

## Notice of Meeting

### Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Angell (Chairman),  
Councillor Virgo (Vice-Chairman),  
Councillors Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle,  
McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter, Temperton and Tullett



**Tuesday 5 November 2019, 7.30 - 9.30 pm**  
**Council Chamber - Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell,**  
**RG12 1JD**

There will be a pre-meeting for members of the O&S Commission at  
7.00pm in TS Ground Boardroom

### Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members</b>	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute Members.	
2.	<b>Minutes</b>	3 - 12
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 19 September 2019.	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest and Party Whip</b>	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests and the nature of that interest, including the existence and nature of the party whip, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an Affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	
4.	<b>Urgent Items of Business</b>	
	Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.	

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5.	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements 2019 - 2023</b>	13 - 84
	To formally agree to the implementation of revised arrangements for the discharge of the overview & scrutiny function. <b>Reporting:</b> Statutory Scrutiny Officer	
6.	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Work Programme 2019 - 2023</b>	85 - 114
	To agree a work programme for the next four years. <b>Reporting:</b> Statutory Scrutiny Officer	

Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media is permitted. Please contact Kirsty Hunt, 01344 353108, [kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.hunt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk), so that any special arrangements can be made.

Published: 28 October 2019

#### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS**

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
19 SEPTEMBER 2019  
7.34 - 8.35 PM**

**Present:**

Councillors Angell (Chairman), Virgo (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Temperton and Tullett

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Mossom and Porter

**Also Present:**

Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive

Councillor John Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director: Delivery

Ann Moore, Head of Democratic Services

Kirsty Hunt, Governance and Scrutiny Manager

**11. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 27 June 2019 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman

There were no matters arising, questions or comments from Members of the Commission.

**12. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest and no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

**13. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**14. Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

**15. Corporate Performance Overview Report**

The Commission considered the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) covering the fourth quarter, January 2019 to March 2019 (Q4) of 2018/19 financial year and the first quarter, April to June 2019 (Q1) of the 2019/20 financial year.

*Panel members were asked to give advance notice to Kirstine Berry in the Governance and Scrutiny Team of any questions relating to the CPOR(s) where possible.*

No questions relating to either CPOR had been received in advance of the meeting.

Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive, introduced the Q1 CPOR to the Commission and explained that:

- The Q1 CPOR had not yet been to the Executive.
- The financial information in the Q1 report related to the Q4 report as the reports had been produced slightly out of sequence.
- The overriding position was that the Council was currently in a holding pattern.
- The service plans in place related to the Council Plan that was agreed in 2015
- Council would be asked to agree a new plan in Nov for the period 2019-2023 and this was where the effort was being directed.

Some of the key highlights of quarter one performance were:

- Progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) in Q1 of the year, were overwhelmingly on target, as expected.
- Over 80% of KPIs had green indicators.
- 3 elections had been held in the first quarter. Democratic Services had new team dealing with the elections who had been very effective. There may very well be more elections in the short term and at short notice.
- The accounts were closed in the first quarter with a balanced budget for the twenty first consecutive year in a row.
- There had been over 1500 hours of volunteering in Parks and Countryside to maintain local parks, open spaces and rights of way which equated to 43 weeks of paid work at 37 hours per week. This was something the community and the Council should be very proud of.
- Housing and Welfare were equal second fastest in the South east for processing new claims, and equal first for change in circumstances so we act quickly for our residents.

Areas that had caused concern during the first quarter were:

- The close down of the accounts had been difficult because of a change in the law on pensions. Ongoing delays to The Berkshire Pension Fund accounts had taken longer to deal with and had posed a challenge.
- 58 complaints had been received in the first quarter which was more than would have been expected.
- When the 58 complaints were put into the context of the millions of interactions the Council had with residents in the same period, this was a low figure, but it was hoped it could be lower still.

In response to questions from members raised during the meeting, Timothy Wheadon, Chief executive advised members that:

- Complaints were processed in 3 stages.
- The complaints recorded were written complaints.
- The first complaint stage was dealt with by a line manager.
- A stage 3 complaint was dealt with by the Chief Executive or a Director.
- There were no more than 25 written stage 3 complaints in a year.
  
- The increase in complaints experienced was down to an increase in the number of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman as “fault with no injustice” which related to minor faults but in these cases there was no injustice found.
- All complaints were learnt from.
- There was no right of appeal against a Local Government Association Ombudsman decision other than judicial review.

- Unless it was a significant issue, a judicial review was not an appeal route that would be chosen to pursue.
- The Local Government Association Ombudsman always provided a draft decision which could be pushed back against if there were areas where there was disagreement. There were a couple of cases currently where the Council was pushing back hard on but always bore in mind that they should not waste resources.
- About 3 years ago the percentage of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman was about 10%. It was anticipated that the category where fault was found would now increase. Members should focus on where fault and injustice had been found by the Ombudsman. Fault alone made no difference, it was cases where injustice had been caused to a family that was key. In Quarter 1 there were no upheld cases of fault and injustice found by the Ombudsman.
- Details about the lift operation at Braccan Walk Car Park, one of which was identified as having been inoperative for a very long time, were not available at the meeting but would be investigated.

**Action:** Damian James, Assistant Director: Contract Services to investigate the current situation and operability of the Braccan Walk Car Park lifts.

- Details about the contract for KOOTH, the online support for young people paid for by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which was due to end in September, possibly being replaced by a cross Berkshire contract were not available at the meeting, but would be investigated.

**Action:** Nikki Edwards, Executive Director: People to investigate the current contract situation relating to the provision of the KOOTH online service within the Borough.

- Apprentices had to spend 20% of their time working outside of the job role. This was a management challenge for the Council and the Council was struggling to identify apprentices because of this.
- The apprenticeship scheme was being looked at to see if the Council could develop a generic apprenticeship role where a small number of people were deployed across the organisation like the graduate trainees.
- To promote apprenticeships the Council was also looking at devolving some of the levy from suppliers and the voluntary sector but retaining the money within the system.
- The apprenticeship system in the Council was not particularly effective but this was a national challenge not just a Bracknell Forest issue.
- It was difficult to compare apprenticeship schemes against larger authorities with larger budgets and populations, an effective comparison would have to be against a similar authority.
- People with a disability were eligible to apply for apprenticeships. It was unknown if there were currently any apprentices with disabilities

**Action:** Damian James, Assistant Director: Contract Services to provide footfall figures for the libraries within Bracknell Forest to identify if there had been additional take up of library services since the transformation.

**Action:** Rachel Morgan, Assistant Director: Education and Learning to advise if there were any apprentices with disabilities.

- The contract with Everyone Active (EA) for leisure services within the Borough included targets EA had to meet and penalties for missing those targets. Penalties would be invoked if required.

- Everyone Active did not have to deliver the improvements that were being made.
- Nationally it was not understood precisely why there was an increase in demand for social care and most authorities were experiencing an increase in the numbers of people requiring provision. It could possibly be driven by austerity, people being more aware of abuse.
- The application of eligibility criteria was based on national criteria.
- Inspectors went through a significant proportion of cases and tested the application of criteria within the Borough and found that the criteria had been applied correctly and consistently.
- The Family Safeguarding Model (FSM) was part of a national pilot which looked at the child in the context of the family unit. It looked at how the child could be kept safe within that unit.
- The overriding duty was to keep children safe.
- Looked after children (LAC) were children at most severe risk of harm. These were children in foster care or residential care.
- Children on child protection plans (CPP) were at a lower risk level where the risk was managed in the family setting
- Children in need (CIN) were managed in the community with social work using family centres.
- Using the FSM the levels of LAC had stayed about the same, the numbers of children with CPPs were down and CIN had gone up which was good because that meant the more severe cases were being managed more effectively in the family setting. Invariably children would prefer to stay at home rather than be put into care, and the output was better for children in that case. More management in the community was better for children.
- The FSM uses the appropriate level of monitoring for each risk level.
- The level of Council Tax receipts was very high in the Borough, in excess of 95%.
- As a result of an audit report, an increased level of debt had been seen amongst service users using paid for services in housing and adult social care.
- A new credit control agency was now being used at an earlier stage and helped families to control their debt to stop it increasing.
- The normal debt recovery process is used for those residents who do not pay using the courts and recovery agencies but if people engaged with the Council in a conversation about the debt and agreement could often be reached to establish a reasonable and appropriate re-payment plan.
- Discussions were ongoing with South Hill Park to agree a level of savings for the next financial year.

The Chairman remarked that there had been a number of questions from Members that relating to the CPOR asked during the meeting where an immediate answer was not able to be provided.

Members were reminded and asked to provide notice of any questions they may have in advance of the meeting so that the Chief executive had time to gather the necessary information to provide a suitable response.

The Chairman gave thanks to Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive for attending the meeting and responding to questions relating to the Q1 CPOR.

## 16. **Reports from Panel Chairs**

The Commission noted the reports which advised the Commission of the current status of each Panel's work programme, from the Chairman of the:

- Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel advised that the Panel had not met since the date of the last O&S Commission meeting on 27 June 2019 and had no update to report.

The Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel welcomed Mr Mark Glanville, a Parent Governor from Easthampstead Park Community School, to the meeting of the Commission as an observer and hoped he would soon be joining the Commission as a Parent Governor Representative.

There were no questions from Members.

**17. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity Re-Inspection 2019**

The Commission noted and discussed the report by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) re-inspection into crime data integrity of Thames Valley Police published on 25 July 2019.

The report was accessed via this link:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/thames-valley-crime-data-integrity-re-inspection-2019/>

Responses to the questions from Members about the report had been supplied by Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman expressed his surprise at the overall judgement of inadequate for the Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection report 2019 and observed that this was not the message that had been provided at the recent full Council meeting on 11 September 2019 from the Police when the Chief Constable, John Campbell had been present.

Councillor John Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection thanked Members for the questions relating to the re-inspection report they had provided to him and advised members that:

- Their questions had been sent to the Chief Constable for a response.
- The answers to the questions were provided in the report that accompanied the agenda.
- He held a position on the Police and Crime Panel which was a scrutiny panel which looked at the performance of the Police Commissioner and the police force. It was not an executive or management committee, it only held them to account.
- He had had a further opportunity to question the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) about the crime data integrity and it was that which was the issue not the performance of the Police overall.
- The Police had questions themselves over how the inspectorate had compiled the data in the report and had pushed back.
- He was not in a position or able to answer any detailed questions about the report itself.
- The Police and Crime Panel had asked for a report at their next meeting which would possibly be in December 2019.

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services were annual inspections.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner's office had a named person who was in charge of crime statistics.

Members discussed:

- The recent full Council meeting when the Chief Constable attended and noted how the re-inspection report was not mentioned or referred to at that meeting.
- The appropriateness of full Council being an appropriate forum to ask detailed questions to the Chief Constable and commented that a number of questions that they had submitted for a response remained unanswered by the Chief Constable.
- If it would be appropriate to request that the Chief Constable and/or the Police and Crime Commissioner should attend an Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting to allow the Commission to pose more detailed questions directly.

**Action:** The Chairman of the O&S Commission will discuss outside of the meeting of the Commission, the best way to take the situation forwards and decide who to invite to a focussed, single issue meeting of the O&S Commission in order to discuss the HMICFRS Thames Valley Police Crime Data Integrity re-inspection report 2019 in greater detail.

The Chairman gave thanks to Councillor John Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection for attending the meeting.

#### 18. **Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions**

Members received and noted the scheduled Key and Non-Key Executive Decisions of a corporate nature.

There were no questions from Members.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Commission and closed the meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**

**Actions Arising from Overview and Scrutiny Commission Minutes  
Updated 7 Oct 2019**

**Key: Grey = Action Complete**

Action/Information Request	Response
<p><b>From the 27 June 2019 meeting Item 9. Crime and Disorder Committee</b> <b>ACTION:</b> Opportunities had been taken with the Lexicon to train its security staff to have Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) accreditation training and are therefore able to carry out various functions. <b>It was noted that there had been a high turnover of security staff and the Community Safety team would follow up whether all the new staff were receiving that training.</b></p>	<p>On 13 August 2019, Alison O'Meara, Head of Community Safety advised that the Community Safety Team was currently investigating with the Lexicon the numbers of Westgrove security staff who were currently Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) trained and if plans were in place to train new staff who joined them.</p> <p>The Community Safety Team was also researching the CSAS training more fully e.g. training outcomes, commitments and powers. The outcome of this research would be reported to the Community Safety partnership (CSP) in due course.</p>
<p><b>From the 27 June 2019 meeting Item 9. Crime and Disorder Committee</b> <b>ACTION:</b> Three examples were given to explain how the problem solving model worked and 58 cases had been closed that were causing fear and distress. <b>Clarification would be provided as to the overall number of open cases and a comparison with other CSPs.</b></p>	<p>On 13 August 2019, Alison O'Meara, Head of Community Safety advised that comparison data was not currently available for 2018/19. However, for 2019/20, the number of referred and closed cases would both be captured for reporting to the next Crime and Disorder Committee in 2020.</p> <p>Comparable data with other CSPs would be investigated. However, as each Community Safety Partnership's problem-solving model varied in how/whether they monitor closed cases, this may not be possible.</p>

Action/Information Request	Response
<p><b>From the 19 September 2019 meeting</b>  <b>Item 15 Corporate performance Overview Report</b>  <b>Action:</b> Steve Caplan, Assistant Director: Property to investigate the current situation and operability of the High Street Car Park (North end) lifts.</p>	<p><b>On 26 September, Richard Payne, Head of maintenance advised that:</b>  There was a leak to the roof above the lifts so they had been isolated. A repair had been carried out within the last couple of weeks which had partially fixed the issue. A secondary piece of work had been instructed which should rectify the leak and should be completed within a week which would then allow the lifts to be put back online.</p>
<p><b>From the 19 September 2019 meeting</b>  <b>Item 15 Corporate performance Overview Report</b>  <b>Action:</b> Nikki Edwards, Executive Director: People to investigate the current contract situation relating to the provision of the KOOTH online service within the Borough.</p>	<p><b>On 24 October 2019, Maureen Mandirahwe, Interim Public Health Programme Manager provided an update and advised that:</b>  The KOOTH contract commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017. It offered online mental health support and counselling for young people to support improvements in emotional health and wellbeing. This was a joint arrangement between Bracknell Forest Council and East Berkshire CCG. The contract had two contract extensions followed by a Waiver issued for the period 1 October 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.  The current Waiver period allowed East Berkshire CCG to continue discussions about future service design and delivery of the new contract. These decisions had been reached and meant that from 1 April 2020, following a procurement process, the provision will be fully funded by East Berkshire CCG.</p>
<p><b>From the 19 September 2019 meeting</b>  <b>Item 15 Corporate performance Overview Report</b>  <b>Action:</b> Bobby Mulheir, Assistant Director, Customer Experience to provide footfall figures for the libraries within Bracknell Forest to identify if there had been additional take up of library services since the transformation.</p>	<p><b>Action awaiting an update</b></p>
<p><b>From the 19 September 2019 meeting</b>  <b>Item 15 Corporate performance Overview Report</b>  <b>Action:</b> Rachel Morgan, Assistant Director: Education and Learning to advise if there were any apprentices with disabilities.</p>	<p>On 14 October 2019, Rachel Morgan, Assistant Director, Education and Learning advised that 2 of the people on Apprenticeships programmes declared themselves as having a disability. There were 4 people who had special educational needs (SEN) who</p>

Action/Information Request	Response
	were out of the Borough.
<p><b>From the 19 September 2019 meeting</b>  <b>Item 17 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity Re-Inspection 2019</b>  <b>Action:</b> The Chairman of the O&amp;S Commission will discuss outside of the meeting of the Commission, the best way to take the situation forwards and decide who to invite to a focussed, single issue meeting of the O&amp;S Commission in order to discuss the HMICFRS Thames Valley Police Crime Data Integrity re-inspection report 2019 in greater detail.</p>	<p><b>Action awaiting an update</b></p>

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To: **Overview & Scrutiny Commission**  
**5 November 2019**

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## **Overview & Scrutiny Arrangements 2019-2023** **Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Overview & Scrutiny Commission's (OSC) formal agreement to the implementation of revised arrangements for the discharge of the overview & scrutiny function and to report these changes to the Council in order for consequential changes to be made to the Council's Constitution.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the following Overview & Scrutiny Panels are disestablished:
- Adult Social Care, Health & Housing
  - Children, Young People & Learning
  - Environment, Culture & Communities
- 2.2 That the scrutiny arrangements are agreed as set out in paragraph 6 of the report including the establishment and core membership of the following Overview & Scrutiny Panels:
- Wellbeing & Finance
  - Education, Skills & Growth
  - Environment & Communities
- 2.3 That the appointment of Tracey Wright and Mark Glanville as the two Parent Governor Representatives on the Commission is recommended to Council on 27 November.
- 2.4 That a report is submitted to Council reporting the changes to the overview & scrutiny function as required by the Constitution and to recommend to Council changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendices E, F and G, as a result of the changes.

### **3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To give effect to changes to the overview and scrutiny structure as requested by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and to recommend to Council resultant changes to the Constitution.
- 3.2 To recommend that Council appoints Tracey Wright and Mark Glanville to the two vacant Parent Governor Representative seats on the Commission.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Members considered the following options:
- (i) **Do nothing** - the overview and scrutiny structure historically reflected the Council's directorate structure. It was not realigned following the Council's recent reorganisation. The result is that officers duplicate effort at a number of meetings. It has also been difficult to consider cross-cutting issues as a whole, rather than specific to each Panel's area of responsibility, which dilutes its effectiveness.

- (ii) **Create directorate-based Panels** – this would largely reflect the structure that was in place for many years. It did not encourage a strategic approach to scrutiny activity and Panels tended to work in isolation from one another.
- (iii) **Adopt a theme-based approach to scrutiny activity** – this approach allows activity to align more closely to the Council's objectives for the next four years. There six corporate themes within the Council Plan. The work can be delivered through flexible Panels each responsible for two themes, scheduled to meet to align with the work programme rather than on a pre-agreed fixed cycle. This option offers a sound response to most of the issues raised in the CfPS report and statutory guidance.

**This was the preferred option.**

## **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 It is timely for the Council to review and refresh the role and purpose of the overview and scrutiny function taking account of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) review, the Government's Statutory Guidance and the Council reorganisation. This report sets out a new overview and scrutiny structure and working arrangements which have been considered by the overview and scrutiny chairmen and vice-chairmen and Commission.
- 5.2 The previous Overview & Scrutiny Commission (OSC) Chairman commissioned the CfPS to assess the Council's approach to scrutiny and to make recommendations aimed at improving its impact and effectiveness. This took place in November/December 2018 and the final report was received in the New Year. The report is attached at Annex A. The timing of the review was intended to coincide with the publication of Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Publication of this guidance was delayed to May 2019 however the report took into account CfPS' expectations in relation to it. The guidance is attached at Annex B.
- 5.3 The scope of the review covered the following:
  - An assessment of the effectiveness of the scrutiny function
  - A check of the shared vision for scrutiny
  - The challenge provided to the Executive by scrutiny
  - The work programme – how items are selected and prioritised
  - Use of officer time and resources required to support scrutiny activity
  - The councillor resources required to prepare for and attend scrutiny meetings
  - The structure, remit and focus of task and finish groups
  - The scrutiny of external partners and contracts
  - The quality and robustness of scrutiny
  - The links between scrutiny and corporate strategy priorities
  - The skills of chairmen and vice-chairmen
- 5.4 The review found that scrutiny is efficiently managed and runs well as a function, however feedback from Members was that they would welcome new ways to develop its purpose and make a more constructive contribution. It was also felt that scrutiny could add more value and be more productive and effective given the significant time, effort and resources put in. Specific findings for further consideration were:
  - There is no clear, shared understanding of the role and purpose of scrutiny by Members

- There is little visibility of public accountability of the political leadership and Executive through open scrutiny
- There is a deficit of democratic accountability
- Portfolio Review Groups severely dilute the role of public scrutiny as this internal process leaves limited scope for Members to add further value at a future public scrutiny stage
- There are too few examples of Executive Members and Leader/Deputy being publicly held to account by scrutiny
- Some Members have missed the need for holding to account and see scrutiny as an information gathering and learning opportunity
- Scrutiny work programmes do not have a clear alignment with the Council corporate plan
- There is no clear objective in much of scrutiny's work
- There is no comprehensive Executive forward plan which scrutiny could use as a basis for scrutiny work plans and to have impact
- There is no triangulation between scrutiny and the Executive in the production of the work programme

5.5 One of the findings of the CfPS review was that although there is a lot of scrutiny activity there is a lack of holding to account decision makers and partners. When asked most Members described the role as holding officers and the organisation to account. Some Members missed the need for holding to account and see scrutiny as an information gathering and learning opportunity.

5.6 Following a series of meetings between officers, the chairman and vice-chairman of the Commission, the overview & scrutiny panel chairmen and vice-chairmen and the Commission, a proposal for future arrangements was agreed. Annex C sets out the overall overview & scrutiny structure and roles and responsibilities and Annex D shows the process workflow. The arrangements are set out in detail in paragraph 6 below.

## **6 Revised Overview & Scrutiny Arrangements**

6.1 The revised structure looks familiar in that it has an overarching Overview & Scrutiny Commission and three Overview & Scrutiny Panels. However, it does not mirror officer or Executive Member structures. Instead it focusses on the thematic delivery of the Council Plan.

6.2 Panels previously operated in the main as sub-committees, meeting on a pre-agreed fixed cycle without work programmes that were strategically co-ordinated. Review work was undertaken by small groups of Members operating as start and finish task groups. The revised arrangements recognise that the scrutiny function is most effective when operating the task and finish group model rather than as sub-committees, therefore Panels will work flexibly to conduct focussed enquiries and deep dive reviews across a wide range of topics which support the delivery of the Council's objectives for the next four years. Each Panel is responsible for considering topics under two (of six) themes within the Council Plan 2019 - 2023. Meetings will be open to the public unless exempt information is being considered and will be scheduled as required to align with the timetable for the work to be undertaken rather than based on Members' availability. Activities will range from 'one and done' Panel meetings to a number of three - six months' focussed reviews. This will provide the widest possible opportunity for the majority of core Members to be involved.

6.3 In addition to the core Panel membership, all non-executive Members can take part in review work. This enables the overview & scrutiny function to tap into the skills

and knowledge of Members across a wide variety of topics. This also allows working councillors to be involved effectively based on their availability, interests and knowledge.

- 6.4 This approach recognises the importance of non-executive Members' involvement in policy development and pre-decision input and scrutiny, ensuring that scrutiny does not only provide challenge but also actively contributes to the work of the Council. It relies on the active involvement of a significant number of non-executive members to deliver effectively.
- 6.5 Following discussion with Members it is proposed that the membership of the Commission and core membership of the Panels remains unchanged from the previous structure and that this is reviewed in May as part of the preparations for the Annual Meeting of the Council. This is set out in the table below:

		<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Commission</b>		Cllr Angell	Cllr Virgo	Mrs Birch Brossard Gbadebo Mrs Mattick Mrs McKenzie-Boyle McLean Mossom Porter Temperton Tullett
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	<b>Council Plan Themes</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	<b>Core membership</b>
<b>A – Wellbeing &amp; Finance</b>	Caring for you and your family  Value for money	Cllr Tullett	Cllr Mrs Mattick	Allen Atkinson Bhandari Brossard Finch M J Gibson Mrs L Gibson McLean Skinner Temperton
<b>B - Education, Skills &amp; Growth</b>	Economic resilience  Education & skills	Cllr Mrs Birch	Cllr Brossard	Ms Gaw Mrs Hamilton Gbadebo Ms Hayes Ms Merry Skinner Temperton
<b>C –Environment &amp; Communities</b>	Communities  Protecting and enhancing our environment	Cllr Porter	Cllr Mrs McKenzie-Boyle	Angell Brossard Brown Ms Gaw Mrs Ingham Kennedy Kirke

- 6.6 The role of the Panel chairmen is critical to the success of the new arrangements. They will lead the scrutiny activity within their Panel's remit, working closely with the Overview & Scrutiny Team to undertake the work within the agreed timescales. Panel Chairmen will lead activity in their areas of responsibility and bring that leadership role and knowledge to the Commission when considering strategic items and requests for variations to the work programme. They will report on progress of their reviews to the Commission and present their Panel's findings and recommendations to the Commission for approval, following which they will present recommendations on behalf of the Commission to the Executive as appropriate. Panel Chairmen will monitor outcomes and the implementation of recommendations through the review of the Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR). They will also present issues of concerns from other Members on matters within the Quarterly Service Reports (QSR) or CPOR within their Panel's remit.
- 6.7 The Panel Chairmen will be supported in delivering their work programme activities by two dedicated officers who have developed a scrutiny toolkit, to support scrutiny enquiries and reviews. The toolkit includes a variety of models for scrutiny activity dependent on the required outcome such as challenge sessions; roundtable discussions; scrutiny away-days. There is also good engagement by senior officers in each service area across the Council for enquiry and review work
- 6.8 The Commission will:
- Develop a four-year strategic work programme aligned to the Council Plan following input from scrutiny members, the Executive, Corporate Management Team, partners and the public, ensuring that it is flexible enough to accommodate urgent short-term issues.
  - Co-ordinate the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels to make the best use of available resources which will include allocating topics to Panels and agreeing the scope of activity.
  - Commission Panels to undertake deep dive reviews and support focussed policy development, chaired by the relevant chairman or vice-chairman. Their size and duration will be dependent on the activity.
  - Receive findings and recommendations from Panel chairmen in respect of their Panel's scrutiny activity, for consideration and referral to the Executive or other decision-maker as appropriate.
  - Prioritise scrutiny activity to ensure that the overview and scrutiny function concentrates on the delivery of work of genuine value and relevant to the work of the Council.
  - Discharge the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities.
  - Discharge strategic health responsibilities.
  - Manage call-in.
  - Review the policy framework.
  - Scrutinise the budget proposals.
  - Hold the Executive to account for performance within the Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR).
- 6.9 The Commission will undertake focussed work programming which should ensure that scrutiny activity contributes effectively to the Council Plan objectives. A draft work programme has been developed with the Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and a report seeking agreement to the programme is included later on the agenda. Scrutiny activity has been prioritised to ensure that the impact of scrutiny work is the significant factor in determining which topics to consider. This includes key pieces of scrutiny work to support delivery of the Council Plan's objectives.

- 6.10 Outputs of scrutiny work will be measured and monitored by the Commission and included in the Annual Scrutiny Report to Council.
- 6.11 Quarterly Service Reports (QSR) will be made available to all Members. Members can refer issues of concern to the Commission to consider whether the topic should be included in the work programme. The Commission will receive the Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) quarterly. Executive Members will be present at that meeting to be held to account for performance within their portfolios, supported by their Directors.
- 6.12 Scrutiny Members may require further development to fulfil the role of critical friend and holding the Executive to account rather than officers which is the current practice. A session has been commissioned from an external provider, but the date has not yet been agreed. All scrutiny Members will be encouraged to attend.

*Statutory and other Co-optees*

- 6.13 There are four statutory co-optees the Council is required to appoint to the Commission. The two Diocesan Representative seats have been vacant for a considerable amount of time and it is unlikely that they will be taken up in the near future. This is kept under regular review.
- 6.14 The process has recently been undertaken to recruit to the two vacant Parent Governor Representative seats: one primary stage and one secondary stage. One nomination for each vacancy was received by the deadline for nominations, therefore a ballot was not required. Council will be asked on the 27 November to agree their appointment for the next four years. They are Tracey Wright (primary) and Mark Glanville (secondary).
- 6.15 Under the previous arrangements a number of co-optees were invited to attend Panel meetings. It is proposed that the individuals concerned are advised of the changes and asked whether they would like to take part in reviews in the future.

## **7 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 7.1 Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (“the 2000 Act”) requires all local authorities operating Executive arrangements to have one or more committees to scrutinise the actions of the Executive and the authority and provide overview of matters affecting the authority's area and the inhabitants of that area (“overview and scrutiny” committees). Moreover, Executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committee has power
  - to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
  - to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive,
  - to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive,
  - to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive,

- to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the Executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

7.2 The recommendations to establish new thematically based panels from current arrangements aligns with the authority's statutory responsibilities.

#### Financial Advice

7.3 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The recommended changes to the Commission and Panels do not have any impact on the provisions within the Members' Allowances Scheme.

#### Other Consultation Responses

7.4 These are included in this report.

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

7.5 Changes to the overview and scrutiny arrangements have no apparent equality impact.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.6 Effective scrutiny is important to the successful functioning of local democracy by securing the efficient delivery of Council services and driving improvements. Poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and/or service failure.

#### Background Papers

None

#### Contact for further information

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## **Supporting Scrutiny**

## **Bracknell Forest Borough Council**



## **Scrutiny Review Report**

**December 2018**

## **Contents:**

### **Executive Summary:**

- **Introduction**
- **Scope and methodology**
- **Summary of findings**
- **Recommendations**

## Report Summary

### Introduction

1. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was commissioned by the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission at Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC) to advise and support an internal review on the effectiveness and impact of their current approach to overview and scrutiny.
2. The review was conducted on-site on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018, with subsequent further desk research.
3. We would like to thank those elected scrutiny Members, Executive Members, Officers and partners who took part in interviews, survey and observations for their time, insights and honesty.

### Scope and methodology

4. The scope of the review was to ‘assess the current approach to scrutiny and make recommendations aimed at improving its impact and effectiveness in Bracknell Forest BC’. We explored the value and impact of scrutiny in terms of:
  - Effectively holding the Executive to account
  - Contributing to policy-making
  - Acting as a voice for the public
  - Whether scrutiny is organised in the best way to have an impact and move at pace
  - Its overall value to the Council’s effectiveness
5. Specific areas to be included were:
  - How well the role of scrutiny is understood within the Council and amongst external stakeholders and the perception of its value?
  - How the public are involved in the work of scrutiny?
  - How focused and well managed the work programmes are in relation to corporate priorities and issues of immediate concern?
  - How effectively scrutiny constructively challenges Executive decisions?
  - How much impact scrutiny has had, for example in relation to the performance of the Council, its partners and within the borough?
  - How Members are trained and supported to undertake scrutiny and how this contributes to their broader development?
6. The questions for evidence gathering are:
  - What do people want to be different?
  - What would good look like for Bracknell Forest BC?
  - What works already?
  - What new things could be tried?

7. Evidence gathering included:

- Desk research of key Council documents, agendas, minutes, work programme, etc.
- Study of scrutiny meeting documents
- Interviews with key Members, Officers and partner stakeholders

## Summary of findings

### Context

8. The importance of good governance and the value of accountability and openness in local government are well documented, and scrutiny is a key contributor. In the context of austerity across all public services, challenges in relation to demand and the need for clear accountability - scrutiny's role is even more significant.

The recent Communities and Local Government Select Committee review into local government scrutiny confirmed that the culture of an organisation is vital to ensuring independent and effective challenge. Government is planning to issue new guidance for local government scrutiny and the findings and recommendations in this report takes into account CfPS' expectations in relation to this. For Bracknell Forest, it is important that scrutiny does simply challenge but also actively contributes to the operational working of a high performing Council in a diverse and fluid environment which is focused on maximising the use of scarce resources.

At the time of this draft report the new scrutiny guidance had not been published but is imminent.

9. Bracknell Forest Council is acknowledged through LGA reviews and similar inspections to be a good Council. Its last peer review confirmed this. A long period of steady political and officer leadership has contributed to a stable operating model and the Council continues to be recognised as delivering well for its residents in challenging times for local government.
10. The Council is ambitious for the people of Bracknell Forest in terms of improving outcomes, tackling important issues around housing growth, the economy, supporting residents and delivering excellent services. To achieve this, they recognise that the pace of delivery in the Council needs to be maintained and the Council needs to have its voice heard within the region and beyond. The role of effective and focused scrutiny in adding value and supporting this ambitious agenda is crucial in providing transparency.

## An appraisal of current overview and scrutiny

11. **Council approach to scrutiny:** Our review observed that Bracknell Forest is a well-run, high performing Council and scrutiny is efficiently managed and runs well as a function.

The Council is keen to evolve scrutiny to ensure it is making an appropriate and positive contribution to how the Council operates within the continuing uncertain financial climate and align more fully to corporate priorities.

Based on the interviews and feedback received, it is advised that scrutiny could add more value. Generally, Members enjoy scrutiny and do not see it as underperforming, but they do want it to achieve more and would welcome new ways to develop its purpose and make a more constructive contribution. We suggest that it could be more productive and effective given the significant time, effort and resources that are consumed by this activity.

There is also a desire by the Council leadership to be more democratically and publicly accountable for their policies and decisions. At present there is little visibility of public accountability of the political leadership and Executive through open scrutiny.

The scrutiny function is supported by a dedicated team who work hard to ensure that committees develop their work plans and that the work of scrutiny is as effective as possible.

12. **Scrutiny's purpose and democratic accountability.**

**Democratic accountability** - Most Members described the role of scrutiny as holding the corporate Officers and the organisation to account and to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and offer good value. This is valid activity but there is clearly a deficit of democratic accountability. There are too few examples of Executive Members and Leader/deputy being publicly held to account by scrutiny. There is insufficient openness and transparency in scrutiny. It is suggested by some Members that having virtually a 'single party' Council influences the role and function of scrutiny. The challenge of scrutiny is more complex as Council Members, must in reality, scrutinise themselves. However effective public scrutiny is still achievable and required. Scrutiny is not a function of opposition, and the absence of an opposition group should therefore not prevent it.

**Understanding of role and purpose** - There is no clear, shared understanding of the role and purpose of scrutiny by Members. Its role in adding value through shaping, improving, testing and challenging as well as its purpose in ensuring public visibility and accountability are not universally understood. Some Members have missed the need for holding to account and see scrutiny as an information gathering and learning opportunity.

**Transparency** - Members are involved in shaping and scrutinising policy in Policy Review Groups. Some Members enjoy and welcome this and appreciate the opportunity to have influence and a degree of power. These PRGs appear to play a very useful role in policy making and strategy. Their weakness however is that they are an internal 'controlling group' function, do not form part of the Council's constitution and are not publicly accessible. Therefore, they cannot qualify as 'public scrutiny', although this was not or is not their intention. This is not to suggest that PRGs do not have a useful role, but they do severely dilute the role of public scrutiny as this internal process leaves limited scope for Members to add further value at a future public scrutiny stage.

**Member engagement** - Since the Council is controlled almost entirely by a single political group there is little or no scope for anyone outside the group to offer fresh thinking when it comes to scrutiny. PRG's is an internal Party/Group process and public scrutiny belongs to the Council. How public scrutiny can reclaim lost ground and fit with the up-stream PRG process needs consideration.

The Council's single opposition Councillor is widely respected and provided with considerable access and support to enable her contribution to be as effective as possible.

**Focus** - There is no clear objective in much of scrutiny's work, although working groups and task and finish projects do have better scoping and objective setting. Generally, scrutiny has less objectivity and its effectiveness to producing useful scrutiny is limited by this. Establishing the goal and setting key lines of enquiry would help to keep scrutiny more mission focused.

**Partners** - Scrutiny is also used as a helpful way to scrutinise partners and to give Officers feedback on progress and performance of service delivery. Partners welcome scrutiny and report that the experience is positive. Scrutiny allows Councillors (particularly new ones) to get a deeper understanding of the organisation/ services.

13. **Clarity of vision/ the corporate plan.** The Council's corporate plan is clear. It sets out the objectives and provides details on how it plans to deliver these with relevant measurement of performance. The plan is visible and accessible. However, there is a lack of clarity, understanding or visibility of the Council's corporate plan in scrutiny plans. A key purpose of scrutiny is to test and challenge the plan and its effective delivery.

Whilst pending and forward Executive decisions are presented and available to scrutiny, there is no comprehensive Executive forward plan which scrutiny committee could use as a basis for scrutiny work plans and to have impact.

Scrutiny work programmes did not have a clear alignment with the Council corporate plan which allowed it to engage in both pre-decision scrutiny and post or review of Council actions.

- 14. Authority and independence of scrutiny.** The scrutiny committees reflect the Council's Executive portfolios. There is an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Commission which has the role of scrutinising corporate matters as well as co-ordinating the overall scrutiny work programme.

The Chair of the O&S Commission is elected by Members of the controlling group and is not appointed by the Leader. This gives a degree of independence to this position. Other Panel chairs are elected by the respective scrutiny Panels. We would commend this as good practice.

There is underlying tension between some scrutiny Members and the Executive about the role of scrutiny and its ability to consider areas that might be considered sensitive or politically difficult. Some issues regarding commercial decisions have not been allowed on scrutiny agenda's purportedly due to commercial confidentiality, although scrutiny as a pre-decision or as a review function may have been helpful.

Panels' show signs of a reluctance to robustly hold Executive Members to account as this may cause unnecessary disruption, even where such holding to account can be clearly constructive and supportive. There is a concern that scrutiny is too compliant by some scrutiny Members.

However, there is a clear willingness by both the Leader and Executive Members to engage positively with scrutiny, to work positively and to try other methods to achieve effective scrutiny

- 15. Scrutiny work programme and Panel structure.** There is certainly a lot of scrutiny activity happening in Bracknell Forest, with three permanent Panels and an O&S Commission. Panels are active and consider many key areas of the Council. They also engage well with external partners. Their weakness is the lack of holding to account decision makers and partners. Meetings tend to receive reports, consider decisions and ask questions. Scrutiny is largely unstructured.

The work of Panels is co-ordinated by the O&S Commission, which seeks to both align the work programmes and to ensure that scrutiny is logically constructed managed. A typical benefit is that the various elements of the Council budget and medium-term plan are considered by the relevant scrutiny Panel which O&S taking a corporate overview. This may need further development to ensure that committees are properly aligned and work programmes properly apportioned.

There is no triangulation meeting between scrutiny and Executive to discuss and agree areas where scrutiny focus may add value to support Executive plans and policies.

Task and Finish groups are used efficiently and in the main are usefully contributing. These are welcomed by Members as it allows them to get involved in important single issues that can support change and improvement. Panels plan to use these Task and Finish groups in future work programmes

- 16. Public involvement and external focus.** Scrutiny is currently mainly internal in its focus looking at Council processes and reviewing decisions. There is little evidence of

scrutiny acting as the voice of the public (apart from using specific ward issues to highlight concerns).

Meetings are not publicly webcast or recorded for public review or record. Whilst Members of the public may only rarely attend providing the facility to observe or listen is encouraged. Webcasting can be a useful approach.

There is provision for Members of the public to raise issues at the start of each meeting, provided these are submitted in advance. There is little evidence that the public use this facility or if it is promoted and encouraged.

Our view of Council's web site in relation to scrutiny, democracy and accountability is good. It offers easy navigation and provides comprehensive information on the work of the Council, Executive and scrutiny Panels. It is a useful resource for the public to obtain information and Council business.

17. **Evaluation and review.** An annual report is produced which sets out the activities and achievements of scrutiny. The reports articulate well the aims and objectives of scrutiny, provide comprehensive insight into their work and summarises outcomes. There are also useful recommendations for Executive consideration. These reports would benefit from adopting a section on scrutiny effectiveness and responses by the Executive on the recommendations and provides observations.
18. **The scrutiny support function.** The function is well-supported by a dedicated team of Officers with a strong mix of experience and skills. Members and Officers are well engaged and positive about their role. There are known processes for work programming planning, agenda setting and managing the meetings.

## Summary of recommendations

19. For Bracknell Forest to improve its scrutiny function there are some areas where it could consider making changes:
20. **Agree scrutiny's role and purpose.** Getting a shared view of scrutiny's role and purpose is vital. The focus of scrutiny in Bracknell Forest has developed over time and become custom and practice (i.e. the operational holding to account of Officers). The opportunity should be taken to review and refresh the purpose. Undertaking this as a joint exercise would provide a route for Executive Members to demonstrate its commitment to being challenged. It could also form part of the work programming process.
21. **Public involvement and access.** Building on current practice to allow public participation and a solid web site, consideration could be given to widening the public's understanding of the facility to raise issue. This might be considered as a PR/Comms exercise. In addition, the Council could investigate webcasts or similar

technology. There may also be further technology that would support public engagement in scrutiny.

**22. Relationship between PRGs and Scrutiny.** This is a key area that further consideration is recommended. Whilst accepting the purpose and value of PRGs, the effect on the ability of scrutiny to add-value is questionable, and thought should be given to how both could work in a complementary way.

**23. Scrutiny of commercially confidential or sensitive items.** Consideration could be given to scrutiny having ‘all areas access’ with no off-limits due to confidentiality etc (subject to normal conditions about personal matters, vexatious or other valid constraints). This is likely to be an area addressed in the new scrutiny guidance. Allowing scrutiny to test and challenge commercial decision may offer fresh eyes and insight to add to greater learning and to provide further reassurance.

**24. Democratically accountable, publicly held to account** – A change in behaviour ensuring that it is the Executive Member that is held to account. Currently the majority of scrutiny activity involves report reviewing and questioning of the Bracknell Forest Officers or partners, but less frequently Leader or Executive Members.

Scrutiny Panels could give more consideration to how they want to demonstrate public accountability and how the Executive decision-maker is held to account. Panels could consider inviting the Executive Member to be held to account on at least one or two key items on the agenda at each meeting.

A culture of mutual trust and respect between Executive and scrutiny is essential and whilst this already exists, it can be further enhanced by a shared understanding that scrutiny is a critical friend that is most valuable when providing genuine challenge and robust enquiry. Sometimes that will feel like ‘friendly fire’, but it will also provide a layer of public reassurance and a fresh perspective.

**25. More focused work programming** – The work programme and an Executive forward plan could be better integrated. Work programmes are generally busy and focus on areas of importance to the Council. Further work could be done to develop a golden thread of co-ordinated work programmes across all committees. The productivity of scrutiny could be more effectively managed, with outputs measured and monitored. It’s work programmes should ensure that Scrutiny Panels have a balanced schedule that avoids lost opportunities or cancelled meetings.

**26. Member training and development.** Members are very keen to improve and would benefit from collectively receiving the same essential skills training, alongside extended key skills including researching and questioning techniques. Scrutiny chairs and task and finish leaders would also benefit from advanced skills training involving objective setting, team-building and other leadership essentials.

## Conclusion

27. There are solid foundation stones in place for Bracknell Forest to make changes which will deliver purposeful scrutiny that is valued and makes a difference.
28. The recommendations in this report require commitment from senior Officers and the Council's leadership. Scrutiny Councillors, and the Officers who support them, cannot make scrutiny effective, and enhance its impact, on their own. Part of the change will require a shift in approach from the senior political leadership which makes it receptiveness to scrutiny challenge.

**Evidence gathered**

On-site – meetings and interviews

Scrutiny Members

Scrutiny chairman

Opposition Councillor

Executive Members

Leader of the Council

Document and website review

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Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities



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# Ministerial Foreword

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.

It is vital that councils and combined authorities know the purpose of scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it and the benefits it can bring. This guidance aims to increase understanding in all four areas.

In writing this guidance, my department has taken close note of the House of Commons Select Committee report of December 2017, as well as the written and oral evidence supplied to that Committee. We have also consulted individuals and organisations with practical involvement in conducting, researching and supporting scrutiny.

It is clear from speaking to these practitioners that local and combined authorities with effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in place share certain key traits, the most important being a strong organisational culture. Authorities who welcome challenge and recognise the value scrutiny can bring reap the benefits. But this depends on strong commitment from the top - from senior members as well as senior officials.

Crucially, this guidance recognises that authorities have democratic mandates and are ultimately accountable to their electorates, and that authorities themselves are best-placed to know which scrutiny arrangements are most appropriate for their own individual circumstances.

I would, however, strongly urge all councils to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and, above all, ensure they embed a culture that allows overview and scrutiny to flourish.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rishi Sunak'.

**Rishi Sunak MP**  
**Minister for Local Government**

# About this Guidance

## Who the guidance is for

This document is aimed at local authorities and combined authorities in England to help them carry out their overview and scrutiny functions effectively. In particular, it provides advice for senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees, and support officers.

## Aim of the guidance

This guidance seeks to ensure local authorities and combined authorities are aware of the purpose of overview and scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it effectively and the benefits it can bring.

As such, it includes a number of policies and practices authorities should adopt or should consider adopting when deciding how to carry out their overview and scrutiny functions.

The guidance recognises that authorities approach scrutiny in different ways and have different processes and procedures in place, and that what might work well for one authority might not work well in another.

The hypothetical scenarios contained in the annexes to this guidance have been included for illustrative purposes, and are intended to provoke thought and discussion rather than serve as a 'best' way to approach the relevant issues.

While the guidance sets out some of the key legal requirements, it does not seek to replicate legislation.

## Status of the guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Local authorities and combined authorities must have regard to it when exercising their functions. The phrase 'must have regard', when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.

Not every authority is required to appoint a scrutiny committee. This guidance applies to those authorities who have such a committee in place, whether they are required to or not.

This guidance has been issued under section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which requires authorities to have regard to this guidance. In addition, authorities may have regard to other material they might choose to consider, including that issued by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, when exercising their overview and scrutiny functions.

## Terminology

Unless 'overview' is specifically mentioned, the term 'scrutiny' refers to both overview and scrutiny.<sup>1</sup>

Where the term 'authority' is used, it refers to both local authorities and combined authorities.

Where the term 'scrutiny committee' is used, it refers to an overview and scrutiny committee and any of its sub-committees. As the legislation refers throughout to powers conferred on scrutiny committees, that is the wording used in this guidance. However, the guidance should be seen as applying equally to work undertaken in informal task and finish groups, commissioned by formal committees.

Where the term 'executive' is used, it refers to executive members.

For combined authorities, references to the 'executive' or 'cabinet' should be interpreted as relating to the mayor (where applicable) and all the authority members.

For authorities operating committee rather than executive arrangements, references to the executive or Cabinet should be interpreted as relating to councillors in leadership positions.

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> A distinction is often drawn between 'overview' which focuses on the development of policy, and 'scrutiny' which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.

# 1. Introduction and Context

1. Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities.
2. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers<sup>2</sup> to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Recommendations following scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and scrutiny committees can also play a valuable role in developing policy.

Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services.

3. The requirement for local authorities in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
4. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Local Government Act 2000 to allow councils to revert to a non-executive form of governance - the 'committee system'. Councils who adopt the committee system are not required to have overview and scrutiny but may do so if they wish. The legislation has been strengthened and updated since 2000, most recently to reflect new governance arrangements with combined authorities. Requirements for combined authorities are set out in Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
5. Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are democratically-elected bodies who are best-placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, and so gives them a great degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt.
6. In producing this guidance, the Government fully recognises both authorities' democratic mandate and that the nature of local government has changed in recent years, with, for example, the creation of combined authorities, and councils increasingly delivering key services in partnership with other organisations or outsourcing them entirely.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 1 of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## 2. Culture

7. The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.
8. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.
9. Creating a strong organisational culture supports scrutiny work that can add real value by, for example, improving policy-making and the efficient delivery of public services. In contrast, low levels of support for and engagement with the scrutiny function often lead to poor quality and ill-focused work that serves to reinforce the perception that it is of little worth or relevance.
10. Members and senior officers should note that the performance of the scrutiny function is not just of interest to the authority itself. Its effectiveness, or lack thereof, is often considered by external bodies such as regulators and inspectors, and highlighted in public reports, including best value inspection reports. Failures in scrutiny can therefore help to create a negative public image of the work of an authority as a whole.

### How to establish a strong organisational culture

11. Authorities can establish a strong organisational culture by:

- a) **Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy** – all members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements and for combined authorities.

Councillors have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.

- b) **Identifying a clear role and focus** – authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority (see chapter 6).

Authorities should ensure a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny function and the audit function. While it is appropriate for scrutiny to pay due regard to the authority's financial position, this will need to happen in the context of the formal audit role. The authority's section 151 officer should advise scrutiny on how to manage this dynamic.

While scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of the authority's whistleblowing arrangements, the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications. Members should always follow the authority's constitution and associated Monitoring Officer directions on the matter. Further guidance on whistleblowing can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf).

- c) **Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny** – authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between scrutiny and the executive, especially regarding the latter's future work programme. Authorities should, though, be mindful of their distinct roles:

In particular:

- The executive should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee. This could be direct, e.g. by purporting to 'order' scrutiny to look at, or not look at, certain issues, or indirect, e.g. through the use of the whip or as a tool of political patronage, and the committee itself should remember its statutory purpose when carrying out its work. All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a 'critical friend' not a de facto 'opposition'. Scrutiny chairs have a particular role to play in establishing the profile and nature of their committee (see chapter 4); and
- The chair of the scrutiny committee should determine the nature and extent of an executive member's participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal scrutiny task group meeting.

- d) **Managing disagreement** – effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious. It is therefore inevitable that, at times, an executive will disagree with the findings or recommendations of a scrutiny committee.

It is the job of both the executive and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of this happening, and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement.

One way in which this can be done is via an 'executive-scrutiny protocol' (see annex 1) which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves in unhelpful and unproductive ways. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a framework for disagreement and debate, and a way to manage it when it happens. Often,

the value of such a protocol lies in the dialogue that underpins its preparation. It is important that these protocols are reviewed on a regular basis.

Scrutiny committees do have the power to 'call in' decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.

- e) **Providing the necessary support** – while the level of resource allocated to scrutiny is for each authority to decide for itself, when determining resources an authority should consider the purpose of scrutiny as set out in legislation and the specific role and remit of the authority's own scrutiny committee(s), and the scrutiny function as a whole.

Support should also be given by members and senior officers to scrutiny committees and their support staff to access information held by the authority and facilitate discussions with representatives of external bodies (see chapter 5).

- f) **Ensuring impartial advice from officers** – authorities, particularly senior officers, should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny committees. This is fundamental to effective scrutiny. Of particular importance is the role played by 'statutory officers' – the monitoring officer, the section 151 officer and the head of paid service, and where relevant the statutory scrutiny officer. These individuals have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.
- g) **Communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority** – the scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority's wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.
- h) **Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee** – part of communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority should happen through the formal, public role of full Council – particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council's work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.

One way in which this can be done is by reports and recommendations being submitted to full Council rather than solely to the executive. Scrutiny should decide when it would be appropriate to submit reports for wider debate in this way, taking into account the relevance of reports to full Council business, as well as full Council's capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner. Such

reports would supplement the annual report to full Council on scrutiny's activities and raise awareness of ongoing work.

In order to maintain awareness of scrutiny at the Combined Authority and provoke dialogue and discussion of its impact, the business of scrutiny should be reported to the Combined Authority board or to the chairs of the relevant scrutiny committees of constituent and non-constituent authorities, or both. At those chairs' discretion, particular Combined Authority scrutiny outcomes, and what they might mean for each individual area, could be either discussed by scrutiny in committee or referred to full Council of the constituent authorities.

- i) **Communicating scrutiny's role to the public** – authorities should ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consideration should be given to how and when to engage the authority's communications officers, and any other relevant channels, to understand how to get that message across. This will usually require engagement early on in the work programming process (see chapter 6).
- j) **Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset** – formal committee meetings provide a vital opportunity for scrutiny members to question the executive and officers.

Inevitably, some committee members will come from the same political party as a member they are scrutinising and might well have a long-standing personal, or familial, relationship with them (see paragraph 25).

Scrutiny members should bear in mind, however, that adopting an independent mind-set is fundamental to carrying out their work effectively. In practice, this is likely to require scrutiny chairs working proactively to identify any potentially contentious issues and plan how to manage them.

### Directly-elected mayoral systems

12. A strong organisational culture that supports scrutiny work is particularly important in authorities with a directly-elected mayor to ensure there are the checks and balances to maintain a robust democratic system. Mayoral systems offer the opportunity for greater public accountability and stronger governance, but there have also been incidents that highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a culture that puts scrutiny at the heart of its operations.
13. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should ensure that scrutiny committees are well-resourced, are able to recruit high-calibre members and that their scrutiny functions pay particular attention to issues surrounding:
  - rights of access to documents by the press, public and councillors;
  - transparent and fully recorded decision-making processes, especially avoiding decisions by 'unofficial' committees or working groups;
  - delegated decisions by the Mayor;
  - whistleblowing protections for both staff and councillors; and
  - powers of Full Council, where applicable, to question and review.

14. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should note that mayors are required by law to attend overview and scrutiny committee sessions when asked to do so (see paragraph 44).

## 3. Resourcing

15. The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.
16. Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.
17. Authorities should also recognise that support for scrutiny committees, task groups and other activities is not solely about budgets and provision of officer time, although these are clearly extremely important elements. Effective support is also about the ways in which the wider authority engages with those who carry out the scrutiny function (both members and officers).

When deciding on the level of resource to allocate to the scrutiny function, the factors an authority should consider include:

- Scrutiny's legal powers and responsibilities;
- The particular role and remit scrutiny will play in the authority;
- The training requirements of scrutiny members and support officers, particularly the support needed to ask effective questions of the executive and other key partners, and make effective recommendations;
- The need for ad hoc external support where expertise does not exist in the council;
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny has been shown to add value to the work of authorities, improving their ability to meet the needs of local people; and
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny can help policy formulation and so minimise the need for call-in of executive decisions.

### Statutory scrutiny officers

18. Combined authorities, upper and single tier authorities are required to designate a statutory scrutiny officer,<sup>3</sup> someone whose role is to:
  - promote the role of the authority's scrutiny committee;
  - provide support to the scrutiny committee and its members; and
  - provide support and guidance to members and officers relating to the functions of the scrutiny committee.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000; article 9 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017

19. Authorities not required by law to appoint such an officer should consider whether doing so would be appropriate for their specific local needs.

#### Officer resource models

20. Authorities are free to decide for themselves which wider officer support model best suits their individual circumstances, though generally they adopt one or a mix of the following:

- Committee – officers are drawn from specific policy or service areas;
- Integrated – officers are drawn from the corporate centre and also service the executive; and
- Specialist – officers are dedicated to scrutiny.

21. Each model has its merits – the committee model provides service-specific expertise; the integrated model facilitates closer and earlier scrutiny involvement in policy formation and alignment of corporate work programmes; and the specialist model is structurally independent from those areas it scrutinises.

22. Authorities should ensure that, whatever model they employ, officers tasked with providing scrutiny support are able to provide impartial advice. This might require consideration of the need to build safeguards into the way that support is provided. The nature of these safeguards will differ according to the specific role scrutiny plays in the organisation.

## 4. Selecting Committee Members

23. Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority.
24. While there are proportionality requirements that must be met,<sup>4</sup> the selection of the chair and other committee members is for each authority to decide for itself. Guidance for combined authorities on this issue has been produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny<sup>5</sup>.

Members invariably have different skill-sets. What an authority must consider when forming a committee is that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.

25. Authorities are reminded that members of the executive cannot be members of a scrutiny committee.<sup>6</sup> Authorities should take care to ensure that, as a minimum, members holding less formal executive positions, e.g. as Cabinet assistants, do not sit on scrutinising committees looking at portfolios to which those roles relate. Authorities should articulate in their constitutions how conflicts of interest, including familial links (see also paragraph 31), between executive and scrutiny responsibilities should be managed, including where members stand down from the executive and move to a scrutiny role, and vice-versa.
26. Members or substitute members of a combined authority must not be members of its overview and scrutiny committee.<sup>7</sup> This includes the Mayor in Mayoral Combined Authorities. It is advised that Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime are also not members of the combined authority's overview and scrutiny committee.

### Selecting individual committee members

27. When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve.

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/1020) and article 4 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).

<sup>5</sup> See pages 15-18 of 'Overview and scrutiny in combined authorities: a plain English guide': <https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Overview-and-scrutiny-in-combined-authorities-a-plain-english-guide.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Section 9FA(3) of the Local Government Act 2000.

<sup>7</sup> 2(3) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

28. Authorities should not take into account a member's perceived level of support for or opposition to a particular political party (notwithstanding the wider legal requirement for proportionality referred to in paragraph 24).

### Selecting a chair

29. The Chair plays a leadership role on a scrutiny committee as they are largely responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working.

30. The attributes authorities should and should not take into account when selecting individual committee members (see paragraphs 27 and 28) also apply to the selection of the Chair, but the Chair should also possess the ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus among committee members.

Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the committee's independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the executive.

31. Given their pre-eminent role on the scrutiny committee, it is strongly recommended that the Chair not preside over scrutiny of their relatives<sup>8</sup>. Combined authorities should note the legal requirements that apply to them where the Chair is an independent person<sup>9</sup>.

32. The method for selecting a Chair is for each authority to decide for itself, however every authority should consider taking a vote by secret ballot. Combined Authorities should be aware of the legal requirements regarding the party affiliation of their scrutiny committee Chair<sup>10</sup>.

### Training for committee members

33. Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.

34. When deciding on training requirements for committee members, authorities should consider taking advantage of opportunities offered by external providers in the sector.

### Co-option and technical advice

35. While members and their support officers will often have significant local insight and an understanding of local people and their needs, the provision of outside expertise can be invaluable.

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<sup>8</sup> A definition of 'relative' can be found at section 28(10) of the Localism Act 2011.

<sup>9</sup> See article 5(2) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).

<sup>10</sup> Article 5(6) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

36. There are two principal ways to procure this:

- Co-option – formal co-option is provided for in legislation<sup>11</sup>. Authorities must establish a co-option scheme to determine how individuals will be co-opted onto committees; and
- Technical advisers – depending on the subject matter, independent local experts might exist who can provide advice and assistance in evaluating evidence (see annex 2).

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<sup>11</sup> Section 9FA(4) Local Government Act 2000

## 5. Power to Access Information

37. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds, and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.
38. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information<sup>12</sup>. In particular, regulations give enhanced powers to a scrutiny member to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights for councillors to have access to information to perform their duties, including common law rights to request information and rights to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
39. When considering what information scrutiny needs in order to carry out its work, scrutiny members and the executive should consider scrutiny's role and the legal rights that committees and their individual members have, as well as their need to receive timely and accurate information to carry out their duties effectively.
40. Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk. Where this information exists, and scrutiny members are given support to understand it, the potential for what officers might consider unfocused and unproductive requests is reduced as members will be able to frame their requests from a more informed position.
41. Officers should speak to scrutiny members to ensure they understand the reasons why information is needed, thereby making the authority better able to provide information that is relevant and timely, as well as ensuring that the authority complies with legal requirements.

While each request for information should be judged on its individual merits, authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request, with scrutiny committee members.

42. The law recognises that there might be instances where it is legitimate for an authority to withhold information and places a requirement on the executive to provide the scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision<sup>13</sup>. However, members of the executive and senior officers should take particular care to avoid refusing requests, or limiting the information they provide, for reasons of party political or reputational expediency.

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<sup>12</sup> Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation 17(4) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(4) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

Before an authority takes a decision not to share information it holds, it should give serious consideration to whether that information could be shared in closed session.

43. Regulations already stipulate a timeframe for executives to comply with requests from a scrutiny member<sup>14</sup>. When agreeing to such requests, authorities should:

- consider whether seeking clarification from the information requester could help better target the request; and
- Ensure the information is supplied in a format appropriate to the recipient's needs.

44. Committees should be aware of their legal power to require members of the executive and officers to attend before them to answer questions<sup>15</sup>. It is the duty of members and officers to comply with such requests.<sup>16</sup>

#### Seeking information from external organisations

45. Scrutiny members should also consider the need to supplement any authority-held information they receive with information and intelligence that might be available from other sources, and should note in particular their statutory powers to access information from certain external organisations.

46. When asking an external organisation to provide documentation or appear before it, and where that organisation is not legally obliged to do either (see annex 3), scrutiny committees should consider the following:

- a) **The need to explain the purpose of scrutiny** – the organisation being approached might have little or no awareness of the committee's work, or of an authority's scrutiny function more generally, and so might be reluctant to comply with any request;
- b) **The benefits of an informal approach** – individuals from external organisations can have fixed perceptions of what an evidence session entails and may be unwilling to subject themselves to detailed public scrutiny if they believe it could reflect badly on them or their employer. Making an informal approach can help reassure an organisation of the aims of the committee, the type of information being sought and the manner in which the evidence session would be conducted;

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<sup>14</sup> Regulation 17(2) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(2) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Section 9FA(8) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Section 9FA(9) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

- c) **How to encourage compliance with the request** – scrutiny committees will want to frame their approach on a case by case basis. For contentious issues, committees might want to emphasise the opportunity their request gives the organisation to ‘set the record straight’ in a public setting; and
- d) **Who to approach** – a committee might instinctively want to ask the Chief Executive or Managing Director of an organisation to appear at an evidence session, however it could be more beneficial to engage front-line staff when seeking operational-level detail rather than senior executives who might only be able to talk in more general terms. When making a request to a specific individual, the committee should consider the type of information it is seeking, the nature of the organisation in question and the authority’s pre-existing relationship with it.

**Following ‘the Council Pound’**

Scrutiny committees will often have a keen interest in ‘following the council pound’, i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services.

Authorities should recognise the legitimacy of this interest and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to scrutiny members and their support staff to obtain information from organisations the council has contracted to deliver services. In particular, when agreeing contracts with these bodies, authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a *requirement* for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees.

## 6. Planning Work

47. Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year.
48. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees' work to make best use of the total resources available.

### Being clear about scrutiny's role

49. Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction. While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects 'the area, or the area's inhabitants', authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary, which means that there might be things that, despite being important, scrutiny will not be able to look at.
50. Different overall roles could include having a focus on risk, the authority's finances, or on the way the authority works with its partners.
51. Applying this focus does not mean that certain subjects are 'off limits'. It is more about looking at topics and deciding whether their relative importance justifies the positive impact scrutiny's further involvement could bring.
52. When thinking about scrutiny's focus, members should be supported by key senior officers. The statutory scrutiny officer, if an authority has one, will need to take a leading role in supporting members to clarify the role and function of scrutiny, and championing that role once agreed.

### Who to speak to

53. Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:
  - *The public* – it is likely that formal 'consultation' with the public on the scrutiny work programme will be ineffective. Asking individual scrutiny members to have conversations with individuals and groups in their own local areas can work better. Insights gained from the public through individual pieces of scrutiny work can be fed back into the work programming process. Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results.

Authorities should consider how their communications officers can help scrutiny engage with the public, and how wider internal expertise and local knowledge from both members and officers might make a contribution.

- *The authority's partners* – relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful:
  - Public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers);
  - Voluntary sector partners;
  - Contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies);
  - In parished areas, town, community and parish councils;
  - Neighbouring principal councils (both in two-tier and unitary areas);
  - Cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships<sup>17</sup>; and
  - Others with a stake and interest in the local area – large local employers, for example.
  
- *The executive* – a principal partner in discussions on the work programme should be the executive (and senior officers). The executive should not direct scrutiny's work (see chapter 2), but conversations will help scrutiny members better understand how their work can be designed to align with the best opportunities to influence the authority's wider work.

#### Information sources

54. Scrutiny will need access to relevant information to inform its work programme. The type of information will depend on the specific role and function scrutiny plays within the authority, but might include:

- Performance information from across the authority and its partners;
- Finance and risk information from across the authority and its partners;
- Corporate complaints information, and aggregated information from political groups about the subject matter of members' surgeries;
- Business cases and options appraisals (and other planning information) for forthcoming major decisions. This information will be of particular use for pre-decision scrutiny; and
- Reports and recommendations issued by relevant ombudsmen, especially the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

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<sup>17</sup> Authorities should ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the effective democratic scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnerships' investment decisions.

As committees can meet in closed session, commercial confidentiality should not preclude the sharing of information. Authorities should note, however, that the default for meetings should be that they are held in public (see 2014 guidance on '*Open and accountable local government*':

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/343182/140812\\_Openness\\_Guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343182/140812_Openness_Guide.pdf)).

55. Scrutiny members should consider keeping this information under regular review. It is likely to be easier to do this outside committee, rather than bringing such information to committee 'to note', or to provide an update, as a matter of course.

### Shortlisting topics

Approaches to shortlisting topics should reflect scrutiny's overall role in the authority. This will require the development of bespoke, local solutions, however when considering whether an item should be included in the work programme, the kind of questions a scrutiny committee should consider might include:

- Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue?
- How could we best carry out work on this subject?
- What would be the best outcome of this work?
- How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?

56. Some authorities use scoring systems to evaluate and rank work programme proposals. If these are used to provoke discussion and debate, based on evidence, about what priorities should be, they can be a useful tool. Others take a looser approach. Whichever method is adopted, a committee should be able to justify how and why a decision has been taken to include certain issues and not others.

57. Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.

### Carrying out work

58. Selected topics can be scrutinised in several ways, including:

- a) **As a single item on a committee agenda** – this often presents a limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue;
- b) **At a single meeting** – which could be a committee meeting or something less formal. This can provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a

given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of witnesses;

- c) **At a task and finish review of two or three meetings** – short, sharp scrutiny reviews are likely to be most effective even for complex topics. Properly focused, they ensure members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less;
- d) **Via a longer-term task and finish review** – the ‘traditional’ task and finish model – with perhaps six or seven meetings spread over a number of months – is still appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. However, the resource implications of such work, and its length, can make it unattractive for all but the most complex matters; and
- e) **By establishing a ‘standing panel’** – this falls short of establishing a whole new committee but may reflect a necessity to keep a watching brief over a critical local issue, especially where members feel they need to convene regularly to carry out that oversight. Again, the resource implications of this approach means that it will be rarely used.

## 7. Evidence Sessions

59. Evidence sessions are a key way in which scrutiny committees inform their work. They might happen at formal committee, in less formal ‘task and finish’ groups or at standalone sessions.

Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.

### How to plan

60. Effective planning does not necessarily involve a large number of pre-meetings, the development of complex scopes or the drafting of questioning plans. It is more often about setting overall objectives and then considering what type of questions (and the way in which they are asked) can best elicit the information the committee is seeking. This applies as much to individual agenda items as it does for longer evidence sessions – there should always be consideration in advance of what scrutiny is trying to get out of a particular evidence session.

Chairs play a vital role in leading discussions on objective-setting and ensuring all members are aware of the specific role each will play during the evidence session.

61. As far as possible there should be consensus among scrutiny members about the objective of an evidence session before it starts. It is important to recognise that members have different perspectives on certain issues, and so might not share the objectives for a session that are ultimately adopted. Where this happens, the Chair will need to be aware of this divergence of views and bear it in mind when planning the evidence session.
62. Effective planning should mean that at the end of a session it is relatively straightforward for the chair to draw together themes and highlight the key findings. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to develop and agree recommendations immediately, but, unless the session is part of a wider inquiry, enough evidence should have been gathered to allow the chair to set a clear direction.
63. After an evidence session, the committee might wish to hold a short ‘wash-up’ meeting to review whether their objectives were met and lessons could be learned for future sessions.

### Developing recommendations

64. The development and agreement of recommendations is often an iterative process. It will usually be appropriate for this to be done only by members, assisted by co-optees where relevant. When deciding on recommendations, however, members should have due regard to advice received from officers, particularly the Monitoring Officer.

65. The drafting of reports is usually, but not always, carried out by officers, directed by members.
66. Authorities draft reports and recommendations in a number of ways, but there are normally three stages:
- i. the development of a 'heads of report' – a document setting out general findings that members can then discuss as they consider the overall structure and focus of the report and its recommendations;
  - ii. the development of those findings, which will set out some areas on which recommendations might be made; and
  - iii. the drafting of the full report.
67. Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.
68. Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.

Sharing draft recommendations with executive members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense-check.

# Annex 1: Illustrative Scenario – Creating an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol

An executive-scrutiny protocol can deal with the practical expectations of scrutiny committee members and the executive, as well as the cultural dynamics.

Workshops with scrutiny members, senior officers and Cabinet can be helpful to inform the drafting of a protocol. An external facilitator can help bring an independent perspective.

Councils should consider how to adopt a protocol, e.g. formal agreement at scrutiny committee and Cabinet, then formal integration into the Council's constitution at the next Annual General Meeting.

The protocol, as agreed, may contain sections on:

- The way scrutiny will go about developing its work programme (including the ways in which senior officers and Cabinet members will be kept informed);
- The way in which senior officers and Cabinet will keep scrutiny informed of the outlines of major decisions as they are developed, to allow for discussion of scrutiny's potential involvement in policy development. This involves the building in of safeguards to mitigate risks around the sharing of sensitive information with scrutiny members;
- A strengthening and expansion of existing parts of the code of conduct that relate to behaviour in formal meetings, and in informal meetings;
- Specification of the nature and form of responses that scrutiny can expect when it makes recommendations to the executive, when it makes requests to the executive for information, and when it makes requests that Cabinet members or senior officers attend meetings; and
- Confirmation of the role of the statutory scrutiny officer, and Monitoring Officer, in overseeing compliance with the protocol, and ensuring that it is used to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny, with matters relating to the protocol's success being reported to full Council through the scrutiny Annual Report.

## Annex 2: Illustrative Scenario – Engaging Independent Technical Advisers

This example demonstrates how one Council's executive and scrutiny committee worked together to scope a role and then appoint an independent adviser on transforming social care commissioning. Their considerations and process may be helpful and applicable in other similar scenarios.

Major care contracts were coming to an end and the Council took the opportunity to review whether to continue with its existing strategic commissioning framework, or take a different approach – potentially insourcing certain elements.

The relevant Director was concerned about the Council's reliance on a very small number of large providers. The Director therefore approached the Scrutiny and Governance Manager to talk through the potential role scrutiny could play as the Council considered these changes.

The Scrutiny Chair wanted to look at this issue in some depth, but recognised its complexity could make it difficult for her committee to engage – she was concerned it would not be able to do the issue justice. The Director offered support from his own officer team, but the Chair considered this approach to be beset by risks around the independence of the process.

She talked to the Director about securing independent advice. He was worried that an independent adviser could come with preconceived ideas and would not understand the Council's context and objectives. The Scrutiny Chair was concerned that independent advice could end up leading to scrutiny members being passive, relying on an adviser to do their thinking for them. They agreed that some form of independent assistance would be valuable, but that how it was provided and managed should be carefully thought out.

With the assistance of the Governance and Scrutiny Manager, the Scrutiny Chair approached local universities and Further Education institutions to identify an appropriate individual. The approach was clear – it set out the precise role expected of the adviser, and explained the scrutiny process itself. Because members wanted to focus on the risks of market failure, and felt more confident on substantive social care matters, the approach was directed at those with a specialism in economics and business administration. The Council's search was proactive – the assistance of the service department was drawn on to make direct approaches to particular individuals who could carry out this role.

It was agreed to make a small budget available to act as a 'per diem' to support an adviser; academics were approached in the first instance as the Council felt able to make a case that an educational institution would provide this support for free as part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Three individuals were identified from the Council's proactive search. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee had an informal discussion with each – not so much to establish their skills and expertise (which had already been assessed) but to give a sense about

their 'fit' with scrutiny's objectives and their political nous in understanding the environment in which they would operate, and to satisfy themselves that they will apply themselves even-handedly to the task. The Director sat in on this process but played no part in who was ultimately selected.

The independent advice provided by the selected individual gave the Scrutiny Committee a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and meant it was able to offer informed advice on the merits of putting in place a new strategic commissioning framework.

## Annex 3: Illustrative Scenario – Approaching an External Organisation to Appear before a Committee

This example shows how one council ensured a productive scrutiny meeting, involving a private company and the public. Lessons may be drawn and apply to other similar scenarios.

Concerns had been expressed by user groups, and the public at large, about the reliability of the local bus service. The Scrutiny Chair wanted to question the bus company in a public evidence session but knew that she had no power to compel it to attend. Previous attempts to engage it had been unsuccessful; the company was not hostile, but said it had its own ways of engaging the public.

The Monitoring Officer approached the company's regional PR manager, but he expressed concern that the session would end in a 'bunfight'. He also explained the company had put their improvement plan in the public domain, and felt a big council meeting would exacerbate tensions.

Other councillors had strong views about the company – one thought the committee should tell the company it would be empty-chaired if it refused to attend. The Scrutiny Chair was sympathetic to this, but thought such an approach would not lead to any improvements.

The Scrutiny Chair was keen to make progress, but it was difficult to find the right person to speak to at the company, so she asked council officers and local transport advocacy groups for advice. Speaking to those people also gave her a better sense of what scrutiny's role might be.

When she finally spoke to the company's network manager, she explained the situation and suggested they work together to consider how the meeting could be productive for the Council, the company and local people. In particular, this provided her with an opportunity to explain scrutiny and its role. The network manager remained sceptical but was reassured that they could work together to ensure that the meeting would not be an 'ambush'. He agreed in principle to attend and also provide information to support the Committee's work beforehand.

Discussions continued in the four weeks leading up to the Committee meeting. The Scrutiny Chair was conscious that while she had to work with the company to ensure that the meeting was constructive – and secure their attendance – it could not be a whitewash, and other members and the public would demand a hard edge to the discussions.

The scrutiny committee agreed that the meeting would provide a space for the company to provide context to the problems local people are experiencing, but that this would be preceded by a space on the agenda for the Chair, Vice-chair, and representatives from two local transport advocacy groups to set out their concerns. The company were sent in

advance a summary of the general areas on which members were likely to ask questions, to ensure that those questions could be addressed at the meeting.

Finally, provision was made for public questions and debate. Those attending the meeting were invited to discuss with each other the principal issues they wanted the meeting to cover. A short, facilitated discussion in the room led by the Chair highlighted the key issues, and the Chair then put those points to the company representatives.

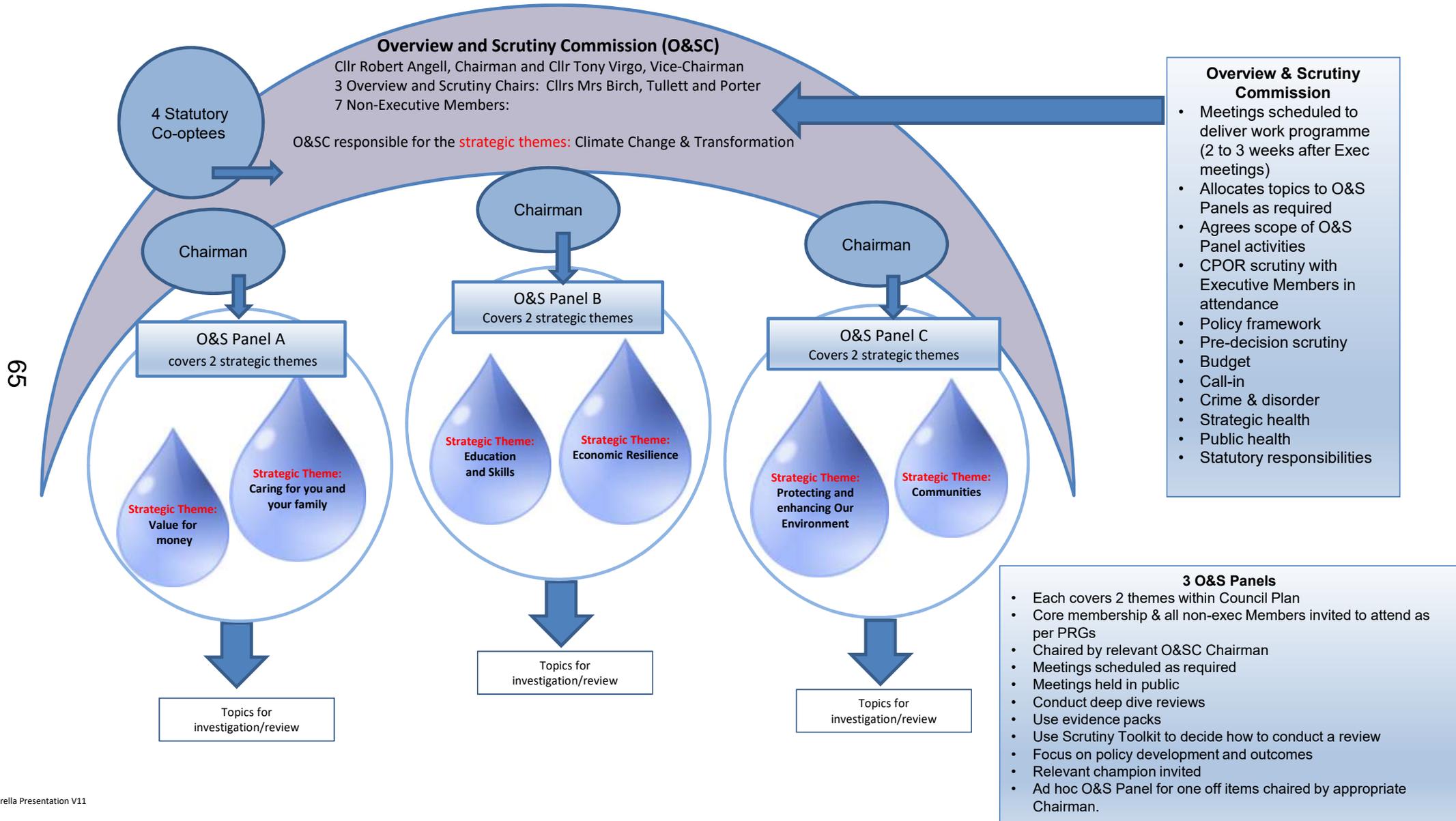
At the end of the meeting, the public asked questions of the bus company representative in a 20-minute plenary item.

The meeting was fractious, but the planning carried out to prepare for this – by channelling issues through discussion and using the Chair to mediate the questioning – made things easier. Some attendees were initially frustrated by this structure, but the company representative was more open and less defensive than might otherwise have been the case.

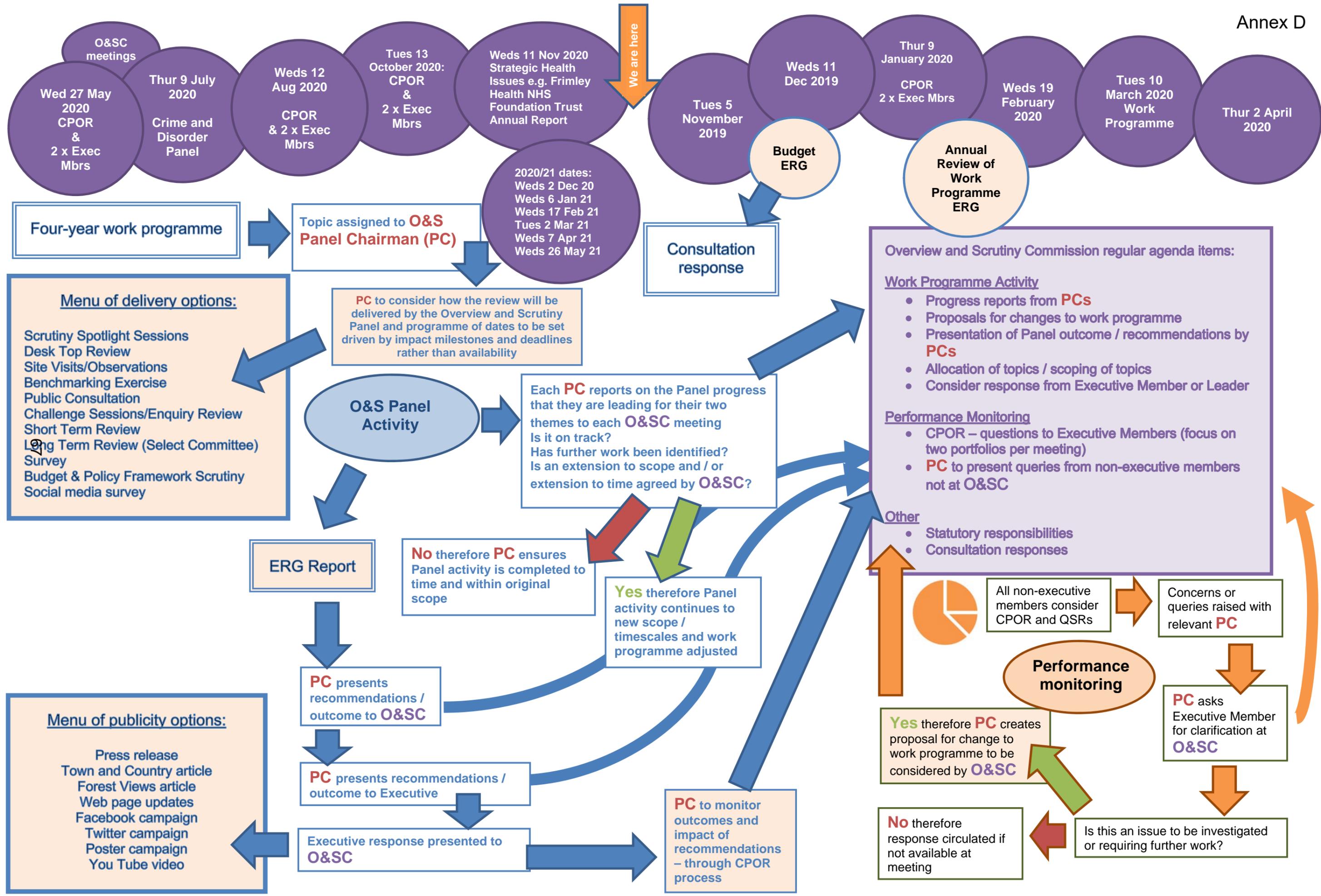
The meeting also motivated the company to revise its communications plan to become more responsive to this kind of challenge, part of which involved a commitment to feed back to the scrutiny committee on the recommendations it made on the night.

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**Overview and Scrutiny Commission (O&SC) and Overview and Scrutiny Panels (O&S Panels)**



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## 2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

2.1 The Council will appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Commission, to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and regulations made thereunder.

### 2.2 Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission shall:

- (i) ~~Develop a four-year strategic work programme aligned to the Council Plan following input from scrutiny members, the Executive, Corporate Management Team, partners and the public, ensuring that it is flexible enough to accommodate urgent short-term issues.~~
- (ii) ~~Co-ordinate the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels to make the best use of available resources which will include allocating topics to Panels and agreeing the scope of activity.~~
- (iii) ~~Commission Panels to undertake deep dive reviews and support focussed policy development, chaired by the relevant chairman or vice-chairman. Their size and duration will be dependent on the activity.~~
- (iv) ~~Receive findings and recommendations from Panel chairmen in respect of their Panel's scrutiny activity, for consideration and referral to the Executive or other decision-maker as appropriate.~~
- (v) ~~Prioritise scrutiny activity to ensure that the overview and scrutiny function concentrates on the delivery of work of genuine value and relevant to the work of the Council.~~
- (vi) ~~Discharge the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities.~~
- (vii) ~~Discharge strategic health responsibilities.~~
- (viii) ~~Manage call-in.~~
- (ix) ~~Review the policy framework.~~
- (x) ~~Scrutinise the budget proposals.~~
- (xi) ~~Hold the Executive to account for performance within the Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR).~~
- (i) ~~develop a work programme of overview and scrutiny reviews and policy development projects, in consultation with the Executive and the Corporate Management Team.~~
- (ii) ~~appoint a number of overview and scrutiny panels, managing and updating their work programme as necessary, including considering any request from an overview and scrutiny panel, or any Member thereof, to add an item to the work programme.~~
- (iii) ~~review decisions made, but not yet implemented, by the Executive and any other Committee, where these have been called-in.~~
- (iv) ~~itself, or through an overview and scrutiny panel:~~
  - ~~review and/or scrutinise decisions made, or actions taken, in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;~~
  - ~~consider any matter affecting the Borough or its inhabitants.~~

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~~(v) — Itsself, or through an Overview and Scrutiny Panel: make reports and/or recommendations to Council and/or the Executive and/or any other committee in connection with the discharge of any functions.~~

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~~(vi) — receive summary performance management information and question Members of the Executive and Officers thereon.~~

~~(vii) — ensure the efficient discharge of a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function.~~

~~(viii) — prepare and submit an annual report to the Council on overview and scrutiny activities and their outcomes.~~

### 2.3 Specific Functions

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~~(a) — **Policy Development and Review** – The Overview and Scrutiny Commission, through its Overview and Scrutiny Panels, may:~~

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~~(i) — assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;~~

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~~(ii) — conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of particular issues and possible options;~~

~~(iii) — consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;~~

~~(iv) — question members of the Executive, other committees and officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and~~

~~(v) — liaise with other external organisations operating in the area whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.~~

~~(b) — **Scrutiny** – The Overview and Scrutiny Commission may itself, or through an overview and scrutiny panel:~~

~~(i) — review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive, Committees and Council Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;~~

~~(ii) — review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;~~

~~(iii) — question members of the Executive, Committees and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;~~

~~(iv) — review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Commission or Panel and local people about their activities and performance; and~~

~~(v) — question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).~~

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~~and make recommendations to the Executive and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.~~

~~(c) **Finance** The Overview and Scrutiny Commission may exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them.~~

~~(xii) (e) **Officers**. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission may exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of any officers employed to support their work.~~

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### 3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

3.1 (a) The Overview and Scrutiny Commission shall establish such overview and scrutiny panels as it shall determine, currently including the following three panels:

- ~~Environment, Culture and Communities~~Education, Skills & Growth  
Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- ~~Adult Social Care, Health and Housing~~Environment & Communities  
Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- ~~Children, Young People and Learning~~Wellbeing & Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel

with terms of reference as set out below. The Commission may discontinue any overview and scrutiny panel and/or appoint alternative or additional panels, subject to there being a minimum of the three standing panels. The Commission may also amend the terms of reference of the panels as appropriate.

(b) Where the Overview and Scrutiny Commission seeks to discontinue or appoint overview and scrutiny panels other than as set out in the Constitution, it may do so provided that it has consulted with interested parties, if appropriate. Any change will be reported to the proper officer and then to the next meeting of the Council by the chairman of the Commission, so that the Constitution may be amended accordingly

### 3.2 Terms of Reference

The three above mentioned overview and scrutiny panels shall

- (i) ~~conduct focussed enquiries and deep dive reviews across a wide range of topics which support the delivery of the Council's objectives~~conduct scrutiny reviews or policy development projects approved ~~commissioned~~ by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission from an agreed work-programme ~~developed by the Panel~~, preparing such evidence-based reports and recommendations as it deems necessary.
- (ii) at the direction of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:
  - review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
  - consider any matter affecting the Borough or its residents or businesses.
- ~~(iii) have responsibility for performance monitoring activities such as:~~
  - ~~• to receive appropriate performance data reports on the work of the relevant Department~~
  - ~~• to question any relevant Executive portfolio holder and officers thereon.~~

- ~~to require reports on such topics / subjects in the departments remit as they deem necessary.~~

~~(iv)(iii)~~ Where appropriate refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission any such issues, arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process, that it considers should be reported to Council.

~~(v)~~ In addition the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel (ASCH&H) will:

- ~~undertake all the statutory functions of a scrutiny committee in accordance with Sections 244-246 (and regulations made under those sections) of the National Health Service Act 2006, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and subsequent legislation. The power to refer to the Secretary of State concerns over consultations regarding substantial development or variation in health services is reserved for Council decision.~~
- ~~through constructive challenge and accountability, work with the Executive, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Service Providers to help ensure good health services are provided to residents of Bracknell Forest, reducing health inequalities, and helping everyone to stay fit and lead healthy lives.~~
- ~~recommend to Council that it appoints representatives to the following committees as and when it deems appropriate:~~
  - ~~The Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.~~
  - ~~The Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Buckinghamshire County Council.~~

## SECTION 9 – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

### 1. General Arrangements

Overview and Scrutiny is the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission as described in Part 3 of the Constitution and the Council will appoint to it as it considers appropriate from time to time. The Commission shall appoint such overview and scrutiny panels as it determines, including those specified in Part 3 of the Constitution.

### 2. Who May Sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Bodies?

The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels will sit on the Overview & Scrutiny Commission. All councillors except members of the Executive may be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and/or one or more overview and scrutiny panels. However, no Member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved. Council may also make appointments of people other than councillors to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels, to meet statutory and other requirements. ~~This will include a representative of Local Healthwatch as an Observer on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.~~

### 3. Co-optees

The Commission and panels shall be entitled to appoint non-voting co-optees for the purpose of assisting with specific time limited reviews. Save for paragraph 9 references to "Members" in these rules shall be deemed not to include references to co-optees appointed pursuant to this Rule 3 or persons appointed pursuant to paragraph 4.

### 4.3. Education Representatives

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission ~~and the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel~~ shall include in their membership the following representatives:

- a) two voting parent governor representatives (one primary and one secondary) (Commission and Panel).
- b) two voting diocesan representatives (one Church of England and one Roman Catholic) (Commission and Panel).
- ~~c) one non-voting teacher representative (Panel only).~~
- ~~d) one non-voting children's social care representative (Panel only).~~

These voting powers of representatives appointed pursuant to (a) to (b) above shall apply only to matters which relate wholly or in part to any education function which is the responsibility of the Executive. However, the representatives may remain in the meeting and speak whilst other matters are under consideration.

### 5.4. Meetings

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- (a) ~~Six-Ten~~ ordinary meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission shall be held each year. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate. Meetings may be called by the chairman, or by the proper officer if he/she considers it necessary or appropriate.
- (b) Overview and scrutiny panels shall determine the frequency and time of their own meetings, according to the work programme set by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. Meetings may be called by the chairman, or by the proper officer if he/she considers it necessary or appropriate.

#### **6.5. Quorum**

The quorum for the Commission or for an overview and scrutiny panel shall be one quarter of the whole number of its members, provided that for a panel the quorum shall be at least three.

#### **7.6. Who Chairs Meetings?**

The chairmen of the Commission and panels will be drawn from among the councillors sitting on those bodies, and subject to this requirement the Commission/panel may appoint such a person as it considers appropriate.

#### **8.7. Work Programme**

- (a) The work programme for overview and scrutiny panels shall be set ~~every four years~~ annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission following consultation with the Executive and Senior Officers and will be reviewed at six monthly intervals.—In setting the work programme the Commission shall take into account the wishes of members who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.
- (b) The work programme shall identify topics for detailed consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels. Overview and scrutiny panels may recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at any time a proposed addition to the work programme. Requests for additions to the work programme may also be made by any other member of the Council, the Executive, officers and members of the public. The Commission shall only consider proposed additions to the work programme that clearly identify the issue to be investigated.
- (c) The Commission shall allocate projects from the work programme to the ~~service~~-themed overview and scrutiny panels having regard to their ~~service~~ Council Plan theme and shall allocate projects of a cross-cutting nature to any one of those overview and scrutiny panels, or to another panel at its discretion.
- (d) The Commission shall keep the work programme under review ~~throughout the year~~, making additions and adjustments as necessary and shall be responsible for ensuring effective consultation with the Executive on developments.

#### **9.8. Agenda items**

Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he/she wishes an item relevant to its functions and which is not an "excluded matter" (as defined

in regulations) to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Commission ~~or the panel (as the case may be)~~. If the item proposes an addition to the work programme it shall fulfil the conditions set out in 8 (b), above. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.

~~The Overview and Scrutiny Commission shall also respond, as soon as its work programme permits, to requests from the Council and, if it considers it appropriate, the Executive to review particular areas of Council activity.~~

#### 10. Councillor Call for Action

Any Member may refer ("the Councillor Call for Action") to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission ~~or one of its panels of which he is not a Member~~ a local government matter relevant to the functions of the Commission ~~or the panel~~ by the following procedure (in which event the provisions set out below shall apply):-

- (a) a Member wishing to invoke the Councillor Call for action shall specify to the Head of ~~Overview and Scrutiny~~Democratic & Registration Services the issue which the Member wishes to be considered
- (b) the Head of ~~Overview and Scrutiny~~Democratic & Registration Services shall record the issue and give notice thereof to the Chairman of the Commission ~~or the panel~~, the relevant Executive Member or Committee Chairman (as the case may be) and relevant Director
- (c) the Head of ~~Overview and Scrutiny~~Democratic & Registration Services shall convene a meeting with the Member who has raised the Councillor Call for Action, the relevant Executive Member or Committee Chairman, the Chairman of the Commission ~~or the panel~~ and the relevant Director (or his/her nominee) to ensure a full understanding of the issue, determine whether any exclusions apply and to explore the resolution which is sought by the Member
- (d) the Head of ~~Overview and Scrutiny~~Democratic & Registration Services shall convene a meeting of the Commission ~~or the panel~~, to be held within two months of the meeting referred to in (c) above if there is no meeting already scheduled.
- ~~(e) in the case of a Councillor Call for Action referred to a panel the panel shall submit to the Commission a report on the matter to the Commission advising whether or not the Commission should exercise any of its powers in relation to the matter and setting out any recommendations~~
- (f) if the Commission decides not to exercise any of its powers in relation to the matter it must give written notice to the Member of its decision and the reasons for it
- (g) if the Commission should make a report or recommendations to the Council or to the Executive on a matter it should (subject to paragraph 14 below) provide the Member with a copy of the report or recommendations
- (h) the Head of ~~Overview and Scrutiny~~Democratic & Registration Services shall include in the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny the number and nature of any Councillor Calls for Action and their outcome.

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In considering whether or not to exercise any of its powers the Commission ~~or the panel~~ may have regard to:-

- any powers which the Member may exercise in relation to the matter by virtue of Section 236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 or
- any representations made by the Member as to why it would be appropriate for the Commission ~~or the panel~~ to exercise any of its powers

“local government matters” means, in relation to a Member, a matter which:-

- relates to the discharge of any function of the Council (or the Executive)
- affects all or part of the Member’s Ward or any person who lives or works in that Ward, and
- is not an “excluded matter”

“Excluded Matter” means any matter which is a local crime and disorder matter (as defined in paragraph 15 below) or is of a description specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State

#### 11. Policy Review and Development

- a) The role of the Commission in relation to the development of the Council’s budget and policy framework is set out in detail in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- b) In relation to the development of the Council’s approach to other matters not forming part of its policy and budget framework, the Commission may make proposals to the Executive for developments, including considering and passing on to the Executive reports and recommendations from overview and scrutiny panels.
- c) Within the work programme determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, overview and scrutiny panels may hold enquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may ~~appoint~~ invite advisers and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses ~~a reasonable fee and~~ expenses for doing so.

#### 12. Reports and Recommendations

Other than pursuant to the Police and Justice Act 2006) a Panel ~~may formulate a report or recommendations it~~ shall submit ~~itself or through its findings and recommendations on a matter to~~ the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. If the Panel cannot agree a single final report, then up to one minority report may be prepared and submitted for consideration annexed to the majority report or to the recommendations. The Commission ~~or Panel~~ shall determine whether it wishes to submit a report on the matter to the Executive (if the proposals are consistent with

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the existing budgetary and policy framework), or to the Council, as appropriate (for example, if a recommendation would require a departure from or a change to the agreed budget and policy framework).

Where the Commission ~~or Panel~~ has published a report on recommendations it must by notice in writing require the Council or the Executive within two months of receiving the report or recommendations:-

- to consider the report or recommendations
- to respond to the Commission ~~or Panel~~ indicating what (if any) action is proposed to be taken
- publish the response
- if the report or recommendation is in response to a Councillor Call for Action provide the Member with a copy of the response

The provisions of paragraph 14 below shall apply to the publication of a report or recommendation and to the response of the Council or the Executive.

The Council or the Executive to whom such notice is given shall comply with the notice.

13. If a report or recommendations of the Commission ~~or Panel~~ relates to a local improvement target which:-
- relates to a relevant partner authority (unless the report or recommendations is made by virtue of Section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006 to an NHS Trust, NHS Foundation Trust or Primary Care Trust), and
  - is specified in the Council's current Local Area Agreement

the Commission ~~or Panel~~ may by notice in writing to the relevant partner authority require it to have regard to the report or recommendations in exercising their functions. The notice must be accompanied by a copy of the report or recommendations. "Partner Authority" does not include a police authority or chief officer of police.

#### 14. Confidential and Exempt Information

The following provisions apply to the publication of a report or recommendations of the Commission ~~or Panel~~, the publication of the response of the Council or the Executive and the provision of a copy of any such document to a Member pursuant to paragraph 10 and 12 above or to a relevant partner authority under paragraph 13 above.

The Commission ~~or Panel~~, the Council or the Executive in publishing the document or providing a copy to a relevant partner authority must exclude any confidential information and may exclude any relevant exempt information. The Commission ~~or Panel~~, the Council or the Executive in providing a copy of the document to a Member may exclude any relevant exempt information.

Where information is excluded the Commission ~~or Panel~~, the Council or the Executive may replace the information with a summary which does not disclose that

information and **must** do so, if in consequence of excluding the information the document would be misleading or not readily comprehensible.

#### 15. Community Call for Action

Any Member may refer a local crime and disorder matter to the Commission ~~or Panel~~ designated by the Council's Constitution as being the Crime and Disorder Committee. The procedures set out in paragraph 10 shall apply to the Community Call for Action. Where the Crime and Disorder Committee make a report or recommendations to the Council it must provide a copy of the same:-

- to the Member who made the reference, and
- to such of the responsible authorities and the co-operating persons and bodies as it considers appropriate

"local crime and disorder matter" in relation to a Member means a matter concerning:-

- (a) crime and disorder (including in particular forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), or
- (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

which affects all or part of the Members Ward or any person who lives or works in that Ward.

#### 16. Response to Proposed Key Decisions

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission will have access to the Executive's forward plan and timetable for decisions and intentions for consultation. ~~Even where an item is not the subject of detailed proposals from an overview and scrutiny panel following a consideration of possible policy/service developments, T~~the Commission will, at its discretion, be able to respond in the course of the Executive's consultation process in relation to any Key Decision.

#### 17. Rights of Overview and Scrutiny Members to Documents

- a) In addition to their rights as councillors, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and overview and scrutiny panels have (subject to paragraph 14) the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.
- b) Nothing in this paragraph prevents more detailed liaison between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission as appropriate depending on the particular matter under consideration.

#### 18. Members and Officers Giving Account

- a) The Overview and Scrutiny Commission ~~and overview and scrutiny panels~~ may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council function, ~~where in the case of a panel this falls within its remit~~. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the scrutiny

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role, it may require any member of the Executive, the head of paid service and/or any senior officer to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:

- I. any particular decision or series of decisions;
- II. the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
- III. their performance.

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

- b) Where any Member or officer is required to attend a meeting under this provision, the chairman of that body will inform the proper officer. The proper officer shall inform the Member or officer in writing giving at least five working days notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the meeting. Where the account to be given to the Commission ~~or panel~~ will require the production of a report, then the Member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.
- c) Where, in exceptional circumstances, the Member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Commission or panel shall in consultation with the Member or officer arrange an alternative date for attendance (to take place within a maximum of ten days from the date of the original request).

#### 19. Attendance by Others

The Commission ~~or panel~~ may invite people other than those people referred to in paragraph 18 above to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and shall invite such people to attend. Panels may invite a range of people to give evidence for reviews they are undertaking.

#### 20. Call-in

- a) When a decision is made by the Executive, an individual member of the Executive or a committee of the Executive, or a Key Decision is made by an officer with delegated authority from the Executive, or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the main offices of the Council normally within two working days of being made. The chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission ~~and overview and scrutiny panels~~ will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.
- b) The notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 5 working days after the date the decision is published, unless the decision is called in as described below.

- c) During the period, the proper officer may call-in a decision for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission if so requested by the chairman and any 2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, or any 5 Members of the Council and shall then notify the decision-maker and all other Executive members of the call-in, a Member requesting a call-in shall provide the proper officer with a brief written summary of their reasons for the request, and insofar as they are able to do so, briefly set out what action arising from the call-in they wish to be taken. The proper officer shall call a meeting of the Commission on such date as he/she may determine, where possible after consultation with the Commission chairman, and in any case be held as soon as reasonably practical but in any event within fifteen working days of the decision to call-in.
- d) For the purposes of this section, where the decision relates to the exercise of an education function, the duly appointed diocesan representatives and parent governor representatives shall have the same rights to seek or support the calling-in of a decision as any other member of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
- e) If, having considered the decision, the Commission is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council. If referred back the decision maker shall then reconsider within a further 7 working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.
- f) If following an objection to the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission does not meet in the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body or to the Council, the decision shall take effect on the date of the meeting, or the expiry of the period in which the meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.
- g) If the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of an Executive decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was made by the Executive, as a whole or a committee of it, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 7 working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 5 working days of the Council request.
- h) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.
- i) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being made by the Executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely

Last updated: February 2015 – Part 4: Section 9

to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public, shall state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Mayor must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor's consent shall be required. In the absence of both, the head of paid service or his/her nominee's consent shall be required. Decisions made as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

- j) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

## 21. The Party Whip

When considering any matter in respect of which a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission or an overview and scrutiny panel is subject to a party whip the Member must declare the existence of the whip, and the nature of it, before the commencement of the Commission's/panel's deliberations on the matter. The declaration, and the detail of the whipping arrangements, shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## 22. Procedure at overview and scrutiny meetings

- (a) The Overview and Scrutiny Commission ~~and overview and scrutiny panels~~ shall consider the following business:
  - i) minutes of the last meeting;
  - ii) declarations of interest (including whipping declarations);
  - iii) submissions arising through the Overview and Scrutiny Public Participation Scheme;
  - iv) ~~(Commission only)~~ consideration of any matter referred to the Commission for a decision in relation to call-in of a decision;
  - v) responses of the Executive to Overview and Scrutiny reports; and
  - vi) the business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.
- (b) Where an overview and scrutiny panel conducts investigations (e.g. with a view to policy development), it may also ask people to attend to give evidence at its meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:
  - i) that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the panel be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
  - ii) that those assisting the panel by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and

- iii) that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.
- (c) Following any investigation or review, the Commission or panel may prepare a report and make recommendations, and subject to the requirements of the Constitution on confidential and exempt information, shall make its reports and findings public.'

**23. Matters within the Remit of More than One Panel**

In the event of an issue for review by an overview and scrutiny panel falling within the remit of more than one panel, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission shall determine which overview and scrutiny panel shall consider the matter.

**24. Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Overview and Scrutiny Panels shall be as set out in Article 6 of the Constitution.

To: **Overview & Scrutiny Commission**  
**5 November 2019**

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## **Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2019 - 2023** **Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report asks the Overview & Scrutiny Commission to agree a work programme for the next four years.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Commission agrees a work programme for the next four years.
- 2.2 That the Commission agrees its own work programme as set out in Appendix D noting that there will be regular items for consideration which are not included in the work programme.
- 2.3 That the dates for Commission meetings are agreed as set out in paragraph 5.11.

### **3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To agree an overview & scrutiny work programme, including the scope and timing for all scrutiny activities aligned to the Council Plan ensuring that it is flexible enough to accommodate urgent short-term issues.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 One of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission's key roles is to undertake focussed work programming in order to ensure that scrutiny activity contributes effectively to the Council Plan objectives.
- 5.2 In preparation for the implementation of the proposed changes to the overview & scrutiny arrangements and the development of a work programme, the previous Panels identified a number of topics that they believed required further investigation by overview & scrutiny. Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Executive were also asked to identify items that they would like overview and scrutiny to consider. All of these topics were collected into a 'bucket list' of ideas.
- 5.3 All topics received were reviewed at a meeting of the Commission, Executive and CMT on 24 September 2019. There were a number of items that were proposed by scrutiny members and the Executive and CMT.
- 5.4 Following the joint meeting the Commission Chairman asked the Overview & Scrutiny Panel Chairmen to work with their Panels to identify their four top priority topics for consideration in the first 18 months.
- 5.5 A proforma was developed by the overview & scrutiny team in consultation with the Commission chairman that aimed to capture all the information the Commission would require to determine whether to agree items for the work programme and, if

so, their priority. A proforma for each topic has been developed by the relevant Member for at least the top four topics.

- 5.6 The priority list for each Panel is set out in Appendix A. The relevant proformas are set out in Appendix B. Appendix C sets out a draft programme as a basis for discussion, based on the Panels' priorities.
- 5.7 A Member, officer or member of the public can suggest a topic for inclusion in the work programme. They will be required to complete and submit a proforma to the overview & scrutiny team. The team will support completion of the form. It is intended that the form will be available online.
- 5.8 A report will be presented to the Commission at its next available meeting, to consider any requests received. The Commission may decide to amend the work programme to incorporate the new piece of work taking into account the impact on any other scrutiny work.
- 5.9 The Panel Chairmen will be required to report progress for each of their reviews at Commission meetings. They will require the Commission's agreement to make changes to the scope of the work and to the deadline for the final report to the Commission. In agreeing to any extensions for completion of the work, the Commission will take into account the impact on other scrutiny activity.
- 5.10 Delivery of the work programme will be reviewed by the Commission at least six-monthly.

#### *Overview & Scrutiny Commission Schedule of Meetings*

- 5.11 Commission meetings will be scheduled 10 times a year. The proposed dates for the remainder of this and the next Municipal Year are:
  - Wed 11 December 2019
  - Thurs 9 January 2020
  - Wed 19 Feb 2020
  - Tues 10 Mar 2020
  - Thurs 2 April 2020
  - Wed 27 May 2020
  - Thurs 9 July 2020
  - Wed 12 Aug 2020
  - Tues 13 Oct 2020
  - Wed 11 Nov 2020
  - Wed 2 Dec 2020
  - Wed 6 Jan 2021
  - Wed 17 Feb 2021
  - Tues 2 Mar 2021
  - Wed 7 April 2021
  - Wed 26 May 2021
- 5.12 The agreed dates will be included in the schedule of meeting to be considered at Council on 27 November.
- 5.13 The Commission work programme is set out in Appendix D. This does not include regular items such as reports from Panel Chairmen on progress of their reviews and requests for new topics to be included in the work programme.

## **7 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### Financial Advice

7.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### Other Consultation Responses

7.3 These are included in this report.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

7.4 Not required for this report.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.5 Effective scrutiny is important to the successful functioning of local democracy by securing the efficient delivery of Council services and driving improvements. A robust work programme is essential in order to ensure that overview and scrutiny activity contributes successfully to the work of the Council. Poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and/or service failure.

### Background Papers

None

### Contact for further information

Ann Moore, Democratic & Registration Services - 01344 352260  
Ann.moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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## O&amp;S Panel Priorities

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</b>	<b>Panel A = Wellbeing and Finance</b>	<b>Panel B = Education, Skills and Growth</b>	<b>Panel C = Environment and Communities</b>
<b>Budget Scrutiny</b>	<b>Isolation and Loneliness</b> Caring for you and your family	<b>Careleavers</b> Education and Skills	<b>Burials</b> Communities
<b>Climate Change</b> <i>(proforma to be developed)</i>	<b>Healthy eating, activity and exercise</b> Caring for you and your family	<b>SEND</b> Education and Skills	<b>Housing Allocation Policy</b> Communities
<b>Strategic Health - Frimley Healthcare Foundation Trust Strategic Plan</b>	<b>Primary Care Networks</b> Value for money	<b>County Lines</b> Communities and Education and Skills	<b>Food Waste</b> Protecting and enhancing our environment
	<b>Digital Access</b> Value for money	<b>Apprentices</b> Education and Skills	<b>Residential Parking</b> Protecting and enhancing our environment
	<b>Mental Health</b> Caring for you and your family <i>(proforma to be developed)</i>	<b>CIL</b> Economic resilience <i>(proforma to be developed)</i>	<b>Integrated Enforcement</b> Protecting and enhancing our environment
	<b>Unsafe discharge</b> Value for money <i>(proforma to be developed)</i>	<b>Governors</b> Education and Skills <i>(proforma to be developed)</i>	<b>Topic TBC</b> TBC
	<b>Topic TBC</b> TBC	<b>Topic TBC</b> TBC	<b>Topic TBC</b> TBC

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## Overview and Scrutiny Commission

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

Budget

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

Overview and Scrutiny undertake financial scrutiny to provide a reality check on budgets and financial plans prior to their approval. This involves challenging how resources are allocated and ensure there are clear links between budget setting and strategic/operational plans.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

The budget proposals with particular focus on:

- \* are they appropriate for the council?
- \* do they fit within the council's priorities?
- \* do they reflect the needs of local people?
- \* are they legal?
- \* are they affordable and prudent?

**What is to be achieved?**

Overview and Scrutiny have added value to the process by considering the impact of the proposals within the difficult financial context. Ensuring every pound of budget counts in terms of maximising service outcomes is essential in local government and should be a focus for scrutiny work. For example, it is better to ask whether the proposed budget is sufficient to fund the level of service planned for the year rather than asking why £x has been cut from a service budget.

'- To provide an informed response to the consultation on the draft budget for consideration by the Executive. The response should explain which proposals are not supported and suggest alternative solutions to pressure or savings proposals.

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Value for money

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Executive

**Time Constraints**

Feb-20

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Whole Council

**Which team is affected?**

Each directorate is potentially affected by the budget proposals

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Scrutiny Spotlight Sessions

## Overview & Scrutiny Commission agenda item

<b>Review title:</b>	Frimley Foundation Trust Strategic Plan
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)</b>	Discharge responsibility for holding the Health Service to account
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	- Review of the Trust's strategic plan and annual report (evidence pack and OSC meeting) '- understand the potential impact on Bracknell Forest residents '- understand the financial implications for BFC of the place based approach '- Make recommendations to the Trust and/or Executive member as appropriate
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Holding the Frimley Foundation NHS Trust to account
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Caring for you and your family
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Time Constraints</b>	11 December O&S Commission TBC
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Challenge Sessions/Enquiry Review

## **Panel A**

### **Wellbeing and Finance**

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	Isolation & Loneliness
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input?</b>	<p>The Council does not currently have a policy on dealing with issues affecting isolation and loneliness in Bracknell Forest, particularly elderly and vulnerable residents.</p> <p>To Contribute to the development of a policy on isolation and loneliness by focussing on the elderly cohort where there is a known significant issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'- Scrutinise current data (evidence pack)</li> <li>'- Identify impact on the most vulnerable people including mental health (evidence pack)</li> <li>'- Scrutinise work of the Bracknell Forest Community Network</li> <li>'- Review case studies (OSP meeting)</li> <li>'- Seek views of AD: Adult Social Care, AD: Mental Health, AD: Early Help &amp; Communities</li> <li>'- Make recommendations for future activities as appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Contribute to the development of a policy for Isolation and Loneliness Recommendations on future activity as appropriate
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Caring for you and your family
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Time Constraints</b>	None
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Adult Social Care/Mental Health/Early Help & Communities
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Short Term Review

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	Healthy Eating, Activity and Exercise
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)</b>	To contribute to the Council Plan and in response to an observed underperformance in the Q1 QSR 4.3.07
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	To contribute to and provide effective input into the development of a weight management strategy by: '- Investigating the emphasis given to physical activity and weight management services '- Reviewing the role of Leisure Services '- Investigating the links between physical health and mental health '- Reviewing opportunities for joint working
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Providing effective input into the development of a Weight Management Strategy
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Caring for you and your family
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Time Constraints</b>	January/February 2020 - Strategy to be agreed in April 2020
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Public Health
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Short Term Review

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

PCNs - impact on Bracknell Forest Council and residents of the introduction of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with particular focus on adult mental health

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

With the introduction of primary care networks (PCNs), there is an opportunity to identify overlapping and shared services where duplications might be obviated and where early intervention will improve services and provide value for money for residents, with particular focus on adult mental health.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

Impact on Bracknell Forest Council and residents of the introduction of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with particular focus on adult mental health  
'- Identify PCN funding streams (evidence pack)  
'- scrutinise the impact on adult mental health and identify opportunities for early intervention (evidence pack)  
'- review BF Community Network (BFCN) (evidence pack/evidence sessions)  
'- Input into proposals for the transformation of Mental Health  
'- seek views of AD: ASC, AD: Mental Health, AD: Early Help & Communities

**What is to be achieved?**

TBA

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Value for money

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

**Time Constraints**

None

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

People

**Which team is affected?**

Adult Mental Health, Early Help & Communities

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Long Term Review (Select Committee)

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

Digital Access

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

Digital access to services is the most efficient and cost-effective route to deliver services. Having made significant investments in to the council's website and IT services, reviewing what is working well and how to build on this success is now required for the next phase of development.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

- To review the current range and depth of BFC services available electronically  
'- To comment upon the current range of services available via digital channels and make recommendations on where the council should be making new investments into these channels.  
'- To make recommendations as to what should be included in the next versions of the IT Strategy and Customer Experience Strategy to achieve the objective of greater digital access.  
'- To compare this range of electronic services to other (the best and leading councils) and other service delivery organisations and match these to the needs of different user demographics.

**What is to be achieved?**

To comment upon the current range of services available via digital channels and make recommendations on where the council should be making new investments into this channel. What should be included in the next versions of the IT Strategy and Customer Experience Strategy to achieve the objective of greater digital access.

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Value for money

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

**Time Constraints**

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Delivery

**Which team is affected?**

Customer Experience

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Site Visits/Observations

## **Panel B**

### **Education, Skills and Growth**

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	Review of the impact of accommodation and support on the educational attainment and skills of young people leaving care.
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)</b>	In response to attainment data for care leavers scrutiny wants to investigate factors affecting this to inform the Care Leavers Strategy.
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review policy for young people leaving care (include in evidence pack)</li><li>'- Review Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel data incl NEETS (include in evidence pack)</li><li>'- Review MiME data regarding care leavers and educational opportunities (include in evidence pack)</li><li>'- Seek views of care leavers, accommodation providers by visiting accommodation</li><li>'- Seek views of post 16 education providers and social workers (evidence gathering session)</li><li>'- Seek views of Executive Member:CYPL, AD:Education &amp; Learning, AD:Commissioning at OSP meet</li><li>'- Consider issues care leavers face (evidence pack and evidence gathering sessions)</li><li>'- Look at best practice in other areas (include in evidence pack)</li></ul> <p>Out of scope - transition.</p>
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Inform the refresh of the Council's care leavers' strategy/policy for the Council
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Education and skills
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Time Constraints</b>	None
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Education and Learning/CSC/Commissioning/Mental Health
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Short Term Review
	<p>One day session.</p> <p><b>Morning</b> - members visit accommodation (Holly House) for approx 1 hour <b>Afternoon (public)</b> - evidence gathering session with Post 16 provider, social worker, AD:Commissioning AD: Mental Health <b>OSP meeting (6-8pm)(public)</b> - Chairman to feedback from earlier sessions/questions to Executive Member:CYPL and relevant ADs or Director/formulation of findings/recommendations</p>

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	SEND - scrutiny of support provided by the Council to Governing Bodies in respect of the exclusion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (Optional)</b>	Identification of where support can be provided to governing bodies to address issue of number of exclusions of children and young people with SEND.  - Review the SEND strategy regarding exclusions (evidence pack) '- Review data regarding exclusions of children and young people with SEND (evidence pack) '- Review support and guidance provided by the Council (evidence pack) '- Review implementation of recommendations from the Pupil Premium review and their impact on this issue (evidence pack) '- Seek views of Executive Member:CYPL, AD: Education & Learning (OSP meeting)
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Make recommendations to the Executive to respond to the identification of any gaps within the SEND strategy in respect of this issue.
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Education and skills
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Time Constraints</b>	None
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Education and Learning
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Short Term Review

# Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	County Lines - scrutiny of the effectiveness of current activities aimed at educating the public about County Lines issues
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)</b>	
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review communication methods and interaction including impact of County Lines Week (evidence pack and viewing youth crime theatre play)</li><li>'- Review data, how it's produced, what it tells us and whether it reflects known youth crime issues (evidence pack and evidence gathering activity)</li><li>'- Identify concerns of children and young people (evidence gathering activity)</li><li>'- Review attendance and exclusion rates (evidence pack)</li><li>'- Seek views of Executive Member:Culture, Delivery &amp; Public Protection, Executive Member: CYPL, AD:Education and Learning, AD:Children's Social Care, Head of Community Safety, TVP officer * PCSOs (OSP meeting)</li></ul>
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Analysis of effectiveness and impact of current activities and whether best use is made of the community to address/highlight this issue. Recommendations to be made to the Executive regarding future activities.
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Communities
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection
<b>Time Constraints</b>	None
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Community Safety/CSC/Education & Learning
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Short Term Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Evidence gathering activity - councillors asked to spend 1 hour in their Ward between 3.30 and 4.30pm speaking to parents, young people, shop keepers, residents re issues, concerns, impact of County Lines/Knife Crime Week</li><li>(ii) Panel meeting to question officers/Police and agree findings/recommendations</li></ul>

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review title:</b>	Post 16 offer/Apprenticeships
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input?</b>	
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Desk top analysis of post 16 education opportunities in the Borough</li><li>•Desk top analysis of apprenticeships in the Borough</li><li>•Benchmark against comparator authorities</li><li>•Visit settings to talk to providers and young people</li></ul>
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	Inform the post 16 and apprenticeship offer in the Borough
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Education and skills
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Time Constraints</b>	
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	People
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Education and Learning/CSC
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Challenge Sessions/Enquiry Review

## **Panel C**

### **Environment and Communities**

## Work Programme Proposal

<b>Review Title</b>	Burial Choices
<b>Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)</b>	<p>There is a wider variety, and greater freedoms, for funeral and burial choices than ever before. With the lack of current provision within BFC, an options appraisal of how to now meet this need is required. As clients move away from the traditional options, ensuring that any new provision is future proofed to meeting these changing client requirements, but within the resources that the council has available, needs to be investigated and options brought forward.</p> <p>- Review the current client requirements for funeral and burial.          '- Produce projections to determine client needs over the next 20 years.          '- Assess how to meet projected needs to include guidance and direction for the council for investment options, given the council's limited financial resources and access to suitable burial locations within the borough.          The options to review are: Traditional funeral, Cremation, Green and woodland funerals, Humanist and civic funerals, any others (new and emerging options).</p>
<b>Scope</b> <i>(What exactly needs to be looked at?)</i>	<p>Advice to the Executive on what options to invest into and recommendations on how to ensure that BFC continues to provide an excellent service, within the resources the council has available.</p>
<b>What is to be achieved?</b>	
<b>Council theme</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Communities
<b>Decision maker</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Executive
<b>Time Constraints</b>	There is no specific time constraint on this review. An Executive decision will be taken before Christmas 2019. Scrutiny input will be required from early to mid 2020.
<b>Portfolio holder</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection
<b>Directorate</b> <i>(Select one option from drop down list)</i>	Delivery
<b>Which team is affected?</b>	Cemetery & Crematorium
<b>Delivery method</b> <i>(select one option from drop down list)</i>	Mixture of Spotlight Sessions, benchmarking and site visits/observations
<b>Are there any costs associated with completing this review?</b>	None identified

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

Housing Allocations Policy

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input?**

To contribute to the policy relating to the allocation of social housing within the Borough.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

To review the Bracknell Forest Council social housing allocations policy within the context of:

- Current legal prioritisation guidelines
- Public consultation responses to the allocations policy principles
- Council plan 2019 - 2023 priorities

**What is to be achieved?**

To contribute to the development of an evidence based, sustainable social housing allocations policy that responds to local needs to ensure the local housing stock is utilised to maximum benefit.

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Communities

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

**Time Constraints**

Jan 2022. This is when the evidence to inform the consultation will be available and departmental work can begin.

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

People

**Which team is affected?**

Sarah Gee, Housing

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Long Term Review (Select Committee)

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title**

Food Waste Implementation - Flats and houses in multiple occupation

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

In the implementation of the new service, the Executive seeks input to the strategy for implementing Food Waste collections to non-doorstep properties

Food Waste collection services implementation to flats, blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMO)s has proven to be more difficult than domestic/residential property.

'- Review differing approaches to food waste collection from HMO properties by other Councils

'- Make recommendations for the type of scheme that would be most successful relating to HMO properties in Bracknell.

'- Make recommendations for what can be done to drive adoption of the recommended scheme for HMO properties

'- Make recommendations as to what the service should do to reduce the risk of "contamination" of this new waste stream for these property types.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

Key points from the learning from others who have implemented this type of scheme for these types of properties. Plus points to consider as part of developing an implementation plan.

**What is to be achieved?**

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Protecting and enhancing our environment

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Executive

**Time Constraints**

There is no timing deadline on this review. This enquiry will not feed into an Executive decision. The review needs to feed into the phase 2 deliverable due after 2020, perhaps March / April 2021

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE, Executive Member for the Environment

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Delivery

**Which team is affected?**

Waste and Recycling

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Mixture of Spotlight Sessions, benchmarking and site visits/observations

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

Residential Parking

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

Investigate practical solutions that could be put in place to help ease parking pressures in residential areas within the borough

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

The Council currently undertakes a number of programmes and implements schemes to help improve parking within residential areas. This includes working with Silva Homes on the delivery of additional parking bays, the ability to apply for residential crossovers to enable off street parking, parking enforcement and a residential permit scheme to protect residents from inappropriate parking in and around Bracknell Town Centre. Other matters of concern are issues such as pavement parking, verge parking, and the use condition and usability of garage courts, particularly in the new town neighbourhoods. These matters need to be considered in the context of the powers that the Council has in this regard.

'- What is currently working and should continue?

'- What needs to be changed or stopped?

'- What alternative initiatives should be explored with clear identification of who should take forward any suggested options

**What is to be achieved?**

Review that the current approach is sound, identification of new or alternative initiatives, stronger partnership working with Silva Homes, consideration of any financial impact of alternative approaches.

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Protecting and enhancing our environment

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Executive

**Time Constraints**

No specific time constraint at this time

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Places

**Which team is affected?**

Highways and Transport, Planning, Contract Services

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Long Term Review (Select Committee)

## Work Programme Proposal

**Review title:**

Integrated Enforcement

**Why are you asking for scrutiny's input? (optional)**

The council has many place based enforcement and regulatory powers, given to it by statute, to protect and enhance the environment. However, statute allows the council to take on further powers or extend these to other agencies / services of the council, upon application. This can mean that where an issue becomes one that the public think that the council should use its enforcement powers, either the council hasn't applied to take on that power or the location that the problem is, the council hasn't applied for the order necessary to enforce in that area. So, the question to address is what discretionary powers should the council take on, what council area wide orders should be applied for and which enforcement officers should be given wider powers under these new powers.

**Scope**

*(What exactly needs to be looked at?)*

- To review which councils have successfully taken on additional place-based enforcement powers and which have been the most successful in addressing the environmental, anti-social, quality of life objectives required by their communities.  
'- To review the current list of available powers and the rationale for why the council has taken on its current list.  
'- To review the range and locations where the council currently has powers of enforcement and to make recommendations to the Executive on what extensions should be applied for, and for which Officers.  
'- To ensure that any recommendation of the extension of powers, doesn't increase the overall costs of enforcement.

**What is to be achieved?**

Recommendations on which additional, place based enforcement powers the council should taken on and what borough wide orders should be sort

**Council theme**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Protecting and enhancing our environment

**Decision maker**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Executive

**Time Constraints**

**Portfolio holder**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

**Directorate**

*(Select one option from drop down list)*

Delivery

**Which team is affected?**

PPP

**Delivery method**

*(select one option from drop down list)*

Mixture of Spotlight Sessions, benchmarking and site visits/observations

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## DRAFT O&amp;S Work programme: November 2019 – April 2023

<b>To be commenced in 2019 – 2020</b>	
Healthy eating, activity and exercise	Wellbeing and Finance
Care leavers	Education, Skills and Growth
Burials	Environment and Communities
SEND	Education, Skills and Growth
Isolation and Loneliness	Wellbeing and Finance
<b>To be commenced in 2020 – 2021</b>	
Food Waste	Environment and Communities
County Lines	Education, Skills and Growth
Digital Access	Wellbeing and Finance
Residential Parking	Environment and Communities
Apprentices	Education, Skills and Growth
Primary Care Networks	Wellbeing and Finance
<b>To be commenced in 2021 – 2022</b>	
Integrated Enforcement	Environment and Communities
CIL	Education, Skills and Growth
Housing Allocation Policy	Environment and Communities
Governors	Education, Skills and Growth

<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Wellbeing and Finance</b>
<b>Topic TBC</b>	<b>Environment and Communities</b>
<b>Unsafe discharge</b>	<b>Wellbeing and Finance</b>
<b>Topic TBC</b>	<b>Education, Skills and Growth</b>
<b>Topic TBC</b>	<b>Environment and Communities</b>
<b>Topic TBC</b>	<b>Wellbeing and Finance</b>
<b>To be commenced in 2022 – 23</b>	
<b>Evaluation of work programme</b>	<b>Wellbeing and Finance</b>
<b>Evaluation of work programme</b>	<b>Education, Skills and Growth</b>
<b>Evaluation of work programme</b>	<b>Environment and Communities</b>

## Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Updated 24.10.2019

Meeting / activity dates	Items to be considered	Attendees
5 November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny Arrangements</li> <li>Work programme</li> </ul>	Kevin Gibbs (SSO)
11 December Activity Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Scrutiny activity TBC</li> </ul>	Cllr Heydon, Portfolio Holder Stuart McKellar, Borough Treasurer
9 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> <li>Budget consultation response</li> </ul>	Councillors Bettison and Heydon TBC Stuart McKellar, BT
19 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime &amp; Disorder Panel</li> </ul>	Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable TBC
10 March Activity Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate Change activity</li> </ul>	Kevin Gibbs, Executive Director
2 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of work programme</li> </ul>	
27 May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> </ul>	Councillors Dr Barnard and Birch TBC
9 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime &amp; Disorder Panel</li> </ul>	Thames Valley Police representatives and Community Safety Partnership TBC
12 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> </ul>	
13 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> </ul>	Councillors Mrs Hayes MBE and Turrell
11 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frimley Health NHS Trust Annual reports</li> </ul>	Frimley Park Health Trust reps TBC
2 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of work programme</li> </ul>	

6 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> </ul>	Councillors Brunel-Walker and Harrison
17 February		
2 March		
7 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of work programme</li> </ul>	
26 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPOR &amp; 2 exec Members</li> </ul>	TBC