

TO: COUNCIL
25 APRIL 2018

2017/18 ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Commission to submit an annual report to the Council on overview and scrutiny activities and their outcomes. The attached report informs Members of progress made in respect of the operation and development of Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2017/18. The Commission recommends that Council adopts the report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the 2017/18 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted;**
- 2.2 **That the Constitution be amended to reflect the changes referred to in paragraph 5.4 as set out in Appendix A; and**
- 2.3 **That the commitment, role and value of the Overview and Scrutiny function be acknowledged and that non-executive Members continue to be supported in their role.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the Constitution.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Structure of Overview and Scrutiny

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission formed a Working Group consisting of members from both the Adult Social Care and Housing and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panels to consider whether combining the work of the two panels would be logical, beneficial and more effective and then the logistics of such a merger.
- 5.2 Once the principle of merging the panels was agreed the Working Group considered the logistics of the new Panel and proposed that:
- the new panel should be called Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - it should be effective from the start of the municipal year
 - the panel size should increase from nine to 12 members
 - it should retain the existing co-option and Healthwatch role
 - it should increase the number of meetings to six per year
 - the new panel should determine its work programme once formed

- an induction process should be undertaken to support the new panel to become effective
- a review should be undertaken after a year to ensure that it was fit for purpose

5.3 As set out in the Constitution at Part 3, Section 3 relating to Overview and Scrutiny Panels 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 would then 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.

5.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission supported all of the Working Group's proposals and recommends to Council the proposed changes to the Constitution (as set out at Appendix A) to reflect those changes.

Activities

5.5 The activities of Overview and Scrutiny in 2017/18 are summarised in the Annual Report.

Outcomes

5.6 The Commission and Panels have maintained a rolling coverage of various matters including budget scrutiny and rigorously monitoring the performance of all Council Departments. The main focus of the Overview and Scrutiny's function has been playing a key role examining and commenting on the Council's Transformation Programme. Due to staffing changes the activity of working groups significantly slowed down during this period but progress is reflected within the report.

Future Developments

5.7 The work programme for Overview and Scrutiny in 2018/19 is still under development with consultation with the Corporate Management Team and the Executive ongoing and will also be dependent on emerging work of the transformation programme.

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6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 6.1 The Annual Report demonstrates the depth and breadth of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and highlights the outcomes of this work. Overview and Scrutiny has exercised its functions in order to support the development of policy within the Council; to scrutinise the Council's financial proposals; and to improve services the Council and its partners provide with the overarching objective of seeking to benefit local communities. The team has had some changes to personnel during the year which has had an impact on timescales for some of the working groups. However, the new team members will be able to support the Scrutiny function in 2018/19 to develop further in line with the changes to council services.

Borough Solicitor

- 6.2 The Scrutiny function has an important role to play in providing local accountability and transparency in decision-making. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 primarily to serve as a check and balance on Executive powers. Subsequent legislation has conferred on Councils the responsibility for scrutinising local NHS Trusts, the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and other partners, such as the Environment Agency. It sits alongside the Council's Standards regime in delivering the accountability that constitutes one of the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.3 Combining the two panels was considered to make the Council's scrutiny process more efficient and respond to the joined up and strategic approach of the Council and its health partners. As a consequence this will reduce the number of Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman from four to three saving £5,701 which has not yet been reflected in the budget. The proposals also reduce the number of overall meetings by two per year but this will have a minimal impact on resourcing which is difficult to quantify. Once finalised the agreed work programme will need to be managed within the existing resources.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 This report has no impact on equalities issues.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 This report has no impact on strategic risk management issues.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Through emails and at meetings to consider the draft report.

Representations Received

- 7.3 None.

Background Papers

Agendas, Minutes and papers of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and Panels in 2017/18.

Contact for further information

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