

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE



Cllr Steve Hollands

5 December 2012 – 15 January 2013

1. Recent Scrutiny Committee Meetings

- 1.1 This report provides an account of Scrutiny activity carried out by the following committees between 22 November 2012 and 18 January 2013:
- The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
 - The Health, Social and Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee
 - The Better Services Better Value Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - The South-West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on NHS Croydon finances

2 Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee

5 December Call-In meeting of Procurement of Library Services

- 2.1 At their 5 December 2012 meeting, the committee called in the Cabinet decision to agree that JLIS should be appointed as preferred bidder for the contract for the provision of Library Services, leading in all likelihood to this bidder being awarded the contract.
- 2.2 The Chairman informed the Committee that there were two call-ins of the same decision, one from the Conservative Group and one from the Labour Group. He proposed considering the Conservative call-in in Part A of the meeting and the Labour call-in in Part B because it contained information that was likely to include exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The Committee agreed this allocation.
- 2.3 After considering evidence from officers, the Committee agreed not to refer the Labour call-in to Cabinet for reconsideration and resolved that no further comments should be made.

2.4 However, the following resolutions were agreed:

- i) That scrutiny should receive monitoring reports on the delivery of the contract as they become available, and that monitoring of the contract should be considered when agreeing each year's scrutiny work programme
- ii) That all library service telephone numbers used by the public should remain the same after the commencement of the contract
- iii) That future commissioning reports should contain as much information in Part A of the agenda as possible in order to allow Members and the public to know whether the commissioning exercise meets the Council's commissioning strategy

15 January 2013 committee meeting

2.5 The Leader of the Councillor, Cllr Mike Fisher, the Nathan Elvery, and Director of Finance Richard Simpson were in attendance to answer members' questions regarding the Council budget for 2013.2014.

2.6 Members questioned officers on a wide range of service areas, including the following:

- the Council's new role in public health
- homelessness and the need for more privately rented housing
- budgets for services to children and young people at risk
- staffing resources for the council run educational traded services
- regeneration in the town centre
- the retention of part of the business rate by councils

3 Health Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

3.1 The 8 January 2013 sub-committee meeting was held at the Brighton Road Baptist church in South Croydon to encourage local residents to take part in discussions regarding the future of the Purley Hospital site. The meeting was well attended. The presentation by the senior management team of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust was followed by a question and answer session.

3.2 The Committee were also given an update on the personalisation and re-ablement programme and its successes and challenges, as recognised by the Department of Health. Members were advised that the Department had reduced the percentage target for assessment for personalised services from 100% to 70% in recognition that these would not be suited to the needs of all eligible service users.

4 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) on better Services Better Value

4.1 The Committee met on 12 December 2012 at the London Borough of Merton Council offices.

- 4.2 Surrey County Council originally joined the JHOSC as non-voting Members. However it has now been given full membership status of the JHOSC to reflect the potential variation to the provision of health services provided to patients in the authority.
- 4.3 A decision was also made by the cross-party chairs of the JHOSC to suspend the launch of the public consultation until Surrey County Council have had the opportunity to review the proposals fully.
- 4.4 However, members were advised that the Better Services Better Value team had a robust consultation timeline which will keep its programme on target

5 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on NHS Finances

- 5.1 A draft final report of the committee's investigation will be considered at its next meeting.

Key conclusions reached by the Committee during their investigation include the following:

- Financial reporting has been significantly inaccurate
- The board of NHS Croydon relied too heavily on the work of internal and external audit
- The report presenting Ernst and Young's findings also asserted that the misstatement of accounts arose from a systems failure. The JHOSC however is of the view that the actions of individuals is the root cause of the overspend.

- 5.2 A date for the final meeting of the JHOSC, at which the draft final report will be approved, is due to be set for February 2013.