1. Scrutiny in Hertfordshire

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny committees of Hertfordshire County Council. The report provides details of the scrutinies undertaken from April 2014 through to March 2015. Key members of the scrutiny process include:

**Terry Hone** Chairman Overview and Scrutiny
**Seamus Quilty** Chairman Health Scrutiny
**Malcolm Cowan** Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny
**Anne Joynes** Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny
**Nick Hollinghurst** Vice Chairman Health Scrutiny
**Sherma Batson** Labour Spokesperson Health Scrutiny

1.1 What is Scrutiny?

Local government scrutiny is about reviewing decisions made by the **Executive (Cabinet)** and acting in the capacity of a critical friend. In other words, scrutiny holds the authority to account. To achieve this **elected members** conduct investigations, take evidence and talk to witnesses before making recommendations.

Hertfordshire has two scrutiny committees, **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)** and **Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC)**. Both set annual work programmes for the areas they wish to scrutinise, whilst retaining flexibility to deal with emerging issues quickly. The majority of scrutinies run for the one day. Occasionally, it may be necessary for a two day session for a complex scrutiny.

The overlap between Health and Social Care means that some scrutinies
involve joint committee membership and work. The scrutinies that fall into this category are still identified in the report. They are listed under the committee that took the lead on that particular scrutiny.

Scrubtnies are focussed with a clear objective; a number of questions to be addressed; desired outcomes; and identified constraints, such as areas that are not being covered. A detailed timetable is produced and thorough Member briefings take place in advance of any formal meetings. ‘Topic Groups’ are then formed to look in depth at the subject and to produce a report with recommendations.

When the report is published the relevant Executive Member/Trust Director has two months in which to respond to the recommendations in particular and to the report in general. It is they who make the decision as to whether a recommendation is accepted and implemented.

In 2014/15 across HSC and OSC, 92% of recommendations were implemented by Trust Boards or the County Council Executive, 3% partially implemented and 5% rejected. In addition, Hertfordshire scrutiny was the winner of the Centre for Public Scrutiny overall impact award in 2011.

2. Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC)

The Health and Social Care Act (2001) requires one of the County Council’s scrutiny committees to have the power to scrutinise public health services. In doing so, it can establish joint arrangements with and/or delegate some responsibility to the County’s district and borough councils.

A Health Scrutiny Committee considers strategic countywide health issues. It consists of ten county councillors and a representative from each of the County’s ten district and borough councils.
2.1 – For ease of reference, Topic Groups are listed in alphabetical order:

**Budget and Francis Scrutiny Café – 25 March and 2 April 2015**

The scrutiny was held over two days to look at the Budgets and Finances of the Health organisations in Hertfordshire and following up on the Francis report. Members heard from NHS England, the two CCG's that cover Hertfordshire, the two acute trusts, the mental health trust, community trust, the Ambulance Service and Herts Urgent Care. Four back bench member groups each focused on a particular theme and asked questions related to that theme of the participants. A report was produced providing recommendations to the participants, requests for additional information and suggestions for future scrutinies.

2.2 Committee meetings

**Healthwatch survey on access to GP services and CCG out of county services – 16 October 2014**

A report was presented to the committee on a survey conducted in the Bishops Stortford area by Healthwatch. Patients and surgeries were engaged with this survey on how they feel regarding accessibility to GP’s in their area. The initial findings were presented and recommendations highlighted for possible ways of working. Healthwatch were asked to return to HSC in June to present any developments or implementations of new strategies and ways of working.

**West Herts Hospital Trust (WHHT) Review of annual reports, current and future services and developments and Herts Valleys CCG (HVCCG) clinical strategy report – 21 November 2014**
WHHT presented their transformation programmer which discussed areas of existing and proposed development. HVCCG presented their clinical strategy and advised how their plans fed into the WHHT strategy. This highlighted areas that have been found requiring further funding or increased commissioning and identified the plans to address them. WHHT updated the committee on their progress with their cancer review. Members were pleased to hear that this review was conducted independently and that outcomes and changes were being made because of it. WHHT presented information on their financial situation and what plans are to be implemented to deal with any shortfalls. The scrutiny concluded with a discussion on the winter plan which members were pleased to hear is now a whole year resilience plan.

**Recruitment, Retention and Development of GP's, hospital nurses and paramedics – 21 January 2015**

The two CCG’s and five Trusts and the Ambulance Trust, attended to inform the committee of what they were doing to address areas where there was a high number of vacancies and increased demand on services. Members were pleased to hear of programs being implemented to improve development and recruitment of hospital nurses and paramedics. However members were keen for closer working with the University of Hertfordshire who offer degree courses to those wishing to qualify as nurses and paramedics. In particular they were concerned to hear that despite the number of vacancies at CCG’s and Trusts there were not enough spaces on courses to fill these gaps, which, they heard, was down to funding. Members asked that NHS England and the Department of Health respond to this.

2.3 Site Visits

**Lister Hospital**

To visit a theatre, the eye surgery area and beds on a ward. This was in the newly built wing focused on surgery.

**Watford Hospital 21 November 2014**
To see the Ambulatory Care Unit, A&E, Bluebell ward (dedicated for patients with dementia) and Maternity Unit.

**Ambulance Call Centre Bedford 4 December 2014**
To view the 999 emergency call centre and listen to live calls being handled by experienced operators.

**HARC Melbourn 4 December 2014**
To view the Hazardous Area Response Team offices, vehicles and equipment and understand what their role is and how and why they were formed.

**Herts Urgent Care 12 February and 3 March 2015**
To see the 111 and GP Out Of Hours services, listen to calls being taken and hear what these services provide to Hertfordshire.

### 3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold The Executive to account by scrutinising:

- Decisions made by, or on behalf of, the Council or Cabinet
- Any operational or policy aspect of the Council’s business

OSC membership consists of ten County Councillors, four parent governors and two church representatives, the latter six being only able to vote on education related issues and take part in education related scrutinies.

### 3.1 – For ease of reference, Topic Groups are listed in alphabetical order:

**Anti-Fraud and Whistle-blowing - 18 September 2014**

Members reviewed the Council’s Anti-fraud and Whistle-blowing arrangements, to see whether they were fit for purpose and meeting the
expectations for transparent local government. They asked to be kept informed of those, following investigation, that were found to be of substance.

**Autistic Spectrum Disorder 7 Nov 2014**

The scrutiny reviewed the council’s Autism services provided by the council after there were concerns raised as to their effectiveness. Members were pleased to hear of the formation of an All Age Autism Board (AAAB) which will report into the Health and Wellbeing Board. The AAAB will implement an all age strategy and oversee the services being provided to those with an autistic spectrum disorder, wrapping services around the individual for holistic care, making sure to create a whole life approach. They asked to be kept informed of the implementation of the strategy and of any work the Board is involved in. They were also informed of work in progress in Education and Health and Community Services and asked to be kept updated on this work and that a further scrutiny takes place within 18 months.

**Child Sexual Exploitation 9 March 2015**

The topic group was set up to understand what arrangements are in place in Hertfordshire to keep CSE to a minimum and consider if they are as effective as is required. Members concluded that the County had strengthened its safeguarding arrangements and appeared to have robust procedures and policies in place. They asked that the annual scrutiny of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (HSCB) in October 2015 focus on their role in CSE, effectiveness and engagement with partners, including updates on recent initiatives, addressing the ‘Key Issues of Enquiry for all Councillors from ‘Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation, a Guidance Pack for Councillors’ published by the LGA. It was felt that this scrutiny could give members further reassurance.

**Effectiveness of Children’s Centre’s Programme 28 April and 6 May 2014**
Members explored the effectiveness of the Hertfordshire children’s centre programme in supporting young children and their parents, with a particular focus on how children’s centres work with early education settings to ensure children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They asked to be kept informed of the work underway to raise standards at those centres not classed as good or outstanding in Ofsted inspections, and to further review the service in 2016 to see how the new contract is working.

**Hate Crime (Annual Crime and Disorder Scrutiny) 11 December 2014**

The Hate Crime scrutiny reviewed the current arrangements across Hertfordshire for responding to Hate Crime and supporting victims, to ensure that the necessary formal governance and accountability structures are in place. Members recommended that a county strategy for talking Hate Crime, ensuring the necessary governance structures are in place, be established.

**Health and Well Being Board (HWB) use of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) – 23 April 2014**

A JSNA analyses the needs of a population to inform commissioning decisions. It is a statutory requirement of upper tier authorities. The scrutiny sought to establish how effectively partners are utilising JSNA data and contributing to its further refinement. Members recommended that further training and information awareness sessions be held for members, commissioners and GP’s. They also asked that Hertsopedia is publicised and used more effectively with members, providers and the general public. (It enables local community organisations to collaborate with each other, bringing knowledge and experience together to build a picture of people's health and wellbeing needs in Hertfordshire. This is done by these organisations jointly writing and publishing articles online in a similar format to Wikipedia. Contributors are vetted and trained to ensure that quality standards are maintained.)
Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board (HSAB) - 14 January 2015

The scrutiny examined the progress and performance of HSAB with particular regard as to whether it is ready to meet the requirements of the Care Act from April 2015. Members concluded Hertfordshire was in a good position to meet its legal requirements from April 2015. They recommended the scrutiny become an annual one, in line with the approach to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (HSCB).

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (HSCB) - 9 October 2014

This is an annual scrutiny that enables Members to monitor the progress and performance of HSCB. It focussed on helping Members understand the work of HSCB, Child Death Overview, Serious Case Review and Partnership Case Reviews, as well as an update on missing children, sexual exploitation and joint working. This scrutiny is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Hertfordshire will cooperate to safeguard children in the county, promote their welfare and ensure that the work undertaken is effective. Members were happy with the progress made by the board during 2013/14 and asked that at the 2014/15 scrutiny, to be held on 8th October 2015, they hear about:

- Serious Case Reviews
- Partnership Case Reviews
- Child Death Overview Panel
- Child Sexual Exploitation

and the work being undertaken in these areas.

Highways Liaison Meetings (HLM) 2 December 2014

This scrutiny was undertaken following concerns that HLMs were not proving to be as effective as the Highways Joint Member Panels (HJMP) they
Members concluded that there was a need to hold three meetings a year of the HLM (up from the current two) and that there should be a separate meeting to discuss Highways Locality Budgets (HLB) and incorporate a local Ringway Casework Surgery. This should then allow HLMs to provide a strategic overview of the highway service pitched at providing information and updates on projects and issues at a district wide level of interest.

Impact of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy 9 May 2014

The scrutiny reviewed the impact of the SEN strategy to meet the SEN of more children locally. Members welcomed the progress made to date in implementing the strategy, in particular the engagement of various stakeholder groups. They agreed to undertake a further scrutiny of SEN in 2016/17 to review further progress in implementing the strategy and the effects of new legislation on the service.

Integrated Plan Proposals (Budget Scrutiny) - 17 December 2014, 28 January and 4 February 2015

The annual budget scrutiny covers three days. The first day advised Members of emerging issues arising from the budget settlement, the second was a ‘scrutiny café’ approach involving the majority of Members of the County Council (both Executive and Non-Executive), all Chief Officers and a further 30 senior County Council officers, whilst the third day was a debate by the committee on the outcomes of the ‘scrutiny café’. Recommendations were produced for consideration by the Executive and Full Council in reaching decisions on the County Council’s Integrated Plan for 2015/16 – 2017/18.

Integration of Public Health 4 and 12 March 2015

The scrutiny looked into how effectively Public Health has integrated into the council. This was seen as a transformation of council services rather than a transfer of a department into the council. Members were pleased to hear how well Public Health were working with other directorates and that there were
many projects currently under way involving joint working, with more planned. It was highlighted that external organisations, including other local authorities, saw Public Health as part of the council and that when they have meetings with representatives, those are representatives of the council and not of Public Health independently. Members asked that OSC add a future scrutiny, to their work programme that focusses on Public Health community projects.

Thriving Families - 18 June 2014

This was a follow up scrutiny that tested the effectiveness of the approach adopted by the Hertfordshire Thriving Families programme, during its second year, to support families with multiple and complex needs to achieve better outcomes and prevent the escalation of problems. Members welcomed the progress being made and the positive comments from districts/boroughs about the programme. They asked that a further scrutiny takes place in 18 months time to monitor the efficacy of the programme.

3.2 - Written updates

For a range of reasons it may not always be appropriate to scrutinise a topic on which Members have expressed an interest. In these instances all Members are provided with a short written update on the particular topic. This method has been used to provide updates on:

- The number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in Hertfordshire, as well as the potential implications for schools catering for their needs

3.3 - Lunchtime seminars

Scrutiny organises two-hour long seminars, with a speaker on topics of general interest to members and officers. Recent examples have included:
• HCT (Herts Community Trust)

• LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership)

• JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)

4 - Having your say on the issues being scrutinised
Members of the public are able to attend any scrutiny and/or topic group. Although the public have no right to speak at the meeting, they may be invited to do so by the Chairman. Members of the public can also make their views known to their local County Councillor or any Member of a scrutiny committee.

5 - Suggest items for future scrutiny work programmes
Members of the public may write to the Head of Scrutiny to request that a relevant subject or issue be investigated.

He can be contacted at:
tom.hawkyard@hertfordshire.gov.uk

or at
CH0317
Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8DE.

All suggestions will be considered by the chair and vice chairs of the appropriate committees at the next agenda setting meeting. The member of the public will then be informed by the Head of Scrutiny of the outcome.
**Glossary of terms**

**AAAB** – All Age Autism Board

**CCG** – Clinical Commissioning Group, responsible for commissioning, or purchasing, most health services for a particular area.

**CQC** – Care Quality Commission, a statutory body responsible for analysing the quality and performance of health trusts.

**Elected member** – Locally elected, sometimes known as councillor

**Executive Cabinet** – A group of elected councillors who each look after a particular department

**Executive member** – An elected member who holds responsibility for a particular department

**Francis Report** – A report written in response to the Mid-Staffordshire NHS review, creating a series of recommended changes for the NHS across the country

**Full Council** – Meets throughout the year and is a meeting of all elected members, to agree and debate suggested policies and strategies of the council.

**HCT** - Herts Community Trust

**HLB** - Highways Locality Budgets

**HLM** - Highways Liaison Meetings
HSAB - Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board

HSC - Health Scrutiny Committee

HSCB - Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board

HWB - Health and Well Being Board

JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LEP - Local Enterprise Partnership

OSC - Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Police and Crime Commissioner – An elected individual who offers direction for the police service, in Hertfordshire this is David Lloyd.

The executive – These are the chief officers of the Authority led by the chief executive of Hertfordshire County Council, John Wood.

Trust Director – A senior official in charge of a health trust

Turnaround and Action Plan – A strategy written in response to low scoring performance outcomes, setting out a way to solve the issues raised.