



# Annual Scrutiny Report

## 2019/20



## **Introduction**

The Scrutiny Committee comprises members who are not Cabinet Members. The general role for the overview and scrutiny function is set out in Section 21 Local Government Act 2000.

Overview and Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants.

The Committees should also be prepared to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism. The Council has split its overview and scrutiny responsibilities across three Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Two policy-focused Committees, which undertake forward looking, policy development work and pre-decision scrutiny, relevant to their specific areas. These are the Business and Housing Policy Committee and the Health and Environment Policy Committee. A Scrutiny Committee (which holds the Cabinet to account, has a strategic outlook and solely holds the power of Call-In)

The Business & Housing Policy Committee undertakes forward looking, policy development work and pre decision scrutiny relevant to its specific areas as well as having broader terms of reference to maintain a strategic overview of the progress towards the achievement of the priorities in the Council Plan.

The Health & Environment Policy Committee undertakes forward looking, policy development work and pre decision scrutiny relevant to its specific areas as well as having broader terms of reference to maintain a strategic overview of the progress towards the achievement of the priorities in the Council Plan.

Underpinning some of the three policy and scrutiny committee's work of the past year has been consideration of the statutory [guidance](#) published by the Minister for Local Government in May 2019 on effective overview and scrutiny.

In summary, the guidance is set out in the following key areas and the Council has realised each of these as part of the scrutiny arrangements now in place and how they have operated over the past year

- A. Culture
- B. Resourcing
- C. Selecting Committee Members
- D. Power to Access Information
- E. Planning Work
- F. Evidence Sessions

**A. Culture**

The guidance has particular regard to the importance of organisational culture and a meaningful commitment to 'effective' overview and scrutiny. This should be challenging and able to have impact and provide added value and improved outcomes for residents.

The Council's new scrutiny arrangements allow for more focussed member involvement in policy-making at an early stage (at policy committees) whilst allowing the scrutiny committee to provide challenge to the executive. Members are also able to continue to bring forward matters for scrutiny that may not necessarily be the responsibility of the council. These can be scrutinised and external organisations invited to take part in any subsequent scrutiny investigation.

The respective chairs of the Council's scrutiny bodies are encouraged to influence development of respective work programmes, having regard to those of the other scrutiny committees and importantly, that of the executive.

**B. Resourcing**

Unlike combined authorities, there is no requirement for there to be statutory officer role for scrutiny. The council will work to achieve a cultural recognition of the potential of the added value that scrutiny can bring to the council's outcomes, for example, through policy development and effective challenge.

The latter will ensure that decisions best suit service priorities, the needs of residents and businesses and support delivery of the outcomes of the Council Plan.

**C. Selecting Committee Members**

Although the choice of chairpersons of scrutiny and policy committees is not an officer decision, the constitution sets out whether they should be an opposition or a member of the leading group of the council and this was discussed and accepted by the Member/Officer working group and subsequently adopted as part of the wider constitution. Membership of the committees is also a matter for the groups who will no doubt have regard to skill sets and interests, although they cannot additionally be a member of the executive.

**D. Power to Access Information**

The council is committed to supporting the overview and scrutiny function and will continue to facilitate access to work programmes and relevant documents where this is appropriate to do so. The scrutiny committee will be provided key performance and risk information on delivery against outcomes of the council strategy and the agreed budget.

**E. Planning Work**

Officers assist with developing work programmes and coordination with the Forward Plan. It is also proposed that all scrutiny chairpersons will periodically meet to coordinate their work.

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All Members will wish to influence work programmes with matters brought to their attention from their local areas.

### **F. Evidence Sessions**

The guidance sets out ideas on how these may be 'run'. Evidence sessions may take place either at the formal scheduled meetings of the respective committees, or informally or in special sessions.

The guidance had provided authorities with an opportunity to reflect on its existing overview and scrutiny function and this had been timely as the Council was reviewing its own arrangements as part of the constitution review. Officers will continue to refer to best practice, including that produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), South East Employers (SEEMP) and discuss this with scrutiny chairperson as appropriate.

The Committee welcomes and encourages engagement with residents and other community representatives during its public participation session. During 2019/20 local residents commented on numerous matters including;

- Governance arrangements relating to the development of the Housing Revenue Account
- The size and configuration of the proposed new Leisure Centre
- Proposals for Station Approach

With the continuing pressure on the Council's resources, it is vital that Scrutiny and its newly established Policy Committees continue to play their part in ensuring that projects are delivered efficiently and with maximum benefit to residents while ensuring that the Council's key services to the public such as refuse, parking, open spaces and the myriad of other Council roles which help make our District a great place to live, continue to be delivered at a high standard.

**Cllr Caroline Brook – Scrutiny Committee Chairman for 2019/20**

**THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY IN THE COUNCIL**

Winchester City Council operates a 'strengthened' Leader and Cabinet Executive model. Members of the Cabinet manage the majority of the Council's business, while scrutiny bodies oversee the discharge of the Council's work.

The role of scrutiny is to review, challenge and develop what the City Council does, making sure the right decisions are being taken to Cabinet, in line with the general policies set by full Council, for the benefit of the Winchester District and its residents and businesses.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 required the Council to designate a scrutiny body as its 'Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee'. It could also consider individual matters related to crime and disorder issues referred from the local level. This role is undertaken by The Scrutiny Committee.

Petition organisers also have the right to request that The Scrutiny Committee review the steps that the Council has taken in response to a petition.

## **THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2019/20**

**Chairman: Cllr Caroline Brook**

### **The work of the Committee**

A summary of the items scrutinised in 2019/20 are listed below. These were mostly presented to the Committee in report format and introduced by the relevant cabinet member, in addition, several presentations were provided. The Committee also considered the work of the Council's Community Safety Partnership further to the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009

#### **Meeting: 04/07/2019 18:30**

Monitoring Report - Exceptions to Forward Plan (SC006)  
Draft Annual Scrutiny Report (SC004)  
Appointments of external bodies related to scrutiny (SC005)  
Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme Outturn 2018/19 (SC007)  
Q4 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report (SC002)  
Medium Term Financial Challenge (SC008)

#### **Meeting: 14/08/2019 18:30**

Station Approach - Proposals for Delivery and Further Public Realm Development (SC009)

#### **Meeting: 09/09/2019 18:30**

Q1 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report (SC011)  
Annual Report: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2018/19 (SC010)

#### **Meeting: 27/11/2019 18:30**

Council Strategy  
Outcome Based Budget Challenges  
Q2 Financial and Performance Monitoring

#### **Meeting: 05/02/2020 18:30**

Capital Investment Strategy 2020-2030 (SC017 & CAB3209)  
Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 (SC019 & CAB3218)

Medium Term Financial Strategy, Budget and Council Tax 2020/21. (Reports SC016 & CAB3211)

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2020/21 & Business Plan (SC018 & CAB3214)

Q3 Financial and Performance Monitoring (SC020 & CAB3222)

#### **Meeting: 12/03/2020 18:30**

Implementation of the extension to the refuse and recycling arrangements  
Community Safety Partnership Performance Review

**Policy Committees**

Both policy committees (Business and Housing & Health and Environment) undertake largely forward looking, policy development work and pre-decision scrutiny relevant to the specific priority areas.

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**THE BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE – 2019/20**

**Chairman: Cllr Dominic Hiscock**

During 2019/20 the Business and Housing Policy Committee met four times. The agendas for each of these meetings were as follows:

- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy BHP004
- Mutual Exchange Policy BHP005
- Housing Company - Presentation
- Economic Strategy - Presentation
- Estate Improvement Programme BHP007
- New Council Strategy
- Housing Company
- Central Winchester Regeneration - future uses
- Local Government Finance and Business Rates
- Station approach
- Tenant Survey results - Presentation
- New Council Strategy - presentation
- Procurement Strategy BHP009
- Housing Revenue Account Budget Options 2020/21 BHP011
- Procurement Strategy BHP009
- Review of downsizing incentive scheme - Presentation (to follow)
- Hampshire Home Choice Policy - Presentation
- Revision and update of Discretionary Housing Payments Policy BHP012
- Fire Safety in Council Housing Strategy - Presentation

The detailed terms of reference for this Policy Committee is set out at Article 7 of the constitution.

**THE HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE – 2019/20**

**Chairman: Cllr Angela Clear**

**During 2019/20 the Health and Environment Policy Committee met four times. The matters considered at these meetings were as follows:**

- Planning Pre-application Advice (HEP003)
- The future of the Traffic Management and Civil Parking Enforcement Agency Agreements (CAB3173)
- Environmental Services Contract - Procurement Process Update - Presentation
- Car Parking Strategy (HEP002) and presentation
- Local Enforcement Plan (HEP008)
- Climate Emergency Action Plan - Presentation
- Southern Parishes Sports Facilities (HEP005)
- City of Winchester Movement Strategy - Update (Presentation)
- Air Quality Action Plan Update (Presentation)
- Options Appraisal for the Delivery of an Electric Vehicle Charging Network (Presentation)
- Proposed Parish Engagement on Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning (Presentation)
- Framework for Community and Wellbeing Strategy (Presentation)
- Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2030 - Progress Update (Presentation)
- Update on the Movement Strategy (Presentation)

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