

Overview and Scrutiny Committee's annual report

2021-22



March 2022

Message from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee,

**Councillor
John Murphy**



I am pleased to present the 2021-22 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report. This includes a summary of the role and responsibilities of the committee, work undertaken during the year and the various outcomes following the committee's input.

It was an honour to be elected chair of the committee in October 2021 after two years of being vice-chair. I am pleased to be supported by vice-chair Councillor Khatija (Keja) Berliner and, of course, our very able and committed group of councillors. I would also like to say a special thanks to the outgoing chair, Councillor Kevin Cromwell who I have worked closely with over the past couple of years.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee has always been critical in supporting the delivery of high-quality services, and our challenge and scrutiny continued throughout 2021-22 – despite the ongoing problems presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Tewkesbury Borough Council's robust response to the pandemic was commendable, and the collective efforts from our communities, staff, councillors, and partners continue to be impactful.

The pandemic meant our committee meetings were held virtually for the first months of 2021, until legislative changes meant we were required to meet in person from June 2021. Irrespective of how our meetings were held, the committee has once again been at the heart of the council's decision-making process and acted as a critical friend to the Executive Committee.

Alongside a busy work programme, the committee also received, on a quarterly basis, a wealth of performance information on the delivery of the second year of the Council Plan 2020-2024. In addition, the committee oversaw the performance of the council's Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan, ensuring it delivered what it set out to do, which was to refocus, recover and rebuild our communities.

The committee has continued to scrutinise and monitor the progress of key areas of work, such as the Peer Challenge action plan and Ubico's performance, as well as helping to shape the development of strategies including the council's Digital Approach Strategy, and Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

It is important the committee builds its knowledge and understanding of how our partners help deliver our priorities, and as such the committee continued to receive presentations from bodies, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau. The committee also welcomed Severn Trent Water, who provided an update presentation following the water supply outage that took place in December 2017.

Looking ahead, there is opportunity for this committee to support the council through its future challenges - even more so as the borough emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic. I am confident we will add even greater value through the work due to be carried out in our 2022/23 workplan, and we will be looking to implement a range of recommendations on how we can maximise the effectiveness of our committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members and council officers for their support and work facilitating the scrutiny process. I am sure that the same dedication will be shown to scrutinise the work of the council and external partners during the year ahead.

**Best wishes,
Councillor John Murphy**

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The role of overview and scrutiny

The role of overview and scrutiny is an important one in the council's governance structure - it provides challenge and drives improvement and is often referred to as the "critical friend" of the council. The committee is not afraid to hold a magnifying glass over any areas of concern.

Formal work programme

Tewkesbury Borough Council has a single overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee that examines all areas of the council's business.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles within the council. These include:

- Holding the Executive Committee to account by thoroughly scrutinising their decisions to ensure that the council continues to provide the best services possible for Tewkesbury Borough's residents. As part of this role, the committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions made by the Executive Committee and request that they consider them again, taking into account the issues raised by the committee.
- Supporting the Executive Committee by reviewing council policies and strategies, making recommendations where appropriate.
- Overview of work areas or topics of interest to the committee and members of the council – including feedback from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel and the Gloucestershire County Council Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee.
- Monitoring the Council Plan and Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan and finances, to ensure the council services are sustainable, meeting milestones and delivered to the highest possible standard.
- Commissioning reviews of services/topics that impact on the council or on the lives of Tewkesbury Borough residents.
- Pre-scrutiny of items prior to their consideration by the Executive Committee.
- Reviewing the level and types of complaints the council receives. On an annual basis a report is received summarising customer complaints and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints made in the year. This helps to identify trends and potential opportunities to learn from the complaints made.
- Setting up task and finish groups to focus on specific reviews and recommend ways to improve existing practices within the council. A flow chart on how to select a potential scrutiny review can be found at Appendix A.



Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2021-2022



Councillor Khatija (Keja) Berliner
(Vice-Chair) from October 2021



Councillor Graham Bocking



Councillor Craig Carter



Councillor Kevin Cromwell
Chair until October 2021



Councillor Pauline Godwin



Councillor Heather McLain



Councillor Paul McLain



Councillor Helen Munro



Councillor John Murphy
Chair from October 2021



Councillor Jill Smith



Councillor Richard Smith



Councillor Philip Surman



Councillor Scott Thomson



Councillor Mark Williams



Councillor Philip Workman

Overview and scrutiny activity during 2021-22

Scrutiny reviews of policy and strategy

Social media policy and guidelines

23 November 2021

Communications has a vital role to play in supporting the council to deliver its vision and promises to local people. Social media provides a modern and targeted form of communication and is commonly used in addition to more established forms of communication.

A specific request was made by committee to consider the policy prior to it being presented to Executive Committee. In November 2021, the committee reviewed the updated policy to ensure it remained in line with legal requirements and reflected best practice. It was explained that the policy and guidelines really help to support our drive for accessible and customer-focused services, whilst protecting the council's reputation and ensuring the effective and safe use of social media.

The main updates to the document were highlighted to the committee – and this included the inclusion of Instagram as a social media channel, an explanation of why the council does not interact on Facebook noticeboards, and the recommendation that members help promote council messages to their social media followers by sharing content from the council's corporate accounts.

A member raised a question about training sessions, and it was explained that a member seminar on the council's approach to social media would be carried out in 2022/23.

The Social Media Policy and Guidelines was approved by Executive Committee on 5 January 2022.

Digital Approach strategy

8 February 2022

The council's Business Transformation Team (BTT) was introduced in 2020 and, in the short time it has

been operating, it has transformed many of the council's online services using its digital platform, Liberty Create.

The Digital Approach Strategy sets out the how the BTT will operate over the coming two years, with a particular focus on embracing a user-centred and agile way of working. The strategy outlines the council's commitment to the Local Digital Declaration and highlights the key principles the BTT will apply to everything it works on. A dynamic programme of works is also included in the strategy, which displays the range of work the team will deliver over the next couple of years.

The committee welcomed the changes the Business Transformation Team has already introduced across numerous services, including:

- An end-to-end bulky waste service delivering significantly increased income (over 100% increase), reduction in wait times from 6-7 weeks to less than 1 week and an online booking system.
- Introducing a new missed bin process, reducing missed bin reports by 50%.
- Stopping 'report it' problems being reported to us that are not on our land.

The committee was particularly pleased to see the BTT's successful Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding bid of £150,000 was part of the team's priorities – it was agreed the proposed planning application tracker would have a significant impact for the council's customers.

The committee endorsed the strategy and recommended its approval to Executive Committee who approved it on 2 March 2022.

Housing and Homelessness strategy 2022-26

8 February 2022

'Housing and Communities' is a key priority in our Council Plan. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy provides more detail on how the council will address the challenges sitting within this priority by setting out our ambition for new homes. It also

considers how we will improve housing conditions and standards across all tenures.

Until the creation of this strategy, an interim strategy had been in place to cover the time while the team responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Arc Consulting was appointed to support the team in the development of this four-year strategy – and this involved workshops with key stakeholders and delivering a six-week public consultation.

As part of its scrutiny, several questions were raised by the committee, including whether anything could be done regarding privately-owned empty homes. As a result of this line of interest, it was agreed that the council will develop its own strategy around bringing empty homes back to use as soon as resources allow.

Several members agreed that the strategy was impactful, well-written and easy to read. The committee endorsed the new strategy and recommended its approval at Executive Committee on 2 March 2022. Executive Committee approved the strategy, and it will be considered by Council in April 2022.

Presentations made to overview and scrutiny committee

Severn Trent Water (STW)

8 June 2021

In December 2017, 10,000 homes, a substantial number of businesses, agricultural farms, the community hospital and 17 schools were left without water in the run up to Christmas.

Due to the impact on the local community, a working group was set up to review the incident and capture any lessons that could be learnt. The information gathered resulted in a public hearing, which was held on 24 April 2018. The hearing revealed that the root cause of the incident was a burst on one of the three pipes which fed into Tewkesbury (located at the Ham). The hearing was a success and was especially useful for the agencies such as Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue, Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum,

Gloucestershire Police and STW.

At a meeting on 10 September 2019 there was an update on the progress being made to the actions following the review. It was reported that all actions had been achieved and new water pipes were due to be installed. At the same meeting, the committee invited STW to come back following completion of the works to provide an update.

On 8 June 2021, representatives from STW attended the committee to present an update on the works that had been carried out. Notwithstanding Covid-19, the complexity of the site and regular flooding of the site, STW reported considerable progress had been made since March 2021. This included identifying the preferred option of replacing the pipes, which would provide the best long-term solution in terms of reducing the likelihood of disturbance to the site and operational risks.

The committee sought assurance that all valves had now been located and were working properly, particularly as this was an issue that had been identified by the scrutiny review. STW confirmed this was carried out as one of the first actions following the event.

Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)

7 September 2021

The bureau provides free, confidential, independent, and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. The CAB are represented in seven different locations in the borough and receive an annual grant from the Council of £52,000. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee play a role in monitoring the effectiveness of this grant.

In September, the committee welcomed the new chief officer from the North and West Gloucestershire CAB, who gave an update to the committee on the key work carried out during 2020/21 and the challenges experienced due to the pandemic. Like many organisations, the CAB had to change its procedures because of the pandemic - with no face-to-face appointments being carried out from March 2020. This saw 78 percent of contact moving to support over the 'phone and 21 per cent via email.

The CAB representative confirmed the service would look to retain the 'phone service but there would also be a focus on face-to-face meetings again to ensure people who were vulnerable could continue to be seen. This form of contact was reintroduced in September 2021. The CAB will also be introducing hybrid working for staff and volunteers.

The committee was pleased to hear that in the first nine months of 2021/22, the service helped 1,218 clients from across the borough - with key issues being around benefits, universal credits, debt, employment, and housing. Since April 2021, clients have benefited from £268,470 of financial gains thanks to the support of the CAB.

The committee queried if there had been any lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the chief officer confirmed they were currently analysing the data and comparing it with previous years to map out where to target the future CAB service. Importantly, they had learnt that the service is now more accessible than ever, as they are still able to support people by 'phone and email, whereas prior to the pandemic this was not an option.

Modern methods of construction presentation - Bromford Housing **8 March 2022**

One of the council's key priorities is 'housing and communities' and reflecting this is the council's new Housing and Homeless Strategy 2022-2026. Subject to its full approval from Council there is a key action within it; 'support opportunities to make use of redundant land for temporary and social housing, promoting the use of modular construction methods'. This not only recognises how important it is for residents to access good quality housing services but to also be sustainable in doing so.

The process of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) focuses on off-site construction techniques, such as mass production and factory assembly as opposed to the traditional on-site construction for housing developments. Bromford Housing, our key strategic housing association provider within the borough, have been looking into MMC for some time and were successful in obtaining planning permissions for sites in Gloucestershire.

In March 2022, the committee welcomed a presentation from Bromford on the benefits and innovations related to MMC. These range from the increase in speed of the construction process, the quality of the build, its financial costings and the carbon reduction benefits. The committee were told that MMC will help support the Government's Net Zero Strategy by 2050.

Members asked questions around timescales of manufacturing the houses, risks of damages to the buildings, obtaining mortgages and what the scope is for extending the properties. The committee thanked Bromford for a well-informed presentation and look forward to the potential partnership working between Bromford and the council to progress this further.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee working groups

The committee can establish working groups - also known as 'Task and Finish Groups'. The groups are established to undertake a piece of scrutiny work with a clear terms of reference to get 'under the skin' of the subject matter and report back to the committee with their findings and recommendations. These are small groups comprising members of the committee, other invited members, council officers and where relevant, officers from external organisations who are invited because of their knowledge and skills relating to the topics being discussed.

As a direct result of the pandemic, working groups have been limited during the year.

Parking Strategy working group

The current Parking Strategy was adopted in 2015 and so a new parking strategy is required. A working group consisting of three members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Tewkesbury South Ward Councillor, the lead member of economic development/ promotion and finance and asset management was formed. The working group was set up to consider the following:

- The current and future parking need of its eight existing car parks in Tewkesbury and two in Winchcombe.

- To ensure, where practical, the strategy supports the economy, social and regenerative needs of the borough.
- Further deployment of technology within the parking service including electric vehicle charging points and new pay and display machines.
- Gloucestershire County Council's on-street parking review, which included parking in Tewkesbury Town.

As a result of the council's response to Covid-19, the group had only been able to meet twice in 2021 (September and November). The meetings were very productive, and the group considered issues such as parking machine options and signage as part of the development of the draft strategy.

Consideration of the draft strategy is a pending item within the committee's work programme for April 2022.

Depot Services working group

This working group was set up in July 2019 to specifically enable members to get a better understanding of the relationship between the council and Ubico. The group is made up of six members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one member of the Audit and Governance Committee and the lead members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management. The group met twice during 2021 (August and October).

A report was brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2021 giving an update on the progress the group had made. The committee were informed that a robust work programme had been developed for the group. Initial discussions focused on the current challenges and priorities. These include:

- Increase of fly-tipping and the council's response
- National driver shortage
- Financial performance
- In-cab technology
- Defra's waste and resources strategy consultation
- Trade waste
- Grass cutting

The Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment chairs the Working Group and attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Lead Member felt that the Group had been an excellent bridge between Members and Ubico which had helped to address many of the concerns about the services being provided. There were still many challenges ahead, not least the need to consider the options for expansion of the depot, and it was imperative that the Group continued for the foreseeable future. Another Member of the Working Group expressed the view there was really positive communication between Ubico and the Council and a sense of trying to help one another through constructive feedback. The committee also reviewed the group's terms of reference and approved an additional Member representative. A further update on the progress of the Depot Services working group is scheduled to be brought to the committee in April 2022.

Other areas of review

Performance management

Quarterly reports

The committee has a key role in scrutinising the delivery of actions within the Council Plan and Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Plan. To achieve this, it receives detailed information through performance tracker documents including key performance indicator data and a variety of financial reports. The trackers provide a range of qualitative and quantitative information which allows the committee to review missed target dates, progression of actions, financial performance and, where appropriate, refer for a response or action from the Executive Committee.

During the year, the committee questioned a wide range of service activity and challenged where slippage had occurred on key milestones. Scrutiny focused on areas including:

- The reopening of council-owned buildings following lockdown
- The level of enviro-crimes
- The impact of the Welcome Back Fund
- Trends in waste and recycling

- Planning processing times
- Sickness absence
- Housing and homelessness data
- Planning enforcement performance
- Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan milestones

The committee's scrutiny of council performance has also led to further presentations and reports on key issues, such as the commercial waste project and private rented sector housing scheme.

In line with a recommendation from the committee to make the information clearer, the 2021/22 performance report saw the revision of three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) referring to homelessness cases. The committee also requested the addition of three further KPIs on affordable housing and council tax reductions.

Economic Development and Tourism Strategy- action plan report

23 November 2021

Economic Growth is a key priority in the Council Plan, and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is an essential way of providing focus to supporting business growth across the borough. The committee received an update on the progress made against the delivery of the strategy's action plan during its fourth year.

The committee was made aware of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had, with some services still operating online. Despite this, the committee was reassured to hear that the team continued to operate on a 'business as usual' service model wherever possible.

- The committee was pleased to hear of the progress made despite the pandemic, which included: Growth Hub continuing to provide support to businesses
- The successful launch of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone
- Delivery of several support grant schemes.

The committee was also informed how the Economic Development and Tourism team will be focusing on

economic assessments and business surveys to understand the needs of local businesses. This will help to inform the future strategy whilst understanding the needs of businesses as they recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Reflecting the committee's scrutiny role, it was pointed out that action plans need to be a true reflection of where teams are at in terms of delivery – and that if areas are not progressing as well as anticipated, that these are highlighted. It was agreed that this would be made clearer in the new strategy. The new strategy would also consider environmental issues which was endorsed by members of the committee as a key area for consideration.

The committee agreed, due to the uncertainty in the business community, that the planned refresh of the strategy would be more effective to be delivered in 2022. The plan is to develop a new strategy for 2022-2026.

Corporate Peer Challenge - action plan report

8 June 2021 and 23 November 2021

Following a very successful Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2020, the Local Government Association produced a report which contained a number of recommendations. An action plan was approved by Council in December 2020 with delegated authority given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor delivery of the plan. During the year, the committee received two reports. The reports confirmed that actions were progressing well, with some already delivered. The committee was also made aware of actions that had been deferred because of the pandemic but overall were impressed with the progress made despite additional workloads. Members raised several questions including the impact on our financial position with the phasing out of the New Homes Bonus, and the steps being taken to roll out a residents' survey across the borough.

Carbon reduction action plan

13 July 2021

At its meeting in July, the committee received an update on the progress achieved in year one of the action plan. The plan was developed following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in October 2019. The committee considered the progress made to date and noted the request for a permanent carbon reduction programme officer post. The committee asked questions around the purpose of the post and was informed it would be to help drive the programme and take advantage of the numerous opportunities for securing funding and working with partners.

Members raised some broad questions around carbon reduction, including the reduction of electricity consumption in the council offices and they wanted to know more about the costings of surveys carried out at The Roses Theatre. In addition, they queried whether a contribution paid towards to the Countywide Climate Change Coordinator would overlap with the council's new carbon reduction programme officer post. The committee was satisfied with the responses and agreed the new role would be essential for moving the programme forward.

Private rented sector housing scheme

8 June 2021

In March 2019 the council with other Gloucestershire districts and West Oxfordshire District Council was successful in a funding bid of £292,333 made to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) - now known the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The bid was for a pilot project that met the criteria of the Private Sector Access Fund, which supported innovative measures that provided additional support for single homeless people and/ or reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation.

The report brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2021 provided background information on the scheme, details of actions that were completed and lessons learnt from carrying out the scheme.

Members were informed that the Housing Advice team was able to use over £45,000 to support 34 households in the borough that applied as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The committee questioned what support the council would give to landlords if they had issues with tenants and whether this was factored into the scheme. Members were assured that whilst the private rented sector housing scheme's main purpose was to support tenants to maintain their tenancy, the scheme also recognises the importance of building a relationship between officers and property owners, and this would be maintained going forward.

Use of mobile surveillance equipment for fly-tipping investigations

12 October 2021

Over the past few years there has been an increase in fly-tipping across the borough, despite an increased level of enforcement and prosecution of offenders. A report was brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which considered options for the council to use mobile surveillance equipment in connection with fly-tipping investigations.

Members of the committee were made aware of the benefits and the drawbacks associated with the use of surveillance equipment, and the committee asked questions on costings, potential theft or vandalism of cameras, and the regulations around signage. Following an in-depth discussion around the options, the committee requested the results of the trial be reported back to the committee to inform a final recommendation to Executive Committee.

Covid-19 response and recovery review

7 September 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the council has been unprecedented. With solid foundations already in place pre-pandemic, the council was in a strong position to support their response and recovery. One particular area was the Growth Hub which opened in 2018. This helped support businesses from the unique set-up of the Public

Services Centre and helped facilitate a multi-agency response. In addition, the relationships that had been formed over the years between the council and the local business network proved to be pivotal in responding to the pandemic.

It was agreed that the staff's 'can do' culture was one of the greatest assets in responding to the pandemic.

The committee was also reminded about the importance of reflecting on any lessons learned following emergency response work. As its meeting in September, the committee was presented with a number of key learning points, including:

- Technology and using software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom
- The importance of regular communications
- New policies and procedures introduced to help ensure resilience
- Keeping updated with legislation and guidance
- Embracing innovation

A member of the committee passed his thanks to all staff and explained that he felt the response to the pandemic had been tremendous, particularly in terms of the speed in which some of the new schemes (e.g., business grants) were implemented – the council should be proud.

Commercial Waste review

13 July 2021 and 11 January 2021

The committee have sought regular assurance during the year that this project is moving forward, particularly given the additional income that can be generated if improvements to the service are made. Through the continued scrutiny of the committee good progress has been made, culminating in a high level business plan for service improvements being approved at Executive Committee in March 2021. Since this approval, Members of the committee were pleased to be informed a project officer has been appointed to lead the project and most recently a trial of a new service delivery model within one part of the borough was imminent. The project is looking at key work streams such as income generation, marketing, recycling provision, vehicle fleet, operational administration, and debt recovery.

Regular updates will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23 and until the successful conclusion of the project.

Ubico annual performance report

13 July 2021

Ubico has been delivering our high profile waste, recycling, grounds maintenance and street cleaning services since April 2015. These services have a direct impact on our communities and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plays a key role in monitoring Ubico's performance annually to ensure services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

In July a detailed outturn report for 2020/21 was brought to the committee giving an update on performance of its finance and services, including health and safety throughout the year.

Like many services, the pandemic brought with it additional challenges; increases of waste and 'near misses' with more cars being parked in the roads - both a result of more residents working from home. This was along with a national HGV driver shortage - which was an underlying risk. However, members were pleased to hear there had been no significant changes in the waste collections throughout the year.

Overall, the report was positively received. Member's acknowledged Ubico's fantastic response to the pandemic and their excellent standard of performance, particularly in relation to waste collection. Moving forward, Members asked that the report includes performance data on all activities especially in relation to grounds maintenance and street cleansing. The Director of Operations for Ubico agreed to include this information within future reports.

Workforce Development strategy- annual review 13 July 2021

As a council we value our employees and will support, praise, and invest in our workforce to develop our organisation. The five-year strategy endorses this by identifying how we will meet the current and future needs of our staff to ensure it has skilled people to

deliver high quality services.

The Workforce Development Strategy was approved at Executive Committee on 3 April 2019, and it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would monitor it on an annual basis.

At its meeting in July 2021 the committee received a progress report on the 2020/21 action plan. The report highlighted achievements around workforce resilience, and health and wellbeing. This was supported by a set of key performance indicators. Members were also made aware of the additional organisational health and wellbeing support provided for employees in response to Covid-19.

Members of the committee queried the council's future approach to hybrid working. Members also expressed their preference for a sensible approach to ensure the council did not lose the many benefits realised through remote working.

The committee was also pleased to hear the positive work around a new website for recruitment, which went live on 5 July 2021. The website means applications for roles can be submitted digitally - presenting the council in a much more modern way.

Complaints report

12 October 2021

Understanding and responding to complaints forms an essential element of the council's customer care and helps indicate how well the council is performing. The committee receives an annual report on the number of complaints the council receives, and this report looks in detail at which areas are receiving complaints, how they are managed, and any lessons learned.

For 2020/21, the committee was informed the council received 183 formal complaints, of which 144 related to council services. Of these, despite the additional workload resulting from the pandemic, 84% had been answered in time with 41% found to be justified and 43% partially justified.

The report was well received, and members were pleased to see the number of complaints had reduced when compared to previous years.

Maximising the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 October 2021

A workshop was held to give the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to share their views and experiences of how the committee was working and an opportunity to identify areas where the committee could add more value. An action plan to take suggestions forward has been developed and can be found in appendix B.

Off the back of this workshop a more formalised training session was held for the committee and facilitated by Dave Burn, Frontline Consultancy. Prior to this session, Dave observed the committee meeting held on 11 January 2022. The session was participative and provided a refresher on the role of the committee, selecting areas for scrutiny and general questioning techniques. A further session may be planned in 2022/23.

Gloucestershire health overview and scrutiny committee 2021/22 financial contribution

8 February 2021

Along with all other Gloucestershire districts, the council contributes £2,500 to Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A member of our Overview and Scrutiny Committee represents the council and reports back on the work carried out and the action being taken at a county level.

On an annual basis, the committee is asked to consider whether value for money is being achieved from the council's contribution and if the council should continue its representation.

The committee had an in-depth discussion around value-for-money. It was recognised that being involved in the committee provides a wealth of reports on vital issues and enables the council to act as an advocate for the communities in the borough. On that basis, the committee agreed to continue to have a representative on the committee and the financial contribution continues. It was also agreed that bringing an annual report to discuss this issue was

not adding value. This was subsequently reported to Executive Committee who supported that decision.

Police and Crime Panel Update, Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee and Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

The committee would like to extend a big thank you to councillors David Gray, Jill Smith and John Murphy who represent the council on these outside bodies.

The committee receives regular updates around crime, health and economic matters and the impact these issues have on Gloucestershire and the borough. Being representatives of the council, our members can influence and act as an advocate for the council at a county-wide level.

Our representatives have done a fantastic job over the past 12 months. They have taken a wide range of questions from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, reported back to the respective county groups any comments or areas of concern.

Looking forward

The committee will be at the forefront of ensuring our key strategies and policies are delivered effectively. This will include the review of the council's new Housing and Homelessness Strategy and the emerging Economic and Development and Tourism Strategy which should be ready in the summer. The Council Plan also enters its third year, and the committee will continue to monitor and scrutinise all aspects of the council's overall performance and ensure the council continues to recover well from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We look forward to the progression of the trade waste project and the opportunity for the committee to have a real input into revitalising this service. In relation to other service areas, it will be interesting to receive an update on the success of deploying surveillance cameras in the proactive campaign to combat fly-tipping. There are also two key service

reviews underway within Development Management and Licensing. Both will be reported, albeit at a high-level, through the council plan performance tracker and we look forward to these reviews making a real difference to service delivery.

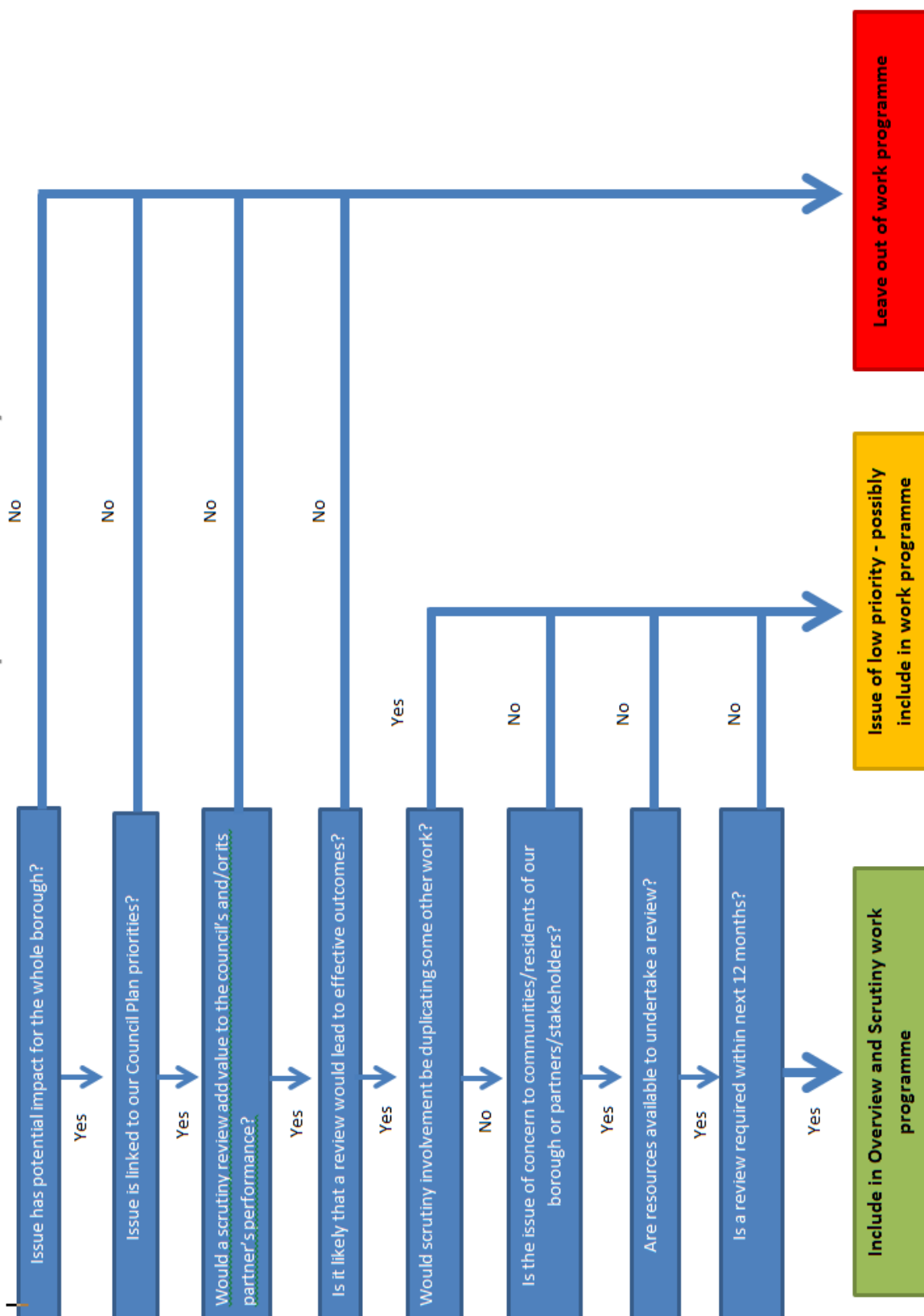
To ensure the committee maximises its value, we look forward to the re-establishment of task and finish working groups in priority areas as well as focussed presentations from outside bodies. These were identified through the member session on ways to improve how we work as a committee. Working with officers, we will look to implement both these and other suggestions during the year. This will ensure the committee continues to play an important role in helping deliver successful outcomes for both the council and its communities.

The Committee's draft work programme for the year 2022/2023 can be found in Appendix C. As always, the programme will be flexible so any new areas for review can be added when required.

On a final note, the committee owe a debt of gratitude to Mike Dawson, the council's Chief Executive who retires in June 2022. Mike has always been a staunch advocate for Overview and Scrutiny, attending the majority of our meetings, and championing the role it plays within the governance of the Council. We wish Mike a very happy retirement.



Flowchart on how to select a potential scrutiny review



MAXIMISING THE VALUE OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP – 12 OCTOBER 2021
ISSUES AND OUTCOMES

1	<p><u>Pre-Brief</u></p> <p>Range of views expressed; some Members found them helpful - particularly new Members - others felt they were not an effective use of time. Main concerns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Committee should not have to rely on Officers telling them what they should look at. - Added to the length of the meeting overall which was not helpful when there was a significant Agenda. - Tendency to just run through the Agenda rather than focusing on specific areas of questioning etc. - Very unsuccessful on Zoom during pandemic. 		
	ACTIONS ARISING	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS UPDATE
a.	In person pre-briefings to be cancelled for a six month trial period and Head of Corporate Services to instead circulate an email pointing out key areas that the Committee may wish to focus their questioning on (by the Thursday/Friday of the week before Committee).	Six month trial to cover the meetings from 23 November-5 April 2022 inclusive.	✓ A briefing note has been emailed to Members prior to each meeting.
b.	Questionnaire to be sent to Members at the end of the trial seeking views and any alternative suggestions.	April 2022	In progress – Members will be consulted on their views in May at the end of the current Committee cycle.

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2	<p><u>Training</u></p> <p>No training had been held for the Committee since the induction. Suggestions for training included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of scrutiny, effective questioning etc. – similar to that received by the previous membership delivered by Ann Reeder. - Opportunity to learn from other authorities – many now recorded and webcasted meetings (e.g. Cheltenham BC, Cotswold DC). Previously visited other authorities but not appropriate in the current climate. - Possibility of joining up with other Scrutiny Committee Members from other authorities for training. - At the start of a new Council term, it would be helpful to run through the ongoing issues for the Committee and any existing Working Groups etc. 		
	ACTIONS ARISING	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS UPDATE
a.	Training to be arranged for the Committee on the role of scrutiny, effective questioning etc.	February 2022	✓ Training session provided 26 January.
b.	Report produced by Ann Reeder to be circulated to the Committee for information.	November 2021	✓ Circulated 22 November 2021.
c.	Head of Democratic Services to contact other Democratic Services Officers across the county to explore opportunities for joint training.	January 2022	✓ Nothing planned currently but will continue to discuss with colleagues, particularly in relation to next year's Member Induction Programme.
d.	O&S induction training to be updated to include a run through of the ongoing issues for the Committee.	April 2023	✓ This suggestion will be taken forward and form part of next year's Member Induction Programme.
e.	Training plan to be put together for the Committee.	March 2022	✓ This suggestion will be taken forward and form part of next year's Member Induction Programme.

3	<u>Work Programme</u> View expressed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Not as many partners had been invited to attend the Committee in recent months – this helped to broaden depth of knowledge. The Committee regularly heard from partners such as Citizens’ Advice Bureau (CAB), Growth Hub and Ubico; whilst it was nice to receive updates, there were others Members would prefer to scrutinise. Important to establish the purpose of them attending – need to add value, not just information gathering.- Missing link between Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee – need for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to understand what the issues were for Executive Committee Members and how it could help.- Important for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be involved in policy development. Members had the opportunity to assess the Executive Committee Forward Plan and request that policies come to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to Executive Committee. List of policies and strategies brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the start of the year for Members to highlight what they would like to look at. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Groups gave an opportunity to review in much more detail, e.g. previous Housing Strategy, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy but needed to be mindful of resources. Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshops were often held to take Members through a policy before it was formally brought to Committee.- Possibility of introducing an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the Committee as at Cheltenham BC, Cotswold DC and GCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Current provision for member questions to Executive Committee and Council as set out in the Constitution; complaints process in place – danger of the same issues being raised through all channels so may not add value.		
	ACTIONS ARISING	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS UPDATE
a.	At the start of each year, Head of Corporate Services to compile a list of the key partners which contribute to Council Plan priorities in order for the Committee to determine who they would like to hear from and that to be factored into the Work Programme accordingly.	June 2022	Not yet commenced – will be undertaken once the Council Plan annual refresh is complete (this is underway).

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b.	Review the partners which report to the Committee on a regular basis, and the agreements in place for monitoring, to establish whether they need to continue to report to the Committee going forward.	June 2022	<p>✓ Annual report items from Citizens' Advice Bureau and Growth Hub removed from O&S Work Programme.</p> <p>Annual requirement to consider the value of the Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been moved.</p>
c.	Invite Lead Members to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee to talk about particular issues within their portfolios in order to establish where the Committee could add value.	March 2022	In progress – potential training options are being considered.
d.	List of corporate policies and strategies brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the start of each year to be updated to highlight those where significant changes are expected.	June 2022	<p>✓ This suggestion has been noted and will be included within the policies and strategies report that will be brought to O&S in June.</p>

4	<p><u>Performance Report</u></p> <p>Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Picking four or five KPIs to focus on and tracking those each month. - Splitting performance information and financial information into two separate reports – the financial aspect was not given as much focus as the performance information currently. - Financial information was complicated – could it be presented in a better way. 		
	ACTIONS ARISING	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS UPDATE
a.	30 minute session to be arranged for the Committee to discuss with the Head of Finance and Asset Management if any changes could be made to the way the financial information was presented to encourage more questioning.	Session to be held prior to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting– after the political groups have received basic finance training and to coincide with the next performance report.	Not yet commenced - Head of Corporate Services to confirm date and time with Head of Finance and Asset Management on the assumption this is still required given the training already provided.

5.	<p><u>Other matters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previously issued a bulletin to the wider membership on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Members felt this would not be well-read and would not be beneficial. - Previously Officers had attended a Countywide Scrutiny Group attended by the Head of Corporate Services which he had found to be helpful. - Action list now brought quarterly to the Committee (starting in September 2021) – Members agreed this should continue. - Suggestion that Members be regularly asked for their views on how the Committee meetings were working. - Debate on timing of Committee meetings – needed to be a majority decision and was very unlikely to suit everyone. 		
	ACTIONS ARISING	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS UPDATE
a.	Head of Corporate Services to speak to GCC to see if any appetite to re-establish the Countywide Scrutiny Group.	January 2022	✓ No appetite within Gloucestershire. There is a South West Scrutiny Group that can be used for best practice as and when appropriate.
b.	O&S Workshop to be held annually to obtain views on how the Committee has operated and what improvements could be made.	November 2022 (and then April 2024 and annually thereafter).	✓ Intention is to hold a short 30 minute briefing prior to the November O&S Committee meeting.
c.	Email to be sent to O&S Committee seeking views on changing the timing of meetings to establish if there was majority opinion.	November 2021	✓ Email sent – no overall consensus but the majority wanted meetings to remain at the same time.

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Appendix B

d.	Chairing skills training to be arranged for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.	January 2022	✓ No specific course for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair and Vice-Chair but will include general training for all Chairs and Vice-Chairs as part of next year's Member Induction Programme.
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DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

REGULAR ITEMS:

- **Executive Committee Forward Plan**
- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23 (to include the Action List Update on a quarterly basis – June, September, January and March meetings each year).**

Committee Date: 7 June 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Council Plan Performance Tracker and COVID-19 Recovery Tracker – Quarter Four 2021/22	To review and scrutinise the performance management and recovery information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Head of Corporate Services	No.
Update on Local Policing Arrangements	To receive an update from the Police on local arrangements.	Chief Executive	Yes – moved from 8 March 2022 to allow recruitment to the post of Inspector for Tewkesbury to take place.
Parking Strategy	To endorse the findings of the Parking Strategy Review and approve the draft strategy for public consultation.	Head of Finance and Asset Management.	Yes – deferred from 2021/22 programme due to Officer resources which led to a delay in commencing the consultation.
Economic Development and Tourism Strategy	To consider the draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and to recommend to Executive Committee that it be approved.	Community and Economic Development Manager	No.

Committee Date: 7 June 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Corporate Policies and Strategies	To consider the corporate policies and strategies and identify which will be reviewed by the Committee during 2022/23.	Head of Corporate Services	No.
LGA Peer Challenge Report Action Plan	To monitor implementation of the action plan (6 monthly).	Head of Corporate Services.	No.
Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (17 May 2022).	N/A	
Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (31 May 2022).	N/A	

Committee Date: 12 July 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Carbon Reduction Action Plan	To consider the progress achieved in year two of the Council's Carbon Reduction Action Plan, and the recommended year three action plan.	Head of Finance and Asset Management	No.
Annual Workforce Development Strategy Review	To consider progress made against delivery of the Workforce Development Strategy.	Head of Corporate Services	No
Ubico Report 2021/22	To consider the Ubico performance report for 2021/22	Head of Community Services	No.
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (1 July 2022).	N/A	No.
Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (12 July 2022).	N/A	
CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Trade Waste Project Update	To receive an update on the progress of the trade waste project.	Head of Community Services.	No.

Committee Date: 6 September 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Council Plan Performance Tracker– Quarter One 2022/23	To review and scrutinise the performance management and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Head of Corporate Services	No.
Parking Strategy	To consider the consultation responses and to recommend to the Executive Committee that the strategy be approved.	Head of Finance and Asset Management.	Yes – deferred from 2021/22 programme due to Officer resources which led to a delay in commencing the consultation.
Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (21 July 2022).	N/A	

Committee Date: 11 October 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Complaints Report	To consider the annual update to provide assurance that complaints are managed effectively.	Head of Corporate Services	No.
Housing and Homelessness Strategy	To monitor delivery of the actions in relation to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.	Head of Community Services	No.
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (9 September 2022).	N/A	No.
Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (22 September 2022).	N/A	

Committee Date: 22 November 2022			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Active Gloucestershire Report on the Progress of its 'We Can Move' Project	To consider the annual report on the progress of the project which the Council had agreed to fund for five years (2021/22-2025/26).	Community and Economic Development Manager	No – added following Executive Committee decision 3 March 2021. Agreement signed October 2021.
Depot Services Working Group Update	To consider the update on the work of the Depot Services Working Group (biannual).	Head of Community Services	No.
LGA Peer Challenge Report Action Plan	To monitor implementation of the action plan (6 monthly).	Head of Corporate Services.	No.
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (4 November 2022).	N/A	No.
Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (25 October 2022).	N/A	

Committee Date: 10 January 2023			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Council Plan Performance Tracker– Quarter Two 2022/23	To review and scrutinise the performance management and recovery information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Head of Corporate Services.	No.
Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (6 December 2022).	N/A	
Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee Update	To receive an update from the Council's representative on matters considered at the last meeting (29 November 2022).	N/A	
CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Trade Waste Project Update	To receive an update on the progress of the trade waste project.	Head of Community Services.	No.

Committee Date: 7 February 2023			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required

Committee Date: 7 March 2023			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Council Plan Performance Tracker– Quarter Three 2022/23	To review and scrutinise the performance management and recovery information and, where appropriate, to require response or action from the Executive Committee.	Head of Corporate Services.	No.
Housing and Homelessness Strategy	To monitor delivery of the actions in relation to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.	Head of Community Services	No.

Committee Date: 4 April 2023			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Customer Care Strategy	To consider the progress made against the actions within the Customer Care Strategy during 2022/23 and to endorse the action plan for 2023/24.	Head of Corporate Services	No.
Communications Strategy 2020-24	To consider the progress made against the actions within the Communications Strategy during 2022/23 and to endorse the action plan for 2023/24.	Corporate Services Manager	No.
Depot Services Working Group Annual Report	To receive the annual report on the work of the Depot Services Working Group and to consider whether there is a continuing role for the Group and if any changes to the Terms of Reference are required.	Head of Community Services.	No
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24	To consider and approve the forthcoming Committee work programme.	Head of Corporate Services.	No.

Committee Date: 4 April 2023			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23	To approve the annual report as required by the Council's Constitution to ensure that the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are promoted, both internally and publicly, to reinforce transparency and accountability in the democratic process.	Head of Corporate Services.	No.

PENDING ITEMS		
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Date Item Added to Pending
Community Services Improvement Review	To consider the progress made against the Community Services Improvement Plan. Moved from 14 July 2020 and 9 March 2021. Little activity has taken place over recent months due to COVID-19.	14 July 2020
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review	To set up an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group to review the scheme and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee/Council. (deferred from 2020/21) <i>It is intended to retain the current default scheme so this no longer requires review.</i>	April 2020
Advice and Information Centres (AIC) Review	To set up an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group to review the scheme and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee. (deferred from 2020/21) <i>The AICs have been reviewed on an individual basis so a review of the scheme is no longer required.</i>	_____
Use of Mobile Surveillance Equipment for Fly-tipping Investigations	To consider the results of the six month trial to inform a final recommendation to the Executive Committee on the way forward. NB – this will be added to the Work Programme when the cameras have been purchased and deployed.	12 October 2021

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