

Health Scrutiny Committee 2014/15

As Chairman of the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee during the 2014/15 Municipal Year, I am delighted to introduce a summary of the work that the Committee has been involved in during that period. The past year has continued to be a challenging one for the health service, both nationally and locally. The demands placed on the NHS have continued to increase and the way that certain services are provided are having to be radically redesigned in order to maintain a high standard of patient care within acceptable timescales. Examples of this are a greater provision of care being provided within community settings, redesigned patient pathways, particularly in relation to both health and social care provision and changes to acute care with a view to reducing non-emergency hospital admissions. The Health Scrutiny Committee has continued its involvement in an oversight role during these times of change, holding both the commissioners and providers of services to account in ensuring that a seamless service is provided, along with continuous improvement in patient care.

Blackpool continues to present some of the more unfortunate statistics in terms of health inequalities in England. This is borne out in Blackpool's 2014 Public Health Annual Report, which is focused upon lifestyle issues, such as the impact that smoking, alcohol, lack of exercise and unhealthy diets have on people's health. The Health Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in ensuring that both service provision and preventative care is targeted to improve those health inequality issues that exist largely as a result of lifestyle choices, which are, to a large extent, preventable. During the last year, the Committee has been working closely with the Council's public health team in monitoring those priorities and the action being taken to address them. The Committee supports the Council's efforts in terms of greater regulation around alcohol advertising, tobacco sales and minimum pricing of alcohol, whilst recognising that education and cultural change are of even greater importance in that respect. Whilst on the subject of inequalities, I would like to specifically mention teenage pregnancy, for which in 2010, Blackpool had the worst statistics in the Country. Since then, the situation has improved dramatically and I feel that acknowledgement is due to all concerned who have worked very hard to achieve such improved statistics.

In last year's annual report, I mentioned the publication of the report by Robert Francis QC into the widely reported failings at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust. The report included a section that was critical of Staffordshire's health scrutiny function and at Blackpool, we took the opportunity to examine the report and apply the findings to the way that we conduct scrutiny here. As a result, our focus has become more concentrated on patient safety, quality and ensuring that patient complaints are properly dealt with. We work closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group in ensuring an adequate level of assurance amongst the providers of services. We also closely monitor patient experience reports on a regular basis, including complaints, particularly in relation to the providers of acute services.

Going forward into 2015/16, it is important that we continue in our role acting as the voice of the public in Blackpool in monitoring the commissioning and delivery of health services, to ensure that excellence in patient care continues. We must maintain our reputation as a valued critical friend and key consultee during times of change and reorganisations of valued services. I am confident that with the enthusiasm and effort of my colleagues and the continued cooperation of key stakeholders, that we will achieve those objectives and that health scrutiny will continue to play an important and influential role in serving the health needs of Blackpool's residents and visitors.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone involved for their cooperation and willingness in attending our Committee, in providing reports and answering questions.



Councillor Martin Mitchell,
Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee,
2014/15 Municipal Year.

Health Scrutiny Committee 2014/15, Key areas of Involvement:

- Review and comment on the Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account
- Review and comment on the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account
- Review and comment on the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust Quality Account
- Continued to monitor the planning and progress relating to the new mental health in-patient unit at 'The Harbour'
- Monitoring action plans at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust in relation to the Care Quality Commission Review and the 2014 Quality Summit
- Overseeing the plans and implementation of the Better Care Fund
- Scrutinising Immunisation programmes in Blackpool
- Scrutinising the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Scrutinising recruitment levels and staff retention rates at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Monitoring NHS dental services in Blackpool
- Scrutinising mortality rates at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Monitoring of patient experiences and complaints at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Overseeing the plans and implementation of Primary Care Co-Commissioning in Blackpool
- Close working relationship with Healthwatch Blackpool
- Working closely with Public Health on monitoring key areas of work around health inequalities
- Membership of the joint Lancashire Health Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15

Blackpool Council



If you want to know more, or have any suggestions for scrutiny, contact us in Democratic Services on Tel 01253 477213 or Email: scrutiny@blackpool.gov.uk.

I am pleased to introduce Blackpool Council's Annual Report on the work of Overview and Scrutiny for the 2014/15 Municipal Year. The report provides a snapshot of last year's activity within overview and scrutiny and highlights some of its key achievements.

The Council operates a Cabinet system where ten elected Councillors are responsible for making major decisions. Scrutiny is a key way in which the remaining Councillors, or Members, can improve the quality of life for Blackpool residents by holding decision makers to account and by scrutinising services and making recommendations for improvement.

Scrutiny in Blackpool in 2014/2015 was centred on a single Scrutiny Committee which took a lead role in both managing and developing the scrutiny process. It appointed six lead members to head up individual scrutiny reviews and undertake an overview of services, as appropriate, around the following themes:

- Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care
- Corporate Management and Resources
- Urban Regeneration
- Children, Young People, Schools and Children's Social Care and Equality, Diversity, Technology and Youth Employment
- Tourism and Culture and Highways and Transport
- Housing, Public Protection and Street Scene and Crime and Community Safety

The Scrutiny Committee appointed a number of standing scrutiny panels, which met on a regular basis to undertake the scrutiny of certain key functions. These include Education, Children's Services (safeguarding) and Outside Bodies (including Blackpool Economic Development Company, Blackpool Zoo and Blackpool Airport). In addition, a separate Health Scrutiny Committee continues to scrutinise health provision and health inequalities in Blackpool and the outcomes of that Committee form a separate part of this report.

During the last year, the challenges for local government in dealing with substantial reductions in funding have continued. This, coupled with public expectation that service levels will be adequately maintained across the Council has created something of a paradox and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain satisfactory levels of service provision against continuously shrinking budgets and resources. That is exactly what the Council has to do though and one of the main tasks of Overview and Scrutiny is to try to ensure that services are being prioritised accordingly. The Scrutiny Committee does that by regularly scrutinising performance against the Council's key goals and priorities. Scrutiny Committee members do not always see eye to eye with the decision makers, whether they be officers or cabinet members. When necessary we ask tough questions, hold those people to account and make alternative recommendations. All of that adds democratic value and credibility to the decision making process. Looking ahead, there will be a need to increase the emphasis and effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny in relation to both Adult and Children's safeguarding. Together with education, these are key issues, both locally and nationally and it is considered vital that scrutiny plays a key part in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Blackpool's most vulnerable groups of people. I am confident that with the engagement and enthusiasm of my colleagues, that Overview and Scrutiny can respond to the challenges ahead and demonstrate what scrutiny can do in terms of both its contribution to the democratic process, as well as adding value to the overall aims and objectives of the Council.

I am standing down as a Councillor at the end of the 2014/15 Municipal Year and would like to thank everyone who has made contributions to the scrutiny process during last year. I would also like to pass on my best wishes to whoever succeeds me in the role of Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.



If you would like to know more about the work of scrutiny at Blackpool then please get in touch. Contact details for Democratic Governance, who support the scrutiny function, can be found at the end of this report.

Councillor Sylvia Taylor
Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee
2014/15 Municipal Year

Scrutiny Committee 2013/14; Key improvements and achievements:

• Community Safety Partnership

This Review Panel met on a six monthly basis. During the course of 2014/2015, the Panel considered in depth performance information on the priorities of the partnership, information relating to drugs and alcohol substance misuse, a briefing on the changes to the Anti-Social Behaviour legislation, an update on burglary information and the Community Safety Landscape across Lancashire.

• Education

This standing Review Panel was established to undertake scrutiny of education matters including consideration of school performance information and Ofsted Inspection Reports. The Panel meets on a regular basis at schools across Blackpool and prior to each meeting receives a tour of the school utilised as a venue.

During the course of 2014/2015 the Panel has considered performance information from a number of schools and detailed information regarding schools causing concern and the Register of Support. The Panel challenged what actions were being undertaken to improve standards in those schools causing concern. The Panel also considered the progress that had been made on the actions identified in the Blackpool School Improvement Plan.

• Outside Bodies

The Panel was established to scrutinise the performance and strategies of companies owned or part-owned, by the Council. Over the course of 2014/2015, the Panel has scrutinised Blackpool Zoo and Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company.

• Children's Services

This standing Panel meets on a regular basis with the objective of ensuring that the Council maintains an appropriate, sustainable focus on the scrutiny of Children's Services. The Panel has considered Children's Services budget monitoring information and provided challenge to officers on the reasons for variances from the budget. It has scrutinised performance information, challenging officers on the actions taken to improve services.

- The Panel has also considered the Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care and challenged the progress that was being made in putting the recommendations contained in the Improvement Plan into practice, as well as examining the detailed proposals for the work still to be undertaken.

• Bathing Water

The Scrutiny Panel was established to consider how the quality of Blackpool's bathing waters could be improved in light of the revised Bathing Water Directive, which came into effect in 2015. The final report of the Panel was considered and approved at the June 2013 Scrutiny Committee meeting and a recommendation was approved that the Panel would continue monitoring progress and consider future bathing season water quality results.

In light of this recommendation, the Panel met with officers from the Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency and received the most recent water quality results and detailed plans relating to the work those organisations had planned, in order to improve bathing water quality. The Panel considered that a great deal of work was being undertaken in response to the more stringent standards of the revised directive.

• Budget Consultation

Contributed to the Council's budget consultation process as follows:

- a) Held a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to which all non-Executive Members were invited to attend.*
- b) A meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee was held to which representatives from the Trade Unions were invited to attend. This meeting was chaired by the Finance and Audit Committee Chairman.*
- c) A meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee was held to which representatives from the National Non-Domestic Ratepayers were invited to attend. This meeting was chaired by the Finance and Audit Committee Chairman.*

• Other areas of work monitored by the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis:

- *Child Poverty Framework*
- *Customer Feedback report*
- *Performance management / priority reporting*
- *Adult Services / Safeguarding adults*
- *Flood Risk Management and Drainage*
- *Grants to the voluntary sector internal audit*

Call-In Sub-Committee

If a Councillor thinks that a Cabinet Member or the Executive has made a wrong decision, they can ask them to think again. This process is known as Call-In. When a decision is called in, it is firstly considered by the Call-In Sub-Committee, which has been appointed by the Scrutiny Committee for that purpose. The Call-In Sub-Committee then decides what action to take, against the following set criteria;

- a) No further action (in which case the decision can be implemented immediately)*
- b) To refer the decision back to either the Cabinet Member or the Executive for reconsideration*
- c) To refer the decision to full Council*

During the period of this report, the Call-In Sub-Committee considered 1 call-in request, which resulted in no further action being taken.