

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Commission**
7 April 2021

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-21
Chair 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 draft report informs members of progress made in respect of the operation and development of overview and scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2019-21.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the 2019-21 draft annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be submitted to Council for adoption.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the Constitution.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The activities of overview and scrutiny in 2019-21 are summarised in the draft annual report at Appendix A. The outcomes of individual reviews are reflected in the report.
- 5.2 Overview and scrutiny has established a structure that allows activity to better align with the themes of the Council Plan. The function has established and delivered against a work programme that supports the council objectives over the period. The Commission has carried out research and made recommendations to support the council's climate change targets and has scrutinised the budget and monitored the performance of all council departments through the Council Plan Overview Report.
- 5.3 Overview and scrutiny will continue to embed the positive changes that support effective contribution to the Council Plan, with particular focus on regaining momentum following a pause due to the pandemic. The Commission will continue to develop its programme management role to deliver the work programme in line with council objectives and available resources.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 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.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 6.3 The annual report highlights the work of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission and panels and 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. At this time of considerable disruption, the strength of scrutiny is its focus on the long-term development of the council and how the council can meet its communities' needs.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Throughout all scrutiny activity members are reminded to consider what equality impacts there may be, and review activities are delivered in a way that avoids barriers to wider involvement e.g. timing of review activity, length of reviews and access to information. As part of the scoping process for each review an initial equalities screening will be more explicitly undertaken and a full equalities impact assessment undertaken if required.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 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

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