

Agenda Item No 6  
 Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
 23 January 2024

Title: Development of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Work Programme

Lead Officer: Graham Leach

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Davison

Wards of the District directly affected: None

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	N/A	Ian Davison
<b>Finance</b>	14/1/24	Alex Elston
<b>Legal Services</b>		N/A
<b>Chief Executive</b>	14/1/24	Chris Elliott
<b>Director of Climate Change</b>		Dave Barber
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	14/1/24 14/1/24	Graham Leach Darren Knight
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>		Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	14/1/24	Graham Leach
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>		N/A
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	Yes	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

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## Summary

The report brings forward proposals to revise the operation of the Committee and update its Work Programme, based on the previous deliberations of the Committee regarding its workload.

## Recommendations

- (1) That the Committee agree to the revised report format for reports to the Committee.
- (2) The Committee note there will be Monthly planning meetings with Committee Chair, Vice- Chair, Deputy Chief Executive and Scrutiny Officer.
- (3) The Committee note there will be quarterly meetings between the Chair & Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of Audit & Standards Committee and the Chair of the Asset Compliance Committee with support from the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Finance, and Head of Governance to discuss themes across the Committees.
- (4) That the Committee agree to review all the items on its work programme work programme against the revised aims of the Committee.
- (5) The Committee agree no more than five key themes for the Climate Emergency Action Plan to consider in detail, building on the three identified in 2023.
- (6) That the Committee agree the following reports are added to the work plan:
  - (a) General Fund Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy, how it is calculated and associated risks – April 2024; and
  - (b) Housing Revenue Account Budget the risks associated with it – June 2024.

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## 1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 The Committee has had concerns about its overall workload since its area of responsibility was redefined by Council in the Summer of 2022. This has been mitigated by the addition of four meetings within the calendar when the Committee will focus solely on its work rather than that of the Cabinet.
- 1.2 The Committee has set a clear remit for considering Cabinet reports, supplemented by the use of written questions in advance of the meetings, about issues that either affect residents or in which they have an interest, and the responses being published online (unless the report is confidential).
- 1.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules focuses the Committee on those Cabinet items that have due significance and fall within the following criteria:
  - a) *The number of residents impacted and the significance of that impact.*
  - b) *The amount of spend involved.*
  - c) *It concerns a strategic priority of the Council or key project.*

*Scrutiny committees should only consider items where there is a tangible reason to do so. This should broadly fit into one of the following criteria:*

- a) *Where there are concerns about the basis for a recommendation e.g. the data that had led to the recommendation is deficient, or new data or information deemed material to forming a view on the item has been*

*provided too late for a written question and answer to be circulated before the meeting, or members are aware of contradictory evidence.*

b) *There is an alternative policy, development or direction which needs to be explored.*

1.4 The Committee, in partnership with the Audit & Standards Committee, has also established the Budget Review Group, which meets twice a year to consider the following items, when they are part of the Cabinet agenda:

*Annual Fees & Charges*

*Setting of the General Fund Budget*

*Setting of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)*

*Annual Treasury Management Strategy (if it is reported to Cabinet in February)*

1.5 With this collective good practice and approach by the Committee now in place, it is undertaking its core functions well, which was recognised within the recent LGA Peer Review. Demand on the Committee's time is still significant because of the ambitious nature of the Council meaning there are many matters progressing at the same time.

1.6 The Committee is seeking to continually improve on its performance and has a number of areas where it considers it needs to become more effective by looking at the inter connections between issues. These can be summarised as; financial scrutiny, how can the Committee reassure the Council of its budgetary position and spot any early warning signs of issues; using performance monitoring effectively to identify issues; reviewing of major projects; looking at performance of Council services, assessing the effectiveness of alternative delivery models; and the identification and management of risk within the Council.

1.7 By focusing on these themes the Committee should be able to move away from being reactive to Cabinet papers and more proactive in identifying issues and adding value, along with helping to develop policy within the Council, which the Committee also has responsibility for.

1.8 With this context in mind the Chair of the Committee presented a briefing to the Committee at its meeting December that proposed some new approaches. These were broadly supported by the Committee and officers were asked to bring a report to this meeting based upon those approaches.

1.9 It is considered appropriate that with the Committee meeting almost monthly, as part of the Chair's briefing ahead of the meeting; the briefings will also review and identify themes across the local government sector and the planning of meetings. Members of the Committee are also encouraged to undertake this reflection through reading of local government sector publications and wider media channels to bring forward proposals to the Committee, with support from the Scrutiny Officer and Deputy Chief Executive, for discussion and development.

1.10 There is a need for the Audit & Standards, Asset Compliance and Overview & Scrutiny Committees to work together and to share information/themes they may have identified from their work. Therefore, quarterly meetings have been arranged between the Chair & Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Audit & Standards Committee and Asset Compliance Committee with support from the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Finance, and Head of Governance to discuss common themes across the Committees.

- 1.11 A new Report format for reports, has been developed for this Committee (with the first use at this meeting). This will be no longer than four pages (with appendices used only after approval from Deputy Chief Executive and Chair of Cttee), and will include information under the following headings:
  1. Why O&S asked for the report (defined objective by O&S)
  2. What is being delivered (and its performance and how is performance validated e.g. benchmarking)
  3. The key risks to the service and how they are being managed
  4. What is working well and what is not working so well
  5. One change to improve performance
- 1.12 If agreed by the Committee, it will need to be reviewed for its effectiveness over the coming months to ensure that it is providing the information Members expect. Members are encouraged to provide feedback on this as they and Officers get used to the format and may consider any changes after this time.
- 1.13 At present the Committee review the Significant Business Risk Register each time it is presented to Cabinet and passes comment on this. There were significant comments from this Committee, in August 2023, on format and approach of the SBRR. These are being considered by the Cabinet as part of a wholesale review of the SBRR to align it with the new Corporate Strategy. Moving forward it is proposed that when the SBRR is considered by Cabinet the Committee uses it as a tool to, consider the associated risks and move to a project-based scrutiny and scrutiny of risk-based themes within the SBRR, rather than challenging a specific risk rating for an item on the register.
- 1.14 The Committee will also look to move to review risk across the Council. Each Councillor will have access to each Service Area Risk register, corporate project lists (which includes) the overall risk rating for each project, and performance data for each service area. This will enable the Committee to identify and focus on core themes within each year where it can add value or assurance.
- 1.15 The Cabinet is due to formally consider the list of projects the Council has at the present time later in the year. That report will need to be considered by this Committee based on the budget exposure, resources and risk associated with the project and from this the Committee should identify ones it wishes to look at further.
- 1.16 The Committee could also review the list of current contracts the Council operates and undertake a risk-based review of these. The Council has a significant number of contracts and therefore to start with Committee may want to look at the performance of the of the five most expensive or high risk services, following on from the approach they have used with the review of the Waste contract.
- 1.17 All Members are provided access to the Service Area Plans (SAPs) and performance data within them. Members need to review these regularly and will receive quarterly reminders about them. Within the next few months the SAPs will be made available via the website and all members will also receive a quarterly report on service performance, highlighting significant changes away from expected performance along with the narrative for this change. The Committee will want to use this information as a tool for looking at performance within the Council and may want to have an agreed informal indicator of when they will look at matters i.e. not before x number of quarters of falling performance.

- 1.18 With these points in mind the Work Programme has been amended to enable the Committee to consider if an item should still come forward or if they wanted to revise the scope of the proposed report. The criterion for review is set out at the top of the Work Programme and an officer recommendation is provided next to each item along on the approach to be taken with it.
- 1.19 The Committee needs to make a continued commitment to training and development, both collectively and individually. Returning to the concerns around understanding finance, while wider finance training is in place, as reported to the Committee in August 2023, it is considered that the Committee needs to have collective and specific understanding of the General Fund Budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy, how it is calculated and associated risks and of the HRA Budget along the risks associated with it. These are proposed to come forward as reports later in 2024 with a view to consider the areas of risk that need to be looked at in more detail by the Committee. These reports will be used as a training opportunity and therefore ahead of the report the Committee members will be asked to set out the key aims they would like to get from the report.
- 1.20 The Committee have a number of tools available to them in terms of scrutinising work once areas have been identified. This can allow for small groups of the Committee (or other non Cabinet members) to work together on specific areas using their own personal skills and knowledge to maximum effect. There will be more resource to support this work with the introduction of a Scrutiny Officer at WDC which is currently being advertised.
- 1.21 Officers are working on setting up training with the LGiU for all Councillors that help answer: How do I know we have a financial problem? And what are the indicators that there may be a financial problem? However, this is proving a challenge in minimising conflicts with other training sessions and meeting dates. Therefore, it is unlikely to take place until after budget setting in February.
- 1.22 Taking these points into consideration the Committee previously considered three themes within the Climate Emergency Action Plan, that it wanted to look at more closely. These are:  
Offsetting and any potential for getting involved in early policy development;  
Issue of adaptation;  
Data tracking and how this can be most efficient.
- The Committee need to consider if they want to progress detailed review of these areas and if so the criteria for this. The Committee could also ask about wider themes within the Climate Emergency Action Plan and how they can be reviewed during the ongoing work of the Committee on each report.
- 1.23 If the Committee support these proposals, then they will be shared with all Councillors so they are aware and all senior officers at the Council will be briefed as part of the monthly Managers' Forum in February 2024.

**Criteria for Items on the work plan**

- 1. High Risk
- 2. High Value
- 3. Major Project
- 4. Decreasing Performance
- 5. Statutory/Constitution requirement

Title	Lead Officer / Councillor	Meeting Date	Where did item originate from	Notes	Continue?
<p>Environmental Enforcement Update subsequent to the report made in March 2023 (following recruitment of the new position reported in March 2023). Figures for rural areas to be provided if possible for discussion of measures put in place and what is required. "Heat map" information for the District to be provided.</p>	<p>Zoë Court Will Roberts</p>	<p>23/1/2024</p>	<p>O&amp;S March 2022</p>		
<p>A review of the waste and recycling contract, with emphasis on the financial considerations.</p> <p>Help in writing this report should be sought from the Head of Finance.</p> <p>See minutes 3 October, Work Programme item for full details, but Members would like to see if the terms and conditions of the contract agreed 12 months ago are still good for WDC, considerations and implications on the forthcoming budget.</p>	<p>Zoe Court and Steve Partner Andrew Rollins Will Roberts</p>	<p>23/1/2024.</p>	<p>O&amp;S 19 April 2023</p>	<p>The request for financial considerations to be added to this report arose from concerns on the figures presented at the 3 October meeting.</p>	
<p>Full review of the Work Programme</p>	<p>Darren Knight</p>	<p>23/1/2024</p>	<p>December 2023 O&amp;S</p>		

## Appendix 1 – Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Councillor</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Where did item originate from</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Continue?</b>
Update on Scrutiny Arrangements as per the recommendation made in the report to O&S 8 August 2023	Graham Leach	23/1/2024	O&S August 2023		
Future High Streets Fund update – the Committee asked for amendments to the Risk Register see confidential minutes 4 July 2023.	Martin O'Neill	6/2/2024	O&S February 2023	Every 3 months until further notice	1,2, and 3
Annual update from Shakespeare's England, looking back over the previous year's activity and forward to next year.	Martin O'Neill and Councillor Billiald	5/3/2024	March 2023	Annual report next due March 2025	No
Summary of the role, responsibilities and performance of the SWCSP.  Invite Councillor Falp (non-Exec rep) and the PH Safer Communities to O&S	Liz Young / Marianne Rolfe.	5/3/2024	This is a Statutory requirement	Annual report next due March 2025	5
Review of the Significant Business Risk Register	Councillor Ian Davison and Chief Executive	5/3/2024 & Cabinet 6/3/24	Forward Plan ref 1374		Yes to identify themes and risks
Digital Strategy Update from the Cabinet Agenda	David Elkington	5/3/2024 & Cabinet 6/3/24	O&S November 2021	June 2024	1,2,3
O&S End of Term report.	Committee Services Officer.	9/4/2024	Standing Annual Item, Constitution requirement	Annual report next due April 2025	5

## Appendix 1 – Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Lead Officer / Councillor	Meeting Date	Where did item originate from	Notes	Continue?
<p>Noise Nuisance Investigations: Review of the Policy and the service area's performance in respect of all forms of noise nuisance more generally.</p> <p>Additional data was requested in the next report (see minute 93, 19 April 2023, 4 paragraphs from the end of this minute, and also see the pre-scrutiny questions on the Council's website for 19 April with the questions posed by Councillor Milton.</p>	Lorna Hudson	9/4/2024	9 August 2022, 19 April 2023	Annual report next due April 2025	No, briefing report to all Councillors for information setting out performance and append to work plan for comment consideration of further scrutiny
<p>Six-month post opening update on the "Relocation of Office Accommodation and the Provision of Public Facing Access to Council Services, including, financial cost of each aspect, savings, communication and residents feedback</p>	Steve Partner Dave Elkington Tracy Dolphin	26/4/2024			3 But Move to allow pump rooms to be in operation for 6 months in October
<p>Appoint Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champion</p>		4/6/2024	Standing Annual Item.	On-going at the first meeting of each Municipal Year	5



Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Lead Officer / Councillor	Meeting Date	Where did item originate from	Notes	Continue?
To appoint members to the Budget Review Group (add the Group's remit which is saved to the annex in the Constitution)		4/6/2024	Standing Annual Item.	On-going at the first meeting of each Municipal Year	5
Elect a Chair and Vice Chair if this was not done after Annual Council		4/6/2024	Standing Annual Item	On-going at the first meeting of each Municipal Year	5
<p>Update on the Resident Engagement Strategy (report to Cabinet August 2023). The Committee is keen to understand a) how is it going? And b) what are we learning? (include some examples of changes that have been made as a result of the consultation.)</p> <p>The question that sits behind this is as-to whether this is a good use of the Council's resources. There are benefits to us as a Council from getting resident feedback and what we'd like to get is visibility of those. This is 'value for money' in its broadest sense (No need to come with figures and a ROI.)</p> <p>Housing is one of the biggest ways that we impact residents' lives and getting a bit more</p>		24/9/2024	O&S 19 Sept 2023	24 September 2024	Change to Councillor Briefing session in first instance covering these areas. Also raised by Asset Compliance Committee as an area that needs to be understood.

## Appendix 1 – Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Lead Officer / Councillor	Meeting Date	Where did item originate from	Notes	Continue?
visibility amongst members of some of the good things we do but also some of the challenges residents face will be valuable					
<p>the Corporate Strategy should be reviewed on a yearly basis, in the same way that the annual governance statement comes through scrutiny to make sure the Council is properly governed. More specifically, the Committee would like to see an annual strategy progress update, looking at the big picture and how the Council is working towards its goals and values</p> <p><i>"In response to the request from the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee to provide clarity on the review process on the "who, what, when and how", this would be set out in the first annual report to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in November 2024".</i></p>		13/11/2024	OS 3 October 2023	13 November 2024	3
Update to Carbon Emission Data and Climate Change Measures report	Dave Barber	2/7/2024	O&S 31 October 2023	2 July 2024	5

**Meeting Date: To Be Advised**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Where did item originate from</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Councillor</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Continue ?</b>
Council's Performance Data – to help shape the data in a positive and constructive way	The Committee's comment to Cabinet on the LGA Corporate Challenge Report and Action Plan	TBA	See O&S minute on Item 7 Cabinet Agenda, Local Gov Assoc Corporate Challenge Report and Action Plan, 31 October 2023 To be set	Review with Chair & Vice Chair of Committee, in early July, of SAP performance and new Policy, Performance & Complaints Manager in post.
Final Accounts / Q4 Budget Update 2022/23 (Forward Plan ref 1,384)	Forward Plan	Andrew Rollins / Steven Leathley	Part of the Committee's finance remit  To be set	No
Statement of Accounts 2021/22 (Forward Plan ref 1,312)	Forward Plan	Andrew Rollins / Steven Leathley	Part of the Committee's finance remit  To be set	No
Review on the Identification and Remediation of Damp and Mould in Council Homes to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was happening with the policy;</li> <li>• Was it being put into action;</li> <li>• The impact it has made.</li> </ul>	Committee 8 August 2023	Steve Partner	Report to be six months after implementation, so December 2023, CSO to chase Steve Partner for the date of implementation and then schedule a report six months following that implementation date.	Briefing for all Councillors

## Appendix 1 – Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Where did item originate from	Lead Officer / Councillor	Notes	Continue ?
Review additional Licensing Scheme to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective it had been.</li> <li>• How many licenses had been issued.</li> <li>• Was there enough resources in place</li> </ul>	Committee 8 August 2023	Paul Hughes	Report to be six months after implementation, so December 2023, CSO to chase Paul Hughes for the date of implementation and then schedule a report six months following that implementation date.	Briefing for all Councillors
Decide if an update is required on the Catering and Events Concessions Contract – Royal Pump Rooms and Jephson Gardens Glasshouse.	Committee meeting 26 September 2019. (8 November 2022 – an email was sent to David Guilding and Philip Clarke asking for the status.)	Dave Guilding / Philip Clarke.	To be set	No
Update - plans to improve accessibility to, and the condition / cleanliness of, toilets for people living with disabilities.	Committee meeting 26 September 2019 and briefing note 8 December 2020.	Zoë Court	No officer will attend the Committee meeting unless there is a request To be set.	Update to all Councillors from Officers on the work that has taken place following the meeting at Committee. Chair/Vice to consider response before it is shared with Councillors - Remove

## Appendix 1 – Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Where did item originate from	Lead Officer / Councillor	Notes	Continue ?
Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Enforcement Process – Private Sector Housing	O&S August 2020 (31 October 2022 – Cllr Cullinan sent an email to Lisa Barker asking for a date for the report and the response was sometime spring 2023.)	Lisa Barker	A review was requested once the scheme had been in operation for 12 months. Covid affected the process. To be set	No, replace with briefing email to all Councillors on this work.
Park Exercise Permits – annual review of the scheme	August 2020 (Update November 2022 on status - Ann Hill has advised that the current permit scheme is not working and work needs to be undertaken to find out why that was, be it the rules of the scheme, the eligibility or enforcement. After speaking with Marianne Rolfe, she and Marianne decided to approach the relevant PAB when a revised scheme has been formalised.)	Ann Hill	To be set	Remove and await for wider report to Cabinet

Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Title	Where did item originate from	Lead Officer / Councillor	Notes	Continue ?
Climate Change Action Programme Update	O&S 20 July 2023	Dave Barber	1. Offsetting and any potential for getting involved in early policy development; 2. Issue of adaptation; 3. Data tracking and how this can be most efficient.  To be set	Discuss at Committee

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**Briefing Notes to All Councillors – April every year  
Not for O&S Agenda, but to be emailed to all WDC Councillors**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Where did item originate from</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Councillor</b>	<b>Next report date if applicable</b>	<b>Completion Date / Notes</b>
Children’s and Adults’ Safeguarding Champions: End of Term Report.	Standing Annual Item.	Briefing note	Marianne Rolfe.	April 2025.	This is a briefing note to all Councillors.
Members’ Annual Feedback on Outside Appointments / Annual review of membership/participation of Outside Bodies (Includes a short synopsis on Champions)	Standing Annual Items	Briefing note	Andrew Jones	April 2025	This is a briefing note to all Councillors.