

Public Document Pack



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 17 March 2021
Time: 6.00pm,
Location: Virtual (Via Zoom)
Contact: Lisa Jerome (01438) 242203
committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), S Barr, L Chester, M Downing, ME Gardner, A McGuinness, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell CC, R Parker CC, C Parris and S Speller

AGENDA

PART 1

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 17 February 2021.

Pages 5 – 10

- 3. PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

To consider the following Part I Decisions of the Executive taken on Wednesday 10 March 2021.

- 2. Minutes - Wednesday 10 February 2021**
- 3. Minutes of Overview and Security Committee and Select Committee**
- 4. COVID-19 Update**
- 5. The Impact of Development on Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document: Adoption** 27 – 126
- 6. Developer Contribution Supplementary Planning Document: Adoption** 127 - 194
- 7. Housing First Approach – Stevenage Borough Council** 195 - 234
- 8. Community Safety Strategy 2021-2024** 235 -274
- 9. Corporate Performance – Quarter Three 2021-21** 275 – 314
- 10. 3rd Quarter Capital Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2020/0221** 315 – 328
- 11. 3rd Quarter Capital Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2020/21**

Notice of Decisions to follow

PLEASE BRING YOUR AGENDA AND REPORTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE

MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 10 March 2021.

To Follow

4. URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To consider any urgent Part I Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

To provide Members with the report and recommendations for the review of the Council's Scrutiny function as undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Pages 11 – 24

6. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

To consider any Part I business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

8. PART II MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

9. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the following Part II Decisions of the Executive taken on Wednesday 10 March 2021.

14. Part II – Framework for the Supply of Agency Worker 339 – 350
15. SG1 Acceleration 351 – 376
16. Appointment of Principal Contractor at Dunn Close 377 – 396

Notice of Decisions to follow

PLEASE BRING YOUR AGENDA AND REPORTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD 10 MARCH 2021

10. URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To consider any urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 17 February 2021

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair) (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Sandra Barr, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Michelle Gardner, Andy McGuinness, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris and Simon Speller

Start / End Time: Start Time: Time Not Specified
End Time: Time Not Specified

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 26 JANUARY 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee noted the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 20 January 2021.

Minutes of the Executive – 20 January 2021

Note.

Minutes of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

Noted.

4. Covid-19 Update

The Strategic Director (RP) presented a report in relation to Covid- 19 update. He outlined the following key issues:

- The Strategic Director (RP) advised that he provided an update on the latest Covid-19 position at the Executive meeting held on 10 February 2021, and a detailed update was also provided to Coronavirus Executive Committee

meeting held on 2 February 2021. He advised Members that there had been a reduction in Covid-19 cases, and currently stood at 150 per 1000 population in Stevenage, which was a 38.1 percent decrease for those over the age of 60.

The Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that the following actions would be taken following the Executive meeting on 10 February 2020.

- Officers were queried to provide further information on running a safe election during the pandemic.
- Further information would be provided to Members on South African variant, once received by the Officers.
- Information on how Members used their Local Community Fund to support Covid-19 would be shared with the Coronavirus Executive Committee on 26 February 2021.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that Stevenage had the highest number of infections in the County, and the Council was closely liaising with the Director of Public Health to explore the underlying causes of the highest infection rate, and also to identify if there were further actions that needed to be taken.

5. Draft Community Safety Strategy 2021 – 2024

The Community Safety Manager presented Draft Community Safety Strategy 2021-2024. She advised Members that the Draft Community Safety Strategy was reviewed by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) in October 2020, followed by Portfolio Holders Group in January 2021, where Members supported the objectives set out in the Strategy. She advised Members when the Strategy was reviewed for 2018 – 2021; soSafe secured over £450,000 of external funding which resulted in the delivery of innovative projects including the SOS project associated with the anti-social behaviour and crime, SADA (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse), and the Operation Urban which tackled homelessness and aggressive street begging.

In response to a question, the Community Safety Manager advised Members that Hertfordshire County Council had the Hate Crime Strategy and its consultation under their remit, and was a County wide strategy. The Council would be closely monitoring the Strategy outcome. She advised Members on third party reporting centres on hate crimes.

The Committee noted the Draft Community Safety Strategy for 2021 – 2024.

6. Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report for Public Consultation

The Planning Policy Manager updated Members on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan. He advised Members that the options proposed were high level,

strategic options to develop an improved environment, maximise density of space and economic opportunities around Stevenage Railway Station. He clarified the Issues and Options Report contained key concepts at this early stage and did not suggest specific proposal for the Railway Station and Lytton Way.

Members discussed the connectivity and ease access, safety, promotion of cycling and walking, demonstration effective engagement and design quality. Members noted that the report recommended sustainable travel considered throughout, green infrastructure in the public realm and considered climate change in all development decisions.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulations advised Members there would be a minimum of six weeks consultation, and an additional six weeks. He clarified that the second six weeks would more likely to be face to face if lockdown measure were lifted. Members would be informed about the process via email.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director (TP) advised Members that the consultation would be accessible and Council would be responsive for options to the consultation outcome. He explained that it would be for the public to decide which options they would want the Council to explore.

The Committee noted the draft Stevenage Connection Area Plan.

7. Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2021/22

The Assistant Director for Finance and Estates presented report in relation to Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2021/22. She updated Members on 2021/2022 and 2020/2021 budgets including Financial Security options and growths bids and pressures, Council Tax and Council Tax Support Scheme. She advised Members that the January Draft General Fund report to Executive set out the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's General Fund budgets, the cost of homelessness and elections resourced from Covid-19 funding included in the provisional finance settlement.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Finance and Estates (CF) advised Members on allotments. She explained that the Council took on the responsibility for the running of the allotments from the Allotment association in 2020, which had resulted in increased costs to the Council. Members agreed for the increased charge for the allotment in 2020/21 budget.

The Assistant Director for Finance and Estate (CF) would take Members comments on board regarding increased communication between the Council and the allotment holders. She also clarified that there would be more targeted Members trainings, and there was still budget left for it.

The Committee noted the Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2021/22.

8. Final Capital Strategy 2020 – 2025/26

The Assistant Director for Finance and Estate presented report on Final Capital Strategy 2020 – 20215/26. She reminded Members that the report was received by this Committee in January, where there was shortfall of £161,000 for 2021/22. She advised Members that the review had taken place for the shortfall, which resulted in a balance capital strategy recommended to Council.

The Committee noted the Final Capital Strategy 2020 – 2025/26.

9. Annual Treasury Management Strategy including Prudential Code Indicators 2021/22

The Assistant Director for Finance and Estates (CF) updated Members on the key issues of the report. She explained that the Council was increasing the counterparty limits for short term investments from £8Million to £10Million when cash balances were higher than £30Million.

The Committee noted the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Prudential Code Indicators 2021/22.

4 URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

5 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

6 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

7 PART II MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 26 JANUARY 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 26 January 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

8 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered the Part II decisions of the Executive meeting held on Wednesday 20 January 2021.

9 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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Meeting OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (SITTING AS A SELECT COMMITTEE)

Portfolio Area ALL

Date 17 MARCH 2021

Authors Stephen Weaver Ext:2332

Lead Officer Tom Pike Ext:2288

Contact Officer



REVIEW OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with the report and recommendations for the review of the Council’s Scrutiny function as undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members agree the recommendations from the review below:

2.2 Recommendation 1 - Work Programming

- 2.2.1 That the way work programming is arranged be amended to incorporate a better engagement from the public and also from all scrutiny Members to could include:

- (i) Use the Customer Service Centre & Satisfaction Surveys and the Resident Survey data as a source to generate local issues to scrutinise.
- (ii) Work with Scrutiny Members to capture their ideas – possibly with a one day event to gather ideas rather than relying on the current survey. Given the experience of Members working with virtual meetings this could be undertaken in a virtual meeting setting.

- (iii) Address the problem of the lag in the system – describe as a rolling work programme that items can drop off and be added to during the year but still be published in the spring.
- (iv) The process must be Member led with Scrutiny Members having the last word on subjects to scrutinise.
- (v) The Communications Team should be asked to advise on what is trending on social media.

2.3 Recommendation 2 - Scoping

2.3.1 That the way scoping is carried out be amended to incorporate a better understanding of the issues under consideration with both Scrutiny Members and relevant officers prior to a review starting and ways of keeping the scope in focus during the review, with possibly two types of scope (i) performance focused reviews and (ii) policy development scrutiny reviews:

- (i) That prior to a review starting a short introductory background presentation detailing the issues around the scrutiny be brought to Members, this would help all Members but especially new Councillors who may not be familiar with the issues and process.
- (ii) An updated scoping document should be provided at strategic points during a review, reflecting on any changes of focus or additions and what has been achieved so far.
- (iii) That all Scrutiny Members be given the chance to comment on the scope.

2.4 Recommendation 3 - Evidence gathering, site visits & interviews

2.4.1 That the way evidence is gathered including site visits and interviews is carried out be amended to incorporate more engagement and evidence from the public, changes to how and when site visits are carried out, better engagement with all Scrutiny Members and ways to check if the evidence is accurate:

- (i) Promote ways to engage more with the public in the evidence gathering process. One of the features of the Covid-19 pandemic was virtual online video conferencing and livestreaming of meetings, which included inviting external witnesses to meetings. This could carry on as a legacy making it easier for some witnesses to attend meetings.
- (ii) Provide a range of options including some evenings for Member site visits.
- (iii) Provide opportunities to engage with all Scrutiny Members on a Committee and acknowledge Members who take a lead role in a specific issue the review.

2.5 Recommendation 4 – Final reports & recommendations

2.5.1 That the way recommendations and final reports are drawn together should incorporate fewer SMART recommendations, relevant to the objectives of the scrutiny to maintain the reviews impact, make sure that this is a Member led part of the review with Members having the final word on reports and recommendations:

- (i) Review final reports should incorporate less recommendations to maintain the reviews impact (where possible these could be grouped together).
- (ii) That a process be drawn together to invite comment from all Scrutiny Members regarding the final report and recommendations – (possibly an item on an agenda with draft recommendations for comment and amendment prior to the publishing of the final report).

2.6 Recommendation 5 – Monitoring outcomes

2.6.1 That the way monitoring outcomes is currently undertaken is looked at to consider if there can be some improvements in the way monitoring is undertaken:

- (i) That officers are expected to adopt recommendations that are in scrutiny reports once agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holder, but that this should be acknowledged in responses and not passed off as being current practise when it is actually in response to the review.
- (ii) Executive responses should be displayed prominently on the Council's web site (in addition to just being published with an agenda on the web site). – *this should be achievable*
- (iii) Following a review the loop should be closed with witnesses and with any tenants or members of the public who have contributed via a satisfaction survey. The Scrutiny Officer could supply the service area with a simple template to use to survey with the public.
- (iv) That a locally devised action tracker that can be used as a standing item at each scrutiny committee to monitor progress and outcomes from recommendations from previous reviews be designed by officers. Members will need to agree how long an item should remain on any tracker so that this doesn't become too cumbersome over time.

2.7 Recommendation 6 – Pre-scrutiny (Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups)

2.7.1 That the Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups be Chaired by Scrutiny Members as a Pre Scrutiny Advisory Group, which would include the Executive Portfolio Holder as a key contributor answering questions along with the relevant Assistant Director, prior to the Policy being considered at the Executive.

2.8 Recommendation 7 – Appraisal of the Call-in arrangements

2.8.1 Following the most recent O&S Committee call-in of an Executive decision it was agreed that the wording of the current call-in arrangements within the constitution were not clear, so it was agreed that these should be looked at to make them as clear as possible. The Scrutiny Officer should work with the Monitoring Officer on a redrafting of these sections which would then need to be agreed by Council.

That Officers draw together a proposal for the current call-in arrangements and wording within the Constitution to be updated to address the issue that there is currently some ambiguity with call-ins, as part of the Constitutional Review, and also some updated scrutiny training in 2021/2022 be arranged to cover these areas.

2.9 Recommendation 8 – Future oversight of changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic

- 2.9.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny function has a further assessment of the Covid and post-Covid working arrangements after around six months, to consider any further changes needed at that point given the way Members meet may have changed by then with possibly hybrid meetings etc. and to allow for a period of reflection brought about by the pandemic and in addition look for examples of how other Councils have adapted and changed their model of scrutiny.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 23 September 2019 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed a scoping document to scrutinise the issue of a review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements. When the scope was agreed Members were reminded of the background context of Overview and Scrutiny (O & S) including the legal framework. Overview and scrutiny was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 to enable a more streamlined structure for decision-making. The new role of Overview and Scrutiny was designed to act as a check and balance, holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development and carrying out its own reviews of local services and matters of local interest.
- 3.2 The Overview & Scrutiny sitting as a Select Committee to undertake the review met on 4 occasions on 23 September 2019, 11 November 2019, 14 January 2020 and 17 March 2021.
- 3.3 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
- 3.3.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities in May 2019. The guidance was a response to a key recommendation made by the (then) Communities and Local Government Select Committee following its 2016-17 inquiry into the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny, which had been delayed for publication due to the government's focus on Brexit.
- 3.4 Following the publishing of the Statutory Guidance the Centre for Public Scrutiny, who had acted as a principal consultee to the Parliamentary Select Committee and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government offered its own training and suggestions on how to respond to the guidance.

A key document that authorities were recommended to use as a health check on their scrutiny arrangements was the CfPS self-evaluation framework.

3.5 Centre for Governane & Scrutiny – Self Evaluation Framework & SBC devised local scoring Matrix

3.5.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee met with the Strategic Director with responsibility for the Scrutiny function along with the Scrutiny Officer to agree a way to use the CfGS self-evaluation framework principles to undertake a self-evaluation review. Through these discussions it was agreed to devise a local scoring matrix based on key elements of the way issues are scrutinised such as work programming, scoping, evidence gathering, recommendations and reports and future monitoring. These key areas were then scored against the current procedures, Members and SLT involvement.

3.6 The matrix document was used to canvass members for their views on the key areas, this was then compiled into a response and brought back to committee on 11 November 2019. At the meeting Members began to agree a consensus on each area where there was agreement, which have become the core recommendations of the review. A summary document of the Members Self Evaluation Framework Scoring Matrix document is appended to the report at Appendix A.

3.7 Benchmarking with other authorities

3.7.1 As part of the review the Scrutiny Officer reached out to other authorities to invite them to comment on the Council's scrutiny arrangements, this was by undertaken by sending copies of examples of the work that the Committees undertake and details about the structure and function. The Scrutiny Officer reached out to local authorities in the Hertfordshire Scrutiny Network and an authority in a neighbouring County who had a similar demographic to Stevenage all of which were considered most likely to respond to such a request. Unfortunately, having had an initial positive response from a few that they would respond to this request this was not followed through despite a number of requests. Following this the Scrutiny Officer sent a short survey to the Scrutiny Network and there was a response from 2 districts and the County – The County Council were using the publishing of the guidance to review their arrangements via a self-evaluation process but the two other districts were not. In terms of strengths and weaknesses the key strength for the County was a national reputation for innovative cross party working, holding the NHS to account and robust annual budget scrutiny, the weakness is public engagement. The two districts felt their strengths were detailed reviews with sound recommendations and pre-scrutiny as well as clear structures and compulsory training for Members and on weaknesses they felt that there was a poor relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny and a lack of understanding of the role of scrutiny.

3.8 Interviews with 4th tier Managers and Officers

3.8.1 Some managers who had supported reviews within their own service including the Wellbeing & Leisure Services Manager, Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Senior Human Resources Manager, Lettings and Temporary Accommodation Manager and the Garages and Markets Manager

were invited to comment on the process and provide an honest appraisal of what currently works and what doesn't work. The officers were asked a number of questions prior to a face to face interview, this included questions on their understanding of the matter being reviewed? were they able to influence the review? was the focus correct? could they answer all questions? and finally what would improve the process?

3.8.2 With regards to the choice and focus of reviews a number of officers felt that some reviews lacked sufficient clarity at the scoping stage, perhaps being too wide ranging and on occasion further matters were added to the review as the review was part way completed and were not a feature of the original scope. A lesson then is that reviews should stick to the original brief and that Members resist the desire to keep broadening a review with regards to evidence to seek and people to interview. In addition officers suggested that reviews should be realistic about what outcomes are achievable taking into account the number of officers in a team who can respond to recommendations and that it is likely to be possible within budgets available. To counter this, Scrutiny reviews can request the Executive to consider a recommendation even if it could result in a budgetary increase, so long as the recommendation is evidence based. By and large officers felt that the reviews they were involved in were worthwhile with good outcomes for their service as it gave them more profile, focused on good practice and helped improve the service.

3.9 Delay to bringing the review recommendations back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.9.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a delay in bringing back the final report and recommendations to the Committee. It is suggested that this be brought to the Committee at this time so that the recommendations could begin to be implemented for the 2021-22 Municipal Year and before any more potential changes to the Committee's membership who undertook the review.

4 FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

4.1 The review established:

4.2 Work Programming

4.2.1 Members should be using the Customer Service Centre information, customer satisfaction surveys and the residents' survey to help inform what issues should be scrutinised. In the future Members and officers need to look at new ways to engage with the public to get their views expressed. The process needs to be Member led at all stages but informed by SLT re current corporate work programming.

4.3 Scoping

4.3.1 Scoping documents are important to help focus the review and keep the subject matter in view. The documents are living documents so need to be updated as reviews develop, with changes being highlighted between versions and updates on progress achieved. A brief overview of the context

and subject matter at the beginning of the review is very helpful to orientate members.

4.4 Evidence gathering/site visits/interviews

4.4.1 Members are not always available to attend site visits during the day time due to work or other commitments so repeat or site visits in the evening should be arranged. More training in interviewing and questioning is required. Ways of getting better engagement from all Members on the relevant committee undertaking a review need to be found. The Assistant Directors need to take a more active role in reviews as this is currently patchy and the whole programme and individual reviews are vulnerable to stalling if the Scrutiny Officer was incapacitated for an extended period.

4.5 Final Report & Recommendations

4.5.1 It was acknowledged that often there are too many recommendations which can dilute the impact of the review, so thought needs to be given to how many should be produced in the final report. The final word and editing of reports should sit with Members. The Scrutiny Officer writes the report on behalf of the Members.

4.6 Monitoring Outcomes

4.6.1 Members are not entirely happy with the way that actions and recommendations are monitored following a review so a more robust mechanism for ongoing monitoring is requested in the form of a locally devised action tracker that can be used as a standing item at each scrutiny committee to monitor progress with issues. Also Members have said that they feel that the Executive/SD response should be more sufficiently challenged by Scrutiny members when they feel that the response is not accepted.

4.7 Pre-scrutiny Policy Development

4.7.1 Members were of the view that by and large these meetings were going well. However, there was a question around their value if they were held too close to the final Executive report, as the policy was close to being finalised by that stage. Members also raised the issue that although the subject matter was the domain of the Executive Portfolio Holder the meeting should perhaps be Chaired by Scrutiny Members as they are carrying out pre-scrutiny of the policy at these meetings and the Executive Portfolio Holder would still attend as a key contributor answering questions along with the relevant Assistant Director, prior to the Policy being considered and agreed at the Executive.

4.8 Updating of the Council's Call-in arrangements

4.8.1 Following a recent call-in of a part II Executive decision it was suggested by Members during that process that the wording of the call-in arrangements within the Constitution and standing orders was unclear and possibly ambiguous regarding the timescales for the call-in and when meetings should be held. This work would need to feed into a wider review and refresh of the Council's Constitution which the Monitoring Officer is commissioning. Accordingly it was agreed that work should be undertaken to redraft the wording prior to this being adopted by Council as part of a redrafted Constitution.

4.9 Other views expressed by Members on the review

- 4.9.1 As part of the review Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee debated the Statutory Guidance and specifically the sections regarding the Chairing of Scrutiny Committees by Opposition Members and whether the choice of the Chair should be by secret ballots. A few Members were keen for the Committee to make a recommendation on these two issues (i) that the Council should consider recommending that opposition members should chair scrutiny committees and (ii) that the choice of the chairs should be by secret ballot. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has consistently stated that the key issue for any Chair of Scrutiny is that they are independently minded. There was a divergence of views expressed by Members on these two issues and no consensus at the time to make this a recommendation. The Statutory Guidance recommended that authorities should have regard to these issues, and specifically states:

“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...”

5 **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications within this report.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 The report refers to the various acts which give the legal status to Overview & Scrutiny Committees including the Local Government Act 2000 and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, May 2019.

Staffing Implications

- 5.3 The Scrutiny Officer will need to devise an action tracker to be used at each scrutiny committee as well as revising the current call-in arrangements in the Council's constitution and changes to the work programming for 2021-22, all of these changes and developments will take time to be developed.

Equalities & Diversity Implications

- 5.4 There are no direct equalities and diversity implications that were considered in this review.

APPENDECIES

Appendix A – Scrutiny Self Evaluation Framework Scoring Matrix

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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Scrutiny Self Evaluation Framework Scoring Matrix

Key Areas	Current Procedure (brief description + presentation for each column) (Score 5 high 1 low)	Scrutiny & Executive Member Involvement (Score 5 high 1 low)	SLT involvement (Score 5 high 1 low)	Overall score (out of 15)	Opportunities for improvement (completed by Members at the meeting on 23 September 2019)
1. Work Programming	<p>Work programming starts in Jan/Feb. Scrutiny Members provide Scrutiny Officer with issues. Council's Social Media canvass views of public. Issues brought to Members in Committee reports in March, following discussion with SDs and ADs.</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure:</u></p> <p>1= 2= 3= IIIII II 4= II 5= I</p>	<p>Each Scrutiny Member is invited to contribute ideas. Response rate is a little over 50%</p> <p>Executive Members are not able to direct the work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees...</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement:</u></p> <p>1= 2= 3= IIIII III 4= II 5= I</p>	<p>SLT receive details of the ideas that Members have raised when the report is being drafted. Following Members decision at the 3 meetings in March the work programme items for each committee are shared with SLT to agree timings and commitments.</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u></p> <p>1= 2= II 3= II 4= IIIII I 5=</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u></p> <p>8 11 11 8 12 10 10 11 9 10 = Average score 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be using Customer Service Centre info they gather to inform what is scrutinised • Need grid of Portfolio Holders areas of responsibility • Can more be done to encourage a better response rate to work programme ideas/responses from Members? • Do other Council's enjoy a better engagement level? • The lag in the system is not ideal but need to accept it • A bit haphazard, Chairs need to ensure other Members contribute and give an idea about how this relates to priorities • Timing does have an effect on the quality of how much time we have and resources available • Happy that channels are opened to invite comments/uptake from both members and public • Once topics are collated – could be voted on by all Members rather than just the select committee and possibly public vote • Scrutiny topics should be informed in part by CSC record of complaints also satisfaction surveys need to be used also (housing) SLT Members should provide written response • Understand the need to start the process early. Not all Members want to respond to the surveys are they happy to be led? Sometimes SLT seek to influence the work programme – this should not be the case • The process is Member led which I believe is a good thing • Too much lag; out of date; not responsive; new councillors not involved. Allow at least some uncommitted time until June meetings. A little beholden to SLT • Realise why work programming is agreed in March but could be a completely different committee and Chair and Vice-chair
2. Scoping	<p>Each substantive review item has a scoping document drafted and presented to the Select Committee for consideration...</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure</u></p> <p>1= 2= 3= II 4= IIIII II 5= I</p>	<p>Currently the Chair and Vice-Chair receive an early draft copy of the scoping document...</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement:</u></p> <p>1= 2= 3= IIIII 4= III 5= II</p>	<p>SLT receive a copy of the draft scope written by the Scrutiny Officer...</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u></p> <p>1= I 2= 3= III 4= IIIII 5= I</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u></p> <p>11 11 13 10 7 15 10 11 11 12 = Average score 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short introduction giving background info into scoping document detailing why and how it has come to scrutiny • Scoping document needs to be a living document and be flexible to reflect the evidence given during scrutiny • Should <u>all</u> scrutiny members have the chance to comment on the draft document? • Do we receive details of SLT comment? Make scoping documents more flexible • The most important thing about a scoping document is that it does not restrict anything. Should not be too precise but allow for the unexpected • I'm not sure that members always understand this document an introduction to the current context of the issue could be added and why it was chosen as a scrutiny topic • An updated scoping document should be provided at a strategic point to reflect on any change of focus or additions and what has been achieved to date • At scoping meeting an explanation why the issue has been chosen should be provided to help new Members

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3.Evidence Gathering/site visit/interviews	<p>Depending on the review site visits are set up...</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure</u> 1= 2= 3= III 4= III 5= II</p>	<p>Members are involved with preparing questions for witnesses, attending site visits...</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement:</u> 1= 2= 3= IIII I 4= I 5= I</p>	<p>ADs and Lead Officers take a lead on site visits and in providing evidence that Members have requested.</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u> 1= 2= 3= I 4= IIIII 5= II</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u> 10 10 Nil 10 Nil 13 12 15 Nil 11 = Average score 11.57</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits are sometimes inconvenient/can't make when held during the day • Would like to see more evidence coming from members of the public • I think this works really well but we should be open to suggestions for improvements from external witnesses • No experience as never been on select committee • Use call-in procedure more / with interviews • Training in interviewing & questioning. Need for planning what outcome and value is expected from a site visit • Where relevant witnesses are used the scrutiny acquired solid recommendations • Regarding Member involvement - not all Members take an active part. Input should be credited in the minutes • Regarding SLT and Officer involvement – much of the success is due to the scrutiny officer • Who checks that the evidence is accurate? • Stop last minute circulation of papers. For O&S the double agenda is cumbersome • Often when site visits are arranged they are not always convenient for all Members, but not sure how this would be overcome
4.Final reports & recommendations	<p>Nearing the end of the review the Scrutiny Officer drafts a report which is sent to the Chair & Vice-Chair...</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure</u> 1= 2= 3= 4= IIIII III 5= I</p>	<p>The Chair and Vice-Chair receive a copy of the first draft for comment prior to sending to the whole Committee.</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement:</u> 1= 2= 3= II 4= IIIII I 5= I</p>	<p>SDs & ADs have an opportunity to amend the wording of reports and recommendations in consultation with the Chair's agreement...</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u> 1= 2= 3= III 4= IIIII 5= I</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u> 11 12 12 10 12 15 12 Nil 10 12 = Average score 11.77</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could improve but can't put my finger on how • I think this works really well but we should be open to suggestions for improvements from external witnesses • Regarding supposed weaknesses of directing focus in the wrong areas will result in wrong outcomes, surely that is the whole point? The key is to ensure it is the right slant. • Strongly agree that there are often too many recommendations • Regarding SLT having opportunities to amend the final report and recommendations – I don't like this happening • Agree that the final word <u>must</u> be with the elected Members • The scrutiny committees should have ownership. Regarding the final reports and recommendations – Maybe sometimes they will not be led by Future Town Future Council or Executive priorities • When the draft report goes to Committee in some cases the outside witnesses who have been interviewed should also be invited to comment
5.Monitoring outcomes	<p>As part of the monitoring of recommendations and agreed actions, reports are responded to within the Statutory deadline of two months...</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure:</u> 1= 2= I 3= III 4= II</p>	<p>Executive Portfolio Holders and relevant officers receive a template document detailing the recommendations...</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement (both Scrutiny & Exec):</u> 1= 2= I 3= II</p>	<p>The relevant ADs and officers meet up with the Executive Portfolio Holder within the Statutory 2 month period to agree the response...</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u> 1= I 2= 3= IIIII</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u> 10 10 10 5 15 13 12 Nil 9 = Average score 10.50</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes feel that the response from the Executive Portfolio is slow • Need to tighten up of going back to scrutiny 6-9 months down the road • We are doing what is required by statute but could monitoring be done quicker, more often in a more transparent way? • Question effectiveness of monitoring/challenging response • Need to be more assertive and systematic. Some Executive/SD responses do not show sufficiently serious engagement • The process sounds well organised • Yes monitoring happens. However, the timeframe is far too long. They change things and then say in the report that they've done it anyway. I find this infuriating. The Executive Member response should be published on the website and displayed on the front window

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	5= II	4= IIII 5= I	4= II 5= I		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some responses very grudging. Some recommendations completely lost e.g. BTC and transport • When recommendations have been carried out and officers have reported back witness statements should also be obtained to ensure the tenants/public/community are satisfied with the outcomes of the recommendations being implemented
6.Council Priority	<p>Within the scoping process, Scrutiny Members are invited to reflect on the suitability of the subject matter being scrutinised and whether this fits with the Council's core priorities?</p> <p><u>Score of current procedure:</u> 1= I 2= 3= III 4= II 5= III</p>	<p>Scrutiny Members are invited to agree the work programme items through the process explained above, this provides adequate time to test the suitability of the issue and links to the Council's priorities.</p> <p><u>Score Member Involvement:</u> 1= 2= I 3= II 4= IIIII 5= I</p>	<p>SD & ADs are able to comment on the suitability of a work programme item when the work programme is being considered and also at an early stage in the scoping process.</p> <p><u>Score of SLT Involvement:</u> 1= 2= I 3= IIIII 4= I 5= I</p>	<p><u>Score out of 15:</u> 12 9 9 Nil 10 14 10 12 5 11 = Average score 10.55</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priorities should be set by the Customer Services Centre complaints log • Council priorities are not always our residents priorities • I wonder if we sometimes try to scrutinise things which SBC has no control over? Examples are post offices, busses etc. • Are we asked to relate to council priorities? • Should scrutiny help to modify / change priorities • As a scrutiny Member I'm not too clear about SD & ADs involvement • As this has been linked with agreeing the work programmes, as Chair, I invite a vote /objections. However, there is nothing formal as in there is no requirement. It may be that a recorded vote is taken? • In terms of a weakness it isn't a weakness when Scrutiny looks to address any issue that is of concern regarding existing practice. If an urgent issue arises you could question the focus of the Future Town Future Council priorities? • The Future Town Future Council is <u>not</u> the only priority for the town's people • I think it's a good thing that the choice of items reviewed are not always the Councils direct priorities • Scrutiny must be independent of the Executive. This is the wrong question, an example of this is the review of damp and mould, officers and the Executive didn't want this to be scrutinised. Policy Development should be chaired by chair of committee • Scrutiny committees should scrutinise all issues that concern the community, even if it does not come under the control of the Council as our input could be of some value in certain areas

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