

Scrutiny Annual Report



2019/20

Chair's Review

This year saw the publication of the long awaited statutory guidance for Scrutiny. The Scrutiny team responded by producing a Scrutiny Action Plan, seeking to embed some of our practice and to be even more ambitious in our approach to Scrutiny. This prompted some tweaks to the way we do things, including annual work programming, speaking to more people and even more visits to see Devon County Council and partners in action!

Task groups and Spotlight reviews have been varied, with Children's Scrutiny reviewing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Education Health and Care Plans, Special Guardianship arrangements and Relationships & Sex Education. Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services has looked at the Speed Policy and application across Devon as well as Spotlight Reviews on Food waste, Policing, and Preventing and Tackling Exploitation. Health and Adult Care Scrutiny has influenced the emerging Integrated Care System with the development of a Long-Term Plan for Devon and undertaken an investigation into the needs of Carers.

Each Committee now has a Standing Overview Group, including the dedicated Climate Change Group, acting as a critical friend to support how Devon takes forward it's actions in response to the climate emergency.

Scrutiny Chairs express their thanks to all Scrutiny Committee Members, recognising the value of Task Group investigations and Spotlight Reviews. The support of the dedicated Scrutiny team, coupled with the expertise offered by the two special advisors continues to be critical to the success of scrutiny.

Councillor Alistair Dewhirst, Chair of Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny

Councillor Rob Hannaford, Chair of Children's Scrutiny

Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair of Health & Adult Care Scrutiny

Highlights:

Committee Meetings

16 Public meetings

62 Reports

4 speakers

0 Call-ins

Task Groups/Spotlights

10 reviews established

7 reports published

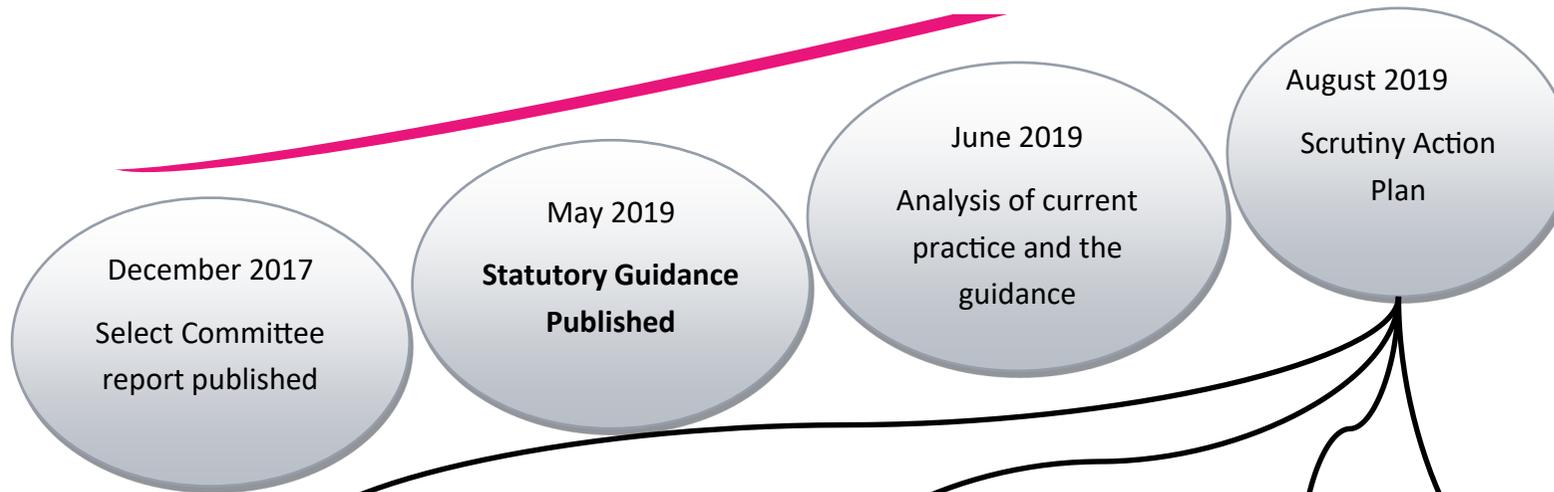
404 witnesses

77 recommendations

9 SOG Meetings

Scrutiny Response

Statutory Guidance



Quality Evidence Gathering Sessions to inform Policy

Maintaining site visits where appropriate to increase awareness of issues and services.

Continuing to hear and listen to the voice of the public— with more people engaging with members than ever before.

Planning for Impact

Scrutiny Committees introduced Annual work programming— where each committee held a dedicated session to consider what should be on their work programme, including Cabinet Members and suggestions from others.

This process will be repeated in June 2021

Media and Comms

Working with the Comms team to better publicise the role and impact of Scrutiny internally and externally.

The communications team being aware of news worthy items coming from Scrutiny, including Scrutiny members highlighting upcoming items

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Bite sized summaries of notable work

Promotion of Scrutiny success + tweeting

Even more site visits

Ask the 'SO WHAT? Question

Reflecting upon how value has been added

How has Scrutiny listened?

SCOMIS Offices visit



School Visits



Visited community hospitals, care homes, social work offices, schools, NHS facilities and charities speaking to more staff and service users than any previous year.

Heard from **404** witnesses in person from industry, the NHS, charities, employees, universities and members of the public in Task Group/Spotlight Reviews.

Ness Dementia Centre Visit



Responded to public concern over 5G and established a spotlight review, already hearing from 1300 survey responses and 150 people in person.



Plymouth Energy from Waste Visit



Focus groups as part of the 5G Spotlight Review



Exeter Energy from Waste Visit

SCRUTINY IMPACT

Scrutiny continues to raise awareness on problem gambling:

- ⇒ lobbying minsters;
- ⇒ Dedicated local JSNA on gambling;
- ⇒ Being on local TV;
- ⇒ Speaking to other Councils;
- ⇒ Working with the CfPS and the LGA

The Carers Spotlight Review took the voice of the carer and presented the issues that matter most to them in a detailed study that spoke to more than **120 unpaid carers across Devon**.
Foremost this piece of work recognises and celebrates the role of the carer.

Food Waste Spotlight Review

- * Helped to clarify what counts as waste and publicise what was possible to compost
- * Recommended sharing info about community initiatives designed to share food that would otherwise be wasted
- * Suggested further work with schools and businesses



Impact of Changes to Local Policing Spotlight Review

Community concerns around local policing and communication with the public were channelled directly to Devon and Cornwall Police in 2017.

Scrutiny revisited this year and found that concerns have been addressed through;

- * Creation of a new Rural Crime Team
- * Better public involvement in Community Speedwatch scheme
- * New and improved ways for the public to contact the police online.

40

Speed Limits Task Group realigned the Council's approach to speed to focus on communities, not casualties.

30

+ piloted two 20mph zones in Devon

20

Special Guardianship Task Group

Recommendations taken forward included; helping to provide better support for special guardians, including improved access to history of the child and access to therapeutic parenting and other training.

The evidence and recommendations from the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Task Group helped secure over **£1m additional investment in the service.**



Sharing Devon's Practice

- * The Head of Scrutiny, Camilla de Bernhardt Lane spoke at the annual Centre for Public Scrutiny Conference and DCC was held up as best practice
- * Councillor Dewhirst and Camilla also spoke about the scrutiny contribution to tackling problem gambling at the LGA Licencing conference.
- * The Head of Scrutiny also lead a fruitful discussion at the County and Unitary Officers Group on Devon's approach to Scrutiny.
- * Devon also hosted, and Tim Ridgeway, Scrutiny Support Officer, presented, to the South West Regional Network on climate change approaches.



Speaking at the CfPS Annual Conference

Influencing the National Agenda

Numerous lobbying activities have taken place including:

- * Writing to the Under Secretary for Sport encouraging him to do more to tackle problem gambling including giving more funds to public health.
- * Tackling the Government on it's approach to Covid -19 and support for adult social care
- * Request fairer funding for Devon's schools
- * Speeding up legal provision for special guardians
- * A series of recommendations to Government through the LGA for improved support to carers.



Speaking on Gambling at the LGA

For task group reports, briefings & more [click here](#)

For any comments or to suggest topics for Scrutiny contact
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