas where scrutiny has made comments and or asked for more work to be done in order to meet set targets.

Annual Town Centre Footfall

23. OSB called for further detailed reporting on the town centre footfall to its future meeting to scrutinise why annual footfall for Q3 of 2019/20 fell by 9% on the previous year and was down by 12% on the year before that and had experienced consistent fall in the last couple of years.

Bed and Breakfast

24. Scrutiny has always expressed concerns about the number of people in bed and breakfast as this was not cost effective. This target has been going in the right direction but the impact of Covid19 may mean increase in the number of people in bed and breakfast in the coming year.

Children Services Social Workers

25. OSB expressed concern at the high increase in the numbers of agency workers for both Adult and Children Services. A 'Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers Task and Finish Group' to address some of these issues took place in 2017 and recommendations were approved by the Executive. In order to address this concern, OSB made a recommendation to Scrutiny Children Services to investigate this matter further in the following headlines.

- Children's Services Social Workers turnover rate

- Number of permanent Children's Services Social
- Workers leaving in the period
- Number of Children's Services social workers (headcount) at period end

Number of Children not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Figures

26. The low standard and numbers of the young people not in education, employment or training 'NEET' and the low percentage of children attending a school rated "good or better" was a concern for Members of the Board. OSB made recommendation to Scrutiny Children Service Review Group for further scrutiny.

The percentage of Single Assessments completed within timescales (which is 45 working days from the start date)

27. Members of the Board were pleased to see that this target exceeded the target of 80% and stands at 81% at quarter three (December 2019). Performance is progressing in the right direction evidenced in consistent performance and drive by the Assessment Team for positive outcomes for children and families in Luton. OSB however, acknowledged there are some greater challenges around staffing, thresholds and sustainability. Scrutiny would continue to monitor this indicator in the coming months through its work programme.

Failing Schools

28. This is now rated as Ofsted "Good status" as against "no longer requiring improvement" following Ofsted Inspection which took place in September 2019. This was good achievement informed by continuous monitoring by OSB.

Number of Apprenticeship Placement in Luton

29. There had been increase in the number of Apprenticeship placements in the Council, however, scrutiny's opinion is that the number of Apprentices should be more inclusive of BAME. The Board requested that breakdown of all the current apprentices by ethnicity (for the 198) reported in Q3 2019-20 should be submitted to a future meeting and where possible Officers should also provide the numbers of applicants who applied for apprenticeship.

All Crimes and Anti-social behaviour in Luton

30. The Overview and Scrutiny Board acknowledged that there was need to take prompt action about the drastic increase in the number of burglary in the town. This was a key concern for members. Unfortunately, not all victims of crime contacted the Police to report incidents of crime as residents feel that there was lack of response from the Police, which could also be because of the lack of resources. OSB will continue to monitor progress.

Performance management areas requiring improvement or areas further report has been requested by OSB

31. The following have been requested for a report back:

- Children who attend a school (Good or Better)
- The Percentage of Single Assessments
- Town Centre Action Plan to help identify how crime figures collected.
- Universal Credit – Implementation in Luton – Impact
- Timeliness of Benefits
- Stronger Families – number of families "turned around"
- Integrated, efficient and digital service delivery – striving for a "one Luton" approach
- Luton Lets (Progress Update in 12months time)

- Harnessing Momentum – The Council's Strategy for Arts and Culture And Creative Industries 2017-2027 (Report on People Power Evaluation Report)
- Scrutiny of SEMLEP (SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP-Overview) (Update Report in 12 months' time).
- Hitchin Road/Stopsley Way/Vauxhall Way Upgrade
- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Bus Passenger Transport Issues In Luton
- Regulation of Social Housing (Report Progress in 12 months' time & Report on Health and Safety Standards applied to Homeless Hostels and Temporary Accommodation Properties)
- Supplementary Planning Document (Affordable Housing)
- Pilot Red Routes in Luton

32. The Overview and Scrutiny Board will continue to review set targets and monitor areas for improvement. The Board had recommended in the past that some measures are more appropriate for annual reporting and this is now happening as requested.

Other Areas of Discussions, Reviews and Achievements by OSB during 2019/20

Stuart Street – Dunstable Road – Highway Improvement on Congestion June 2019 Meeting

33. This area was previously labelled as being within an Air Quality Management Zone due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide being emitted from road traffic, over 12 months after the works took place, OSB called to hear the progress and impact of the works. Members were informed that the changes made was evidently seen in the reduced congestion, which ultimately meant less pollution.

Reduction in the number of occupants permitted in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) August 2019

34. OSB requested that a Joint Report on the Council's HMO Licensing arrangements and its powers together with planning legislation which affects HMO's be submitted a future meeting of the Committee. OSB will continue to monitor this matter through its work programme.

Scrutiny of SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership) November 2019 Meeting

35. The Council now has appropriate scrutiny arrangements in place to ensure that Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is scrutinised effectively within the national local growth assurance framework, issued by the government in January 2019. On 25th November 2019, OSB received information from SEMLEP in relation to overview of its activities and role its in South East Midlands and in particular Luton. The SEMLEP Board is at the heart of the decision-making process for making effective use of available funds and receives advice from a number of public and private sector groups. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Simmons is a Member of the SEMLEP Board which also oversee and scrutinise the performance of SEMLEP. In view of the future of the EU funding and the Government's Brexit Plans there is a commitment from the current Government in relation to UK shared prosperity fund which may take over from the Local Growth Funding but this is subject to further Government announcements.

Selective Licensing

36. OSB supported the proposals to introduce the Selective Licensing Scheme and its implementation, in defined areas of Luton. The proposals required the licensing of all privately rented accommodations to meet certain standards and require private Landlords "to be a fit and proper person". OSB further requested the Executive to apply to the Secretary of State to

approve the introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme across the whole of Luton. OSB will continue to monitor its implementation through its work programme.

Regulation of Social Housing January 2020 Meeting

37. OSB commended the Council for adopting this new framework regarding the Governments 2018 Regulatory Framework for Social Housing. OSB further requested that the performance indicators set out in the report be included in the corporate performance framework, which is now currently being monitored and reported.

Scrutiny Training – provided by Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) on 17th June 2019

38. The Council's local government election took place on 2nd May 2019 and with a number of new elected members of the Council on board, this was the right time to take stock of member development in relation to scrutiny and how it operates. It is also a crucial time to look at members' skills gaps or development opportunities to help with their new roles and or support existing Councillors to refresh their knowledge in scrutiny practice and new government's guidance. The Scrutiny training which was delivered by CfPS, explored statutory framework and powers of scrutiny, culture, its role in a challenging local government context and the principles of good scrutiny. During the training members had an insight into the new "Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Overview and Scrutiny" published by the Ministry of Housing and Communities & Local Government in May 2019.

Uptake

39. There are 48 Members of the Council, out of which 10 are Executive Members whilst the remaining 38 are the non-executive members who are also all members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They form membership of the 4 scrutiny sub-committees. Unfortunately, only 14 members attended the training. This was not encouraging. Scrutiny training is crucial and essential to the effectiveness of scrutiny as a critical friend in local government's decision making and holding the executive to account. Uptake has been a challenge.

40. However, good feedback was received from the 14 members who attended the training on 17th June 2019. Many enjoyed the experience. They said that the training was timely, relevant and informative. Below are some quotes from candidates:

"As a new Councillor I found the training relevant and I believe that this would help me as a member of scrutiny committee to be effective in delivering good scrutiny and holding decision makers to account – Candidate (New Councillor) 17th June 2019"

"A reminder of the wider scope of scrutiny and the framework within which it operates. It has broadened my knowledge and opens a doorway to amplify the voice of the public. Candidate 17th June 2019"

Overview and Scrutiny Board References to Executive Meetings – 2019/2020

41. Reference Reports from Scrutiny is a vehicle with which Scrutiny's comments and views are passed to the decision making body (Executive). It can ask for further action to take place in relation to proposals with the sole aim of ensuring that the needs of the people of Luton are met through a well-grounded democratic process.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board made the following recommendations to the Executive:

Executive Meeting on 22nd July 2019

42. Bedfordshire Stop and Search Community Scrutiny Panel: The Executive noted and endorsed the Recommendation. *Executive Decision Number: EX/75/19*

Executive Meeting on 13th January 2020

43. Hitchin Road/Stopsley Way/Vauxhall Way Works: The concerns raised regarding Birchen Grove by Overview and Scrutiny Board was acknowledged by the Portfolio Holder who assured scrutiny that this would be addressed in the second phase of the proposed works. *Executive Decision Number: EX/03/20*

Selective Licensing

44. The Executive approved the recommendation from OSB supporting the proposals that the selective licensing scheme is introduced in the defined areas of Luton and should apply to the Secretary of State for the introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme across the whole of Luton. *Executive Decision Number: EX/04/20*

The Year Ahead

45. Listed below are some of the key matters that will top the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Agenda in the coming year 2020/21.

- The depth of the Impact of Covid19 on local people
- Annual LTN Monitoring Report
- Universal Credit and Impact on local people
- Annual Ombudsman Complaints
- Pilot of Red Routes in Luton
- Annual Food Plan Report 2020/21
- Annual Health and Safety Work Plan 2020/21
- Bedfordshire Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel Progress
- Luton Lets (Progress Update in 12months time)
- Harnessing Momentum – The Council's Strategy for Arts and Culture And Creative Industries 2017-2027 & Report on People Power Evaluation Report
- Scrutiny of SEMLEP (SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP-Overview)
- Hitchin Road/Stopsley Way/Vauxhall Way Upgrade Progress
- Selective Licensing Scheme – Progress on Implementation
- Bus Passenger Transport Issues In Luton
- Regulation of Social Housing Report Progress & Report on Health and Safety Standards applied to Homeless Hostels and Temporary Accommodation Properties
- Supplementary Planning Document (Affordable Housing)

Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Committee (CDC) – 2nd March 2020

Councillor Anna Pedersen (Liberal Democrat) Chair of Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Committee



Councillor David Agleby, (Labour), Vice Chair

Councillor Jeff Petts, (Conservative) Vice-Chair



46. The Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Committee (CDC) takes place annually helping to shape the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in line with legislative requirement. This year marks its fourth successful year running. Partners and senior officers of the Council who lead on the various theme work of the partnership attended the meeting. The work of the (CDC) evidenced excellent work undertaken by scrutiny and it shows clear working relationship and collaboration between scrutiny and partner organisations.
47. The CDC recognised the good work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and its annual report marked the end of the current CSP plan for the period 2017 – 2020. The CSP plan is a significant opportunity for the CDC to contribute towards Luton's 2040 agenda and plan to adopt a strategic approach to ensure that CSP connects its approach to targeting drivers/generators of crime prioritising prevention alongside robust action when crime or anti-social behaviour occurs.
48. The CDC supported the new model approach, which was adopted in recognition of the fact that local experts who are actively engaged within their respective theme areas will best deliver the CSP objectives. CDC further commended the work of the CSP and agreed some recommendations listed below, to help monitor areas where scrutiny may be required in the following year 2020/21. The CDC scrutinised the following areas of the work of the CSP.
- Town Centre & Neighbourhood Crime Direction of Travel – Delivered by Laura Church Corporate Director Place and Infrastructure & Superintendent Jaki Whittred
 - Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health – Delivered by Gerry Taylor, Director Public Health and Wellbeing, Luton Council.

- Young People – Delivered by David Collins - Service Manager, Youth Offending Service
- Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit – Delivered by Superintendent David Cestaro
- Bedfordshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy
- Extremism – Delivered by Sarah Pinnock – Prevent Co-ordinator Luton Council
- Domestic Abuse – Amanda Lewis, Director For People – Luton Council

CDC made the following recommendations:

- That the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2020 to 2024 to provide any specific feedback that would assist the Partnership to deliver on its priorities be endorsed by the Crime and Disorder Committee.
- That the Community Safety Partnership Executive be recommended that Theme Leads develop robust performance monitoring regimes to fully evaluate the work within the priority areas.
- That the Community Safety Partnership Executive be recommended to integrate opportunities for community consultation and involvement within the delivery of the CSP Plan.
- That the Domestic Abuse Strategic Document be endorsed; and recommend that the Community Safety Partnership Executive approve the Strategy and Overview Action Plan.
- That the Crime and Disorder Committee in agreeing with all 4 recommendations (1-4) above request the relevant theme Leads and the Groups involved to take into account the comments made by Members of the Crime and Disorder Committee at this meeting.

Highlighted below are some of the areas of the CSP work, scrutinised by the CDC on 2nd March 2020 include:

49. Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – The Town Centre PSPO came into force in July 2018 and Scrutiny has had input in the process right from onset and these had made significant positive outcome in terms of developing and shaping the order which made it an offence to fail to stop begging in the town centre when requested to do so
 - CDC supported the proposal to amend and vary the terms of the Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order in the context of begging.
 - CDC called on CSP to address the issue of low-level enforcement of PSPO in the light of all the antisocial behaviour in the Town Centre.

Overview of Bedfordshire Police's collaboration with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire

50. CDC recognises the importance of collaborative work, which yields positive outcome and lead to enhance and effective democratic and scrutiny process.

The Crime and Disorder Committee commended the work of CSP and thanked partners who supported the process in terms of collaboration of services between Bedfordshire Policing, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

These are some of the quotes from the participants of the CDC this year 2019/2020:

“The Community Safety Partnership welcomes the scrutiny and challenge that the annual Crime & Disorder Committee brings to the work we carry out in partnership to improve community safety across the Town. The committee takes a critical look at the work that is being undertaken and actively promotes improvements and recommendations to the work plan and strategic direction of travel. This year that was particularly important as we have moved into a new CSP plan for 2020 to 2024 and it is vital that the CSP priorities are set with transparency and that they meet the needs of the Town.” (Robin Porter Chief Executive Luton Council and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership)

“The 2020 Crime & Disorder Committee provided partners from the Community Safety Partnership with a platform to demonstrate the work which has been undertaken over the past 12 months to tackle a range of crime and community safety related issues. This is a really helpful forum in terms of connecting the community safety agenda to local democratic processes and as a meeting in public means that residents can come along to hear about the priority issues.” (Vicky Hawkes, Service Manager, Public Protection)

Children’s Services Scrutiny Review Group (CSRG)

Councillor Terry Keens (Liberal Democrat) Chair, Children’s Services Scrutiny Review Group



51. Councillor Terry Keens remained as Chair of the Children's Services Review Group (CSRG) in 2019/20. His appointment and the whole membership of CSRG rolled over for 2020/21 without change due to the cancellation of the annual council meeting in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
52. CSRG's main function is scrutinise and make comments/ recommendations to inform and enhance decision-making on any matters relating to operation of Children’s Services in Luton. Its main areas of responsibility include:
- Education: e.g. attainment, Special Educational Needs; enforcement powers;; the Virtual School for Children in Care;
 - Children Social Care: e.g. early Intervention and prevention; Children in care and leaving care; children with disabilities; child physical and mental health and well-being
 - Safeguarding: e.g. child protection from abuse and sexual exploitation; missing children; domestic violence impacting on children; Youth Offending

Councillor Keens said

“My first year as Chair of the Children's Services Review Group has been quite eventful, with a challenging Ofsted inspection result and the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased for the opportunity to continue to serve as Chair and work with members of CSRG to provide effective scrutiny, monitoring and supporting the Children's Families and Education Services"

Work Programme 2019-20

53. During the year CSRG monitored and reviewed the performance in Children's Services and a range of topics on key areas, including the following:

- Outcome of the Ofsted inspection
- Flying Start Children's Centre
- Early Intervention and Prevention Transformation Programme, including progress of the Luton Families and Family Safeguarding Programmes
- Luton Adoption Service Proposal
- Luton Youth Offending and the serious violence strategy 2016 – 2020 and the Council's response to Tackling Knife Crime
- Universal Credit and the Potential Impact on Free School Meals
- Luton Education Strategy 2019 – 2022, school places, education outcomes, including Early Years to Key Stage 4, maintained Nursery School funding and concerns over independent schools and unregistered schools
- Looked After Children and Sufficiency Strategy, including accommodation for young people in care over 16 Years
- Careers Hub Luton
- Luton Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2018-19

Highlights of the year

Ofsted Inspection

54. The result of the Ofsted inspection in January 2020, rating the council's children's services overall effectiveness as inadequate was disappointing. The CSRG was concerned that some children were not getting the quality of services they needed and expected. The CSRG is keen to see that the Children Services make it their top priority to bring about the change and improvement required and fully supported the Children's Improvement Plan and Delivery Plan. The CSRG will continue to monitor the improvement and delivery plans during 2020/21 and look forward to see real progress in the key areas of weakness identified in the Ofsted report

Early Intervention and Prevention Transformation Programme

55. The national Troubled Families Programme funding had been extended up to March 2021. The Early Help Teams demonstrated positive outcomes for families worked with to meet the threshold of 'significant and sustained progress' a requirement under the troubled families financial framework for payments by results, and means a claim can be submitted for all those families. The current performance by results target was 1940 families by the end of March 2020. So far, 1843 families had been 'turned around' in Luton and the service can claim 95% of that target. Figures released from the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government ranked Luton 1st regionally and 20th nationally compared to other local authorities.

Universal Credit

56. The impact of Universal Credit on free school meals continued to be of concern. The CSRG aims to keep it under review throughout the transition period and, as more information comes to light, determine if any local measures will be required to mitigate the effects on vulnerable children and their families.

Looked after Children and Sufficiency Strategy

57. The CSRG was informed of the work with the Pan Beds Forum and Supported Living Arrangements for 16+ care leavers, as part of its review of the “Looked After Children” and Sufficiency Strategy. The Committee expressed concern in the number of children being placed in unregulated accommodation, where it was difficult to ensure whether proper care was being given to the children. Semi independent supported living accommodation is staffed 24/7 and provides support rather than care to young people and as a result is not currently covered under the Care Act 2014. The issue was also raised in a BBC investigation that found children being placed at risk of abuse in unregistered children’s homes. The under Secretary of State on 11 February 2020 made proposals to implement regulation in this area and those proposed changes have been secured due to the efforts of the three authorities working with Beds Police and Andrew Selous MP to highlight the issues and push for change. An eight-week consultation process is due to commence to identify the best form of regulation and what the expected standards should be for the 16+ providers.

2020/21 Items for Monitoring

58. CSRG will continue to regularly monitor the performance of Children’s Services and the Children Services Improvement Plan and delivery plan. There will also be a focus on progress on the recruitment and retention of children social workers. Other key areas in the work programme include:

- Flying Start Children’s Centre Annual Performance Review
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Written Statement of Actions Progress Update
- Local Transformation Plan - Children and Young People's Mental Health
- Children Not in Education
- 14-19 Progression and Transition Team, Education Service: 16 x 16 Sustainability Proposal
- Youth Justice Three Year Plan 2019-22 – Annual Review
- Luton Safeguarding Children’s Board Annual Report 2019-20
- Stronger Families Programme Update
- Special School Provision

Finance Review Group (FRG)

Councillor John Young (Conservative) Chair, Finance Review Group



59. Councillor John Young remained the Chair of the Finance Review Group (FRG) for 2019/20. The Scrutiny Finance Review Group is responsible for overseeing and scrutinising the Council's use of public finances. In respect of the work of the committee, Councillor Young stated:

"It has been a great honour to serve another year as Chairman of the Finance Review Group. As can be seen in the report below the committee covers a large number of issues, all to the purpose of seeing that the Taxpayer of Luton's money is spent efficiently and effectively."

A number of issues have come up over the last year including the impact of the revised Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme and Universal Credit / Housing Benefit, Charges for Burials & Cremations Including Full List of Additional Charges, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Future Ready Programme. Not to be forgotten regular updates on debt management and finance have given us a good idea of the state of our finances. Finally a big thank you for all the sterling work Democratic Services have performed to enable FRG to work efficiently."

60. The Committees main area of scrutiny include:-

- Medium Term Financial Planning
- Capital Programme – Expenditure and Income
- Public Involvement on spending priorities
- Budget priorities,
- Organisational transformation
- Identification and delivery of corporate priorities
- Gross Income and Net Budgets
- Service efficiency, effectiveness and value for money
- Public involvement on spending priorities
- Enabling closer scrutiny of the Council's Finances

Work Programme 2019-20

61. During the year the Finance Review Group reviewed, made comments and recommendations on a range of financial topics in the key areas set out below:.

Key Topics Scrutinised - Finance Updates

62. The Finance Review Group received regular financial updates from the Service Director, Finance & Audit. This included any forecasted overspend on the General Fund and the Council's outturn position.
63. At its meeting held on 28 November 2019, the Committee was informed of the latest financial position for the current year's revenue and capital budgets, which had been noted by the Executive at its meeting on 11 November 2019.
64. The overall prospects for the General fund Budget at Quarter 2 after taking account of all corporate level savings to-date and the full use of the remaining £2.2 million of general contingency budget cover had a remaining overspend of approximately £1.44 million. It was imperative that this improved and for a balanced position to be achieved in line with the budget originally set for the year. The Finance Review Group noted the additional Dividend from LLAL of £3.6m.
65. It also noted budget pressures such as costs for children's social care and accommodation to relieve homelessness remained. Although the cost of nightly lets had reduced, the total number of placements had not come down. The number of Children on Care had increased.
66. Members were presented with the draft Financial Sustainability Improvement Plan that was submitted to the Executive on the 9th December 2019 and were invited to review the current budget position and report on any measures that could be taken to improve the current year's recovery and longer-term sustainability of the budget.
67. The areas of overspend and some compensating one-off savings, left a predicted 2019/20 net overspend of £1.44million after the allocation of the whole of the general budget contingency:

	£'m	£'m
service cost pressures (excl. savings items)	4.6	
savings shortfalls (before use of savings contingency)	6.4	
use of savings delivery contingency	-3.2	
net service overspend		7.8
Corporate resource account net gain	-4.1	
use of residual general contingency	-2.3	
		-6.4
net forecast overspend after use of general contingency		£1.4

68. Further savings were identified as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process in order to restore the specific contingency amounting to £3.7m. This required a continuation of the 2019/20 savings initiatives and delivery of same in 2020/21.
69. The Finance Review Group made the following suggestions to the Executive to:
- Look at the use of consultants and their effectiveness.
 - Explore options for the provision of in-house residential homes as opposed to the use of external providers.
 - Look at how the Authority can improve on the recruitment and support of in-house foster carers?

- d) Investigate how the Council can further improve on recycling rates?
- e) Find ways to reduce housing overpayments.
- f) Look into cost of temporary accommodations and effectiveness of rent collection.

70. The above recommendations were approved by the Executive at its meeting held on the 9th December 2019 and the Finance Review Group were thanked for reviewing the Financial Sustainability Improvement Plan.

71. At its meeting of the 20th January 2020 the Service Director, Finance & Audit gave a presentation in regards to 2020-21 Draft Budget, Capital Programme & Medium Term Financial Plan, Treasury Management Annual Investment Strategy 2019-20 and the HRA Budget, Rents & Service Charges 2020-21 which covered the following key areas:

- National Context Chancellor's budget 2020
- Spending Round & Provisional Finance Settlement 2019/20
- Budget and MTFP assumptions – Council's decisions
- Growth - challenge & opportunities
- MTFP – financial sustainability
- Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2023/24
- Treasury Strategy
- Reserves position
- HRA 2019

Impact of the Revised Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme and Universal Credit / Housing Benefit:

72. The Finance Review Group receive a report at its 28th June 2019 meeting on the impact of the revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Universal Credit (UC) /Housing Benefit (HB).

73. It was essential that the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme was reviewed following the introduction of Universal Credit in 2018. The new Council Tax Reduction scheme mainly focussed on targeting those with the most housing needs, such as those with lower income, households with children and carers via discretionary funding support. Some households received better support with UC whilst others did not. There was evidence that households with carers and children required more support and as a result, the percentage of households with people with disabilities in receipt of CTR had reduced to 90% and the percentage of households with carers and children had increased from 75% to 90%. In order to balance the needs of those who needed CTR most, those who were considered to be in less need had a reduction in how much allowance they could receive. It was noted that if the existing CTR scheme was left unchanged, it would have cost £100,000 more in 2018/19.

74. Luton was one of the last local authorities to implement Universal Credit, and in terms of impact, in Luton, no residents had experienced debt problems as a result of the delay in receiving their UC. However, what was clear was that the use of food banks had increased but had not been as high as anticipated.

2018/19 Provisional Revenue & Capital Outturn

75. The Service Director, Finance & Audit submitted a report to the 27th June 2018 meeting on the key highlights of the 2018/19 outturn position for the revenue and capital accounts. These were subject to the completion of the external audit, and outlined each department's revenue outturn position, movements in revenue reserves for 2018/19, revenue budgets set aside to carry forward to 2019/20 and the capital outturn position for the year.

76. The Council continued to manage a number of significant demand-led service pressures in 2018/19, including the high levels of support needed for vulnerable children and families in the town and providing accommodation for members of the community that were homeless, together with other operational pressures in services that had placed additional strain on the overall Budget.

The key highlights of the year in relation to the council's revenue and capital outturn were:

- In 2017/18 the council borrowed £100m
- In 2018/19 the council borrowed £50m
- The corporate accounts for borrowing costs, investment income, capital financing and corporate level grant funding had contributed a short term net gain of £5.6m to assist the 2018/19 outturn position.
- The cumulative monitoring for the General Fund in 2018/19 predicted an under spend of £1.016m.
- In respect of approved central contingency budget, the final use of the central contingency budget was similar to the position reported in this year's financial monitoring.

Treasury Management Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2019

77. The Finance Review Group received an overview of the Treasury Management Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2019. The council had made savings through proactive decisions in borrowing and spending, for instance they had successfully applied for £100m of Public Works Loan Board's special infrastructure rate loan to part finance the London Luton Airport Direct Air to Rail Transit (DART) project. This decision was made to fix lower gilt rates and therefore reduced the risk of interest rate. This generated a short term increase in the level of investments held by the council. The council had borrowed a total of £114m within the year.

78. There were two LOBO loans re-financed during the year. The re-financing deal would generate savings of approximately £35,000 per annum. This had removed the risk of the lender option and reduced the annual interest being paid by the council. The council also undertook £60m of short term fixed rate borrowing from other local authorities to fund the net unfinanced capital expenditure. It was also noted that the Council was currently negotiating an additional £125m of loans from the European Investment Bank to finance the remaining costs of delivering the DART project.

Charges for Burials & Cremations Including Full List of Additional Charges

79. At its meeting held on the 22nd August 2019, the Finance Review Group received a report from the Service Director, Public Realm submitted a report in regards to all charges for burial and cremations and additional services prior to submission to the Executive.

80. The reduction in charges included concrete burial chambers used at the Vale from £960 down to £750 and weekend cremation and burial services in line with other authorities. To offset the reduced income, it was also proposed to offer additional services at The Vale such as Direct to Cremation Services for those who had a payment plan for a funeral service but unfortunately have any family, friends or loved ones. It was also proposed that other services included establishing a cafe and flower sales in order to bring in additional income.

81. The Finance Review Group supported the proposed charges for burials and cremations including additional services, which were subsequently adopted by the Executive at its meeting on the 16th September 2019.

Luton Council Share in Ownership of Home Connections Lettings LTD

82. The report contained proposals for the Council to pursue the option to purchase an ownership share of Home Connections Lettings Ltd, which was a not-for-profit stakeholder owned company made up of a partnership of Local Authorities and public bodies (Housing Associations).

83. The Council was currently part of a sub-regional partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council and Grand Union Housing Association that procured a Choice Based Lettings service from Home Connections Lettings Ltd with partners sharing the cost of the service under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding. The partnership's contract with Home Connections had been extended by two years and would expire in May 2021 when Central Bedfordshire Council were expected leave the partnership. Home Connections Lettings Ltd was a company limited by guarantee and the liability to each owner was limited to £1. That the Council's Legal services had commissioned a Due Diligence report from external Solicitors (Freeths).
84. The Finance Review Group supported the proposal that the Council take up the option to purchase an ownership share in Home Connections Ltd subject to the concerns around due diligence in the Terms of Reference being addressed.

Setting the Council Tax Base

85. The Finance Review Group were invited by the Head of Revenues & Benefits to review the process used to set up the Council Tax Base for the Council. The Net Tax Base for Luton in 2020/21 would increase by 1,164.2 Band D equivalent properties compared to 2019/20, which had both positive and negative influences. One positive was that the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Scheme, which assisted hard, pressed residents on a short-term basis with paying Council tax liabilities. £86,316 had been paid out to support residents with the payment of their council tax in 2018/2019.
86. The Group supported the adoption of the proposed council tax base figure of 51,828.7 Band D equivalents in accordance with the current Regulations, "Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI: 2012:2914), which came into force in November 2012.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme & Alternative Discretionary Support

87. The Committee received a report on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme, which if implemented would deliver a potential reduction in CTR cost of £1.2m. The proposed scheme would:
- Contribute £400k to corporate savings target.
 - Fund additional staff to provide more in-depth and detailed support to customers affected by CTR changes (cost 150k). Recruitment for recovery and financial assessment officers should commence in Jan 2020, with appointments made only in the event Exec approval 03/02/20
 - Extend the existing CTEH scheme to include households affected by CTR changes. (240k additional funding) conditional on engagement with alternative support and interventions.
 - Maintain a revised Crisis Support Scheme (food and utilities only) (100k)
 - Practical Support including Training, Skills, Childcare (£200k-£300k)

The Finance Review Group supported the proposed revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Alternative Discretionary Support.

Data Protection Act 2018 –Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

88. The Committee receive a report on work completed and underway to ensure the Council was compliant with the DATA Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). Data Protection was a moveable feast, which local authorities had to keep on top of. Certain practices are now embedded in Luton such as subject access requests, as access to data was one of the central aspects of GDPR and most organisations had seen an increase in requests.

89. The Group noted that there were regular data breaches, which were simply down to human error, for example; send emails to the wrong recipient. Therefore, it was essential that staff were kept up to date on current processes and procedures with best practice and data protection developments. As the legislation became embedded the council were seeing case law and guidance from across the EU, and were updating its own policies as required.
90. In anticipation of a no deal BREXIT, GDPR would be known as UKGDPR after the 31st October 2019.
91. Business Intelligence maintained a project list for the data protection Act 2018, which would continue to be kept updated and risk managed.

Future Ready Programme – Discovery Phase

92. Members discussed the Future Ready Programme case for change and ambitions, prior to submission to the Executive requesting funding approval of £470,000 for the Future Ready Programme Discovery phase and the purpose and expectations scheduled for January to September 2020.
93. Activities were already underway to support the Council in developing the Future Council as part of Phase 1. The activities scheduled to be delivered between January and September 2020 include;
- New internal intranet and launch of Yammer – allowing improved internal communication and collaboration
 - External Website review, updates and accessibility improvements – to improve the Councils information provision and interactions with customers
 - Delivery of 10 automated Performance Dashboards across the council – providing information and data to managers at the touch of a button ensuring informed decision making in the Councils services
 - Launch of Skype for Business – enabling staff to be more agile and enabling better collaboration between teams and services across the Council
 - HR Service Redesign – to streamline and where possible automate the HR processes to improve customer experiences of the service
 - Pilot of Bring Your Own Device – to explore the opportunity to allow staff to use their own devices at work and become more flexible with the use of technology
 - Review of the council constitution – to develop a user friendly document and review and streamline our internal processes to improve our productivity
 - Launch of new Council Values – to deliver against staff feedback and take the first step in changing the wider culture within the organisation.
94. The Future Ready Programme would ensure the council structure, processes and services were optimised to deliver the 2040 vision, and the request for £470.00 of funding to undertake a 6-9 month discovery phase to develop the Future Ready Programme was supported by the Finance Review Group.

Scale of Charges

95. The Committee deliberated the Scale of Charges 2020/21, which had been approved by the Executive at its meeting held on 13th January 2020. The Council's Fees and Charges Framework guided the annual review of the Council's fees and charges. The main principles in the framework included:

- setting charges that strive to cover the full cost of the service provided, where possible.
- setting charges at a level that is fair to users and council tax payers, whilst ensuring inclusivity by offering concessions to the disadvantaged
- setting charges within the guiding principles of fairness, viability and consistency.

96. The proposed charges for 2020/21 indicated an additional estimated income yield of £452.9k, a 2.4% increase on the total current income level from charges. The main areas of increased yield for 2020/21 were: £165k from Parking charges, £99.7k from increases to Adult Social Care non-residential charges and £88.1k from increases to school meals charges.

97. The Principal Accountant was tasked at the meeting to investigate the possibility of rounding up Allotment Rental Charges in order to make it easier for Allotment Associations to submit rents to the Council.

Update on DCO Planning Fees Through to Determination of Application

98. The Finance Review Group debated a report submitted by the Service Director, LLAL on the progress with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application and the anticipated costs to be incurred to achieve planning consent from the Secretary of State.

99. The Executive had previously approved the Planning Strategy submitted by LLAL with anticipated costs of up to £50 million to undertake the required work to enable a successful DCO to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2020 and the review period by the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State, which was expected to be 16 to 18 months with at least 3 review hearings.

100. The agreed staged approach to DCO adopted was as follows:

- Stage 1 – August 2017 to December 2017 - preparation of the Vision 2050 and the development of a number of options for growth to be considered.
- Stage 2 – January 2018 to October 2018 - preparation and delivery of initial (non statutory) consultation
- Stage 3a – October 2018 to December 2018 - analysis of consultation feedback and identification of the preferred option
- Stage 3b – January 2019 to October 2019 - preparation for Statutory Consultation
- Stage 3c – October 2019 to Summer 2020 - Statutory Consultation and submission of the DCO application
- Stage 4 – Summer 2020 to end of 2021 - review and examination period of the DCO application

101. Statutory Consultation had been conducted between 16th October and 16th December 2019, which included 35 public events at various locations, demographic groups and local planning authorities affected and numerous statutory authorities, with feedback received on the expansion plans being analysed in January/February 2020.

102. At the time of the meeting the project was at Stage 3c and that the costs were below estimate and were now projected to be £46m rather than £50,228,600.

Scrutiny's Role as Accountable Body for SEMLEP

103. This was a new area for the Finance Review group to scrutinise. Luton acted as Accountable Body on behalf of Government. Its roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements were laid down in SEMLEP Assurance Framework and Accountable Body agreement and was managed under the 5 CIPFA principles for S151 Officers in Accountable Bodies as follows:

- 1) Enshrining a corporate position for the s151 officer in LEP assurance
- 2) Creating a formal/structured mandate for the s151 officer
- 3) Embedding good governance into decision making
- 4) Ensuring effective review of governance
- 5) Appropriate skills and resourcing

104. As the accountable body, Luton also oversaw the proper administration of financial affairs within SEMLEP relating to public funds. It also managed SEMLEP core funding, the Local Growth Fund, Growing Places Fund, Growth Hub and the Careers and Enterprise Fund.

Debt Collection

105. The largest area of debt to the Council was Sundry Debt which stood at £13.4m which was collected efficiently with £11.9m being less than 30 days old. Rent Deposits debt, which opened at £517,349 in April 2019 currently stood at £200,708, was under review. There was still a high turnover in Temporary Accommodation debt in Luton as the debt was hard to collect and required improvement. Therefore, a review of the Temporary Accommodation debt collection process was required to maximise the performance in the management of debt and the collection of tenant's outstanding debt. After Housing Benefit and an affordability assessment, the collection performance was approximately 50% of the residual rent charge.

106. There had been a reduction in regards to parking in the cost of issuing warrants through targeted collection, and that there was now additional PCN income collected and that the use of Council Tax data had improved collection.

Integrated Impact Assessments

107. Overarching View of Budget Considerations: - The Committee scrutinised the Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) for the period September 2018 – August 2019 and the resulting decisions that would stand any potential external challenge.

108. The IIA process internal to the Council continued to consider Equalities, Cohesion, and Social Inclusion, Poverty, Health, and Environmental impacts. The Corporate Parenting Board, had also requested that officers consider impacts on looked after children.

109. Luton continued to comply with its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Duty section 149) to have due regard to its decision making process and ensuring that it was analysing the impact prior to a decision being taken. This could be done by any process but the council had decided to continue with a robust process via the IIAs to ensure a clear audit trail if ever needed.

110. Overall of the 34 IIA's had been undertaken and submitted to the Executive between September 2018 and August 2019, the majority had had a positive outcome. However, the impacts must also consider, wherever possible, mitigation in regard to when a negative outcome was found, and to this end the Council worked hard to ensure that this was considered wherever possible. It was also important that the IIA only considered evidence and where mitigation could not be found, it was clear in the options set out. In relation to the IIAs, 5 had significant negative outcomes. These included:

- Setting the council tax base
- Increase in School Meal Charges
- Adult Social Care Scale of Charges
- M1-A6 Road Planning Application Response
- Review of Experimental Red Routes - Update

Property Investment Performance

111. Regular updates are received on measures taken to improve financial performance of the Council's current Property Investment Portfolio.

Continuous Scrutiny of the Transformation Programme

112. There was continuous scrutiny of the Transformation Programme and regular updates are made to FRG.

2020/21 Items for Monitoring

- Emergency Budget
- Library Strategy
- Base Budget Proposals 2021/22,
- Delivery of 2021/21 and 2022/23 Savings Proposals;
- Minimum reserves and LBC Long Term Financial Sustainability
- 2020-21 Revenue Budget Capital Programme Capital Strategy
- MTFP HRA Budget and Treasury Management Strategy
- Property Investment Performance
- Debt Collection
- Scale of Charges
- Business Transformation
- Gross, Income & Net Budgets
- Finance Performance
- Universal Credit/Housing Benefit

Health And Social Care Review Group (HSCRG)

Cllr. David Agbley (Labour) Chair, Health and Social Care Review Group



113. Councillor David Agbley continued as the Chair of HSCRG for 2019-20. His appointment and the membership of HSCRG rolled over for 2020/21 due to the cancellation of the annual council meeting in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

114. The Committee is responsible for health and adult social care services to promote and help ensure that these services are in the best interest of Luton and the people who use them. Key areas of responsibilities include:

- The review and scrutiny of any matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health and social care services in Luton, focusing on strategic issues
- Oversight of all publicly funded health and social care services in Luton and holding local decision-makers to account
- On-going light touch and, when needed, more in-depth review and scrutiny of health and social care priority areas
- Response to local consultations by NHS bodies and when needed, contributing to Joint Health Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC) with adjoining local authorities, dealing with cross border consultations on proposals for significant change/ development in health services

115. Over the past year, HSCRG in carrying out its responsibilities and functions acknowledged the need for a positive scrutiny culture within the council, with external partners and members of the local community, in matters that affect Luton to ensure that scrutiny is productive and constructive.

Cllr Agbley said, "I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to Chair HSCRG for another year in 2020/21, as Luton faced the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly given its disproportionate impact on the Black, Asians and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. I look forward to continue to work constructively with all NHS and Care partners and the Council's Health and Well-being Board, as we tackle these challenges together".

116. Work Programme 2019/20: - During 2019-20, the HSCRG reviewed and made comments and recommendations on a range of health and social care topics, including key ones outlined below:

- Access GP / Primary Care Services/ Primary Care Networks
- Creation of a new single Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Merger of Bedford Hospital and L&D Hospital
- Mental Health Crisis Services Review
- Universal Credit - Impact on Luton
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy/ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Review of Older People Day Care Provisions/ Centres
- Health Targeted Lung Health and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Healthwatch Luton's 'Enter and View' findings -ELFT Inpatient Wards
- Illicit Drugs Market in Bedfordshire
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service
- Strategic vision for sport and physical activity 2018 - 2022
- Update on the Dementia Strategy
- East of England Ambulance Service – Performance Update

117. In addition, HSCRG regularly reviewed certain items, for information, as follows:

- Luton CCG's Integrated Quality and Performance Report

- Luton and Dunstable Hospital Inpatient Bed Falls
- Health and Social Care extract from Quarterly Corporate Performance reports

Highlights of the year

Access GP/Primary Care Services/ Primary Care Networks

118. HSCRG regularly reviewed changes to the way people get appointments and access GP and primary care services due to public concerns.
119. The development of Primary Care Networks, extended hours GP surgeries, the 111 telephone service and provisions of urgent care and out of hours clinic were noted as playing important parts in delivering Integrated Care Systems to Luton.
120. For reassurance, these areas would continue to be subject of light touch monitoring at every future meetings of HSCRG, until further notice.

Creation of a new single Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

121. HSCRG was briefed on the NHS England plan to merge Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Groups, to create a new single CCG for the BLMK Integrated Care System (ICS) by April 2021. Members noted this was part of the NHS Long Term Plan and there was no choice without a compelling reason.
122. Members were concerned at the impact on Luton due to loss of place focus, but were reassured there would be a high level Luton Team to look after the interest of Luton people. HSCRG will continue to monitor development of this proposal and make comments, as appropriate.

Merger of L&D Hospital Bedford and Hospital

123. HSCRG had reviewed the proposal to merge L&D Hospital Bedford Hospital into one Trust since it first came to light. Members were re-assured Luton would not be adversely affected, with both sites retaining vital services, such as A&E and maternity units and benefitting from pooling of resources and rationalisation of some services, e.g. pathology services.
124. Despite delays due to funding of the plan, the merger has now taken place. HSCRG will continue to monitor the effects of merger and in due course when the Covid-19 pandemic subsides, will call for a progress report.
125. Mental Health Crisis Services Review: - HSCRG had been briefed on the Mental Health Crisis Services Review and eventually during the year, reviewed on the proposed staged implementation of the Mental Health Crisis Pathway transformation, ultimately leading to a 24/7 crisis service in Luton.
126. HSCRG look forward to review the outcome of the implementation of the enhanced 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Response in Luton in due course.

Universal Credit - Impact on Luton

127. HSCRG continued to regularly monitor the implementation of Universal Credit (UC). Given the large number of Luton residents on UC and living in poverty, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, monitoring will continue, as Members are concerned about the impact of the changes on Luton's residents.

Older People Day Care Provisions/ Centres

128. HSCRG reviewed proposals to change provisions of Older People Day Care Centres in view of reduced demands and the need to rationalise costs.

129. Members had concerns about the impact of the proposals on users and made certain recommendations to the Executive to help decision making.

Targeted Lung Health and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening

130. Members were reassured to note provision of the targeted work to improve health outcomes associated with lung disease, identified as a significant issue for Luton. It was hoped that this work and the new abdominal aortic aneurysm screening for the over 65, should help Luton see an improvement in its mortality rate in the long run. The progress of these initiatives would be reviewed in due course.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

131. HSCRG was informed of and noted the proposed new approach in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, prioritising the elimination of poverty in Luton, as well as taking action on a wide range of factors that impact on people's health. Members will be keen to review progress and achievement in due course and receive regular Joint Strategic Needs Assessment updates.

2020/21 Items for Monitoring

132. The HSCRG 2020/21 work programme will again focus on key continuing items, as well as deal with emerging matters, as appropriate. Some of the key areas for monitoring include the following:

- Covid-19 - Impact on the population of Luton
- Primary Care/GP Access
- The Enhanced 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Response in Luton
- Progress on the creation of one BLMK CCG
- Progress following merger of the L&D Hospital and Bedford Hospital
- Impact of Universal Credit in Luton
- Ending Adult Exploitation Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 and JSNA Update
- Luton Council Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Plan
- Older People Day Care Provisions/ Centres Update
- Progress of the Targeted Lung Health programme
- Progress on the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Healthwatch Luton Updates
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service
- East of England Ambulance Service – Performance Update
- Prosperity through Procurement – Performance Update

In addition, HSCRG will regularly review certain items, for information only until further notice, as follows

- Luton CCG's Integrated Quality and Performance Report
- Luton and Dunstable Hospital Inpatient Bed Falls
- Health and Social Care extract from Quarterly Corporate Performance reports