

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

CHAIRS' FOREWORD

This report recognises that overview and scrutiny has the resilience to adapt to changing community needs and the demanding changes the council and our residents want to see in our environment and public realm.

We would like to send a very big thank you to our diligent staff in Democratic Services and the incredible support they offer the chairs of the two committees.

An equally big thank you goes to the Senior Management Team who compile reports and help us draft those very important one page strategies that our task groups use to carry out the tasks we have set them to do, and in turn, produce coherent recommendations for Cabinet and Council.

Lastly, but by no means least, thank you to those councillors who volunteer to serve on the committees and who contribute so much to the work of the task groups on top of their normal borough, ward and parish duties. A good volunteer interested in the area we are reviewing is worth so much more than a conscript who is directed to participate.

Recovering from the impact of COVID-19 on our local economy, meeting the challenges of the climate emergency and encouraging intelligence led partnership working we have, and continue to welcome, the contribution that both our borough residents, parish councils and statutory organisations make to aid our scrutiny role. A council and its executive need to remain accountable and open to review even when the latest emergency or fiscal shortfall has led to difficult decisions being made. Recently added training for scrutineers has helped that process moving forward. We still have significant work to do to improve and enhance our communications, particularly when the committees and task groups call for evidence and we should do more to engage hard to reach groups rather than leaning on the usual suspects.

Cllr Tom Mahoney

Chair of Communities and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Neil Sandison

Chair of Environment and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Meeting Date	Topics
27 June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Performance Monitoring 2018/19 Year-End • Universal Credit – update following changes made to the administration
5 September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit – Vulnerable Groups • Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Quarter 1 • Employee Wellbeing – progress report
18 November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships Working: The Council's Relationship with Registered Provider Partners – light-touch review • Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Quarter 2 • Special Expenses Scheme – review report
3 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Quarter 3 • Communities and Homes – Working in Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector – light-touch review • Employee Wellbeing – progress report
19 March 2020	<p>The meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19. The following reports were circulated by email to the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Resources – performance and future strategy in relation to the portfolio • Communities and Homes – performance and future strategy in relation to the portfolio

ENVIRONMENT AND GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Meeting Date	Topics
15 July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Motion – Encouraging the Community to Adopt Healthy Lifestyles • Houses in Multiple Occupation • Review of Parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre – review report
3 October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Monitoring – annual review • Review of Public Spaces Protection Orders as Gating Orders – one-page strategy
9 December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Public Spaces Protection Orders as Gating Orders – evidence gathering
24 February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Public Spaces Protection Orders as Gating Orders – review draft policy • Environment and Public Realm – discussion of performance and future strategy with the Portfolio Holder • Waste and Recycling – annual review
2 April 2020	<p>The following items were scheduled but the meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Disorder – annual review • Growth and Investment – discussion of performance and future strategy with the Portfolio Holder • Review of Fly Tipping – one-page strategy

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Meeting Date	Topic
27 January 2020	Leader of the Council and Executive Director. The answers to questions submitted in advance were circulated prior to the meeting. The meeting received an overview from both the Leader of the Council and the Executive Director followed by supplementary questions.

HEADLINE STATISTICS

Committee Meetings	Task Groups and Reviews
9 meetings held	5 reviews
20 substantive reports considered	2 reports submitted to Cabinet
2 reports were circulated by email	5 recommendations
3 reports were cancelled – due to COVID-19	
2 public consultations	
1 motion from Council	

MOTION FROM COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVES – following a motion put to Council in September 2018, the Environment and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the process for inviting and evaluating bids and details of expressions of interest submitted for various schemes. The Committee concluded that the work carried out on these projects had the potential to contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of residents in Rugby. A progress report was scheduled into the future work programme.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNIVERSAL CREDIT – this had been an ongoing topic for scrutiny since 2013 in response to changes to the welfare system in 2012. Following a detailed update, a further piece of focused work was carried out in relation to application support for vulnerable claimants with mental health issues including:

- A report from Coventry and Warwickshire Mind on its experience of Universal Credit.
- Examples of historic issues experienced by the Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQIP).

Issues relating to the Department for Work and Pensions' telephone application process were subsequently resolved.

PARTNERSHIPS WORKING – the review was carried out as a light-touch review in two meetings covering:

- The Council's relationship with registered providers (RPs) of social housing including:
 - Lettings and management of RPs' homes
 - Operational issues
 - Regulatory framework for RPs
 - Provision of new homes
 - Nominations review process of RPs

- Working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector including:
 - Current arrangements
 - Contracts for advice management and community infrastructure advice services with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Warwickshire CAVA
 - Managements of Service Level Agreements with community associations
 - Community grants programme
 - Rugby Lotto

SPECIAL EXPENSES SCHEME – a task group was appointed and carried out its work in June – September 2019. The timing of the review was key so that findings and recommendations would inform the Council Tax setting process. Work carried out by the task group included:

- Consultation with parish councils and meetings
- Information on budgets, activity breakdowns, sensitivity analysis and publications
- An analysis of the key service areas - parks and open spaces, Caldecott Park, grass cutting, cemeteries, CCTV and town centre security, maintenance of trees on Borough owned land, dog waste bins and rubbish bins

The review recommendations were endorsed by the parent committee and approved by Cabinet.

ENVIRONMENT AND GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION – following the introduction of new legislation in October 2018, the topic was included in the work programme in response to concerns raised by Members regarding associated complaints from residents. The aim of the review was to gain an understanding of the issues based on licensing and enforcement and what actions were available including:

- Legislative changes to The Housing Act 2004
- An understanding of the new regulations and licensing requirements
- The numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and anticipated increases
- Controls available to the Council, Local Plan and development control, building control and HMO licensing
- Additional legislative powers

PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS AS GATING ORDERS – the review was a detailed piece of work carried out to consider putting controls in place in relation to anti-social behaviour and the closing of alleyways. Evidence and investigation study outcomes from a local case study were gathered by the parent committee and residents attended the meeting to give their views. A task group was set up taking a holistic approach to focus on the creation of a corporate policy on when to use Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) as Gating Orders including:

- Consideration of a draft policy setting out the criteria for the basis of implementing PSPOs Gating Orders
- Consultation process
- Funding

Following consultation, the draft policy was endorsed by the parent committee and submitted to Cabinet for approval in July 2020.

WASTE AND RECYCLING – in February 2020, progress made within the Waste and Recycling Services was reviewed including:

- Services delivered
- 2019/20 key initiatives
- Climate emergency
- Future recycling options
- Fleet procurement
- Warwickshire Waste Partnership
- Resources and Waste Strategy and related consultations
- Rugby App
- Bulky waste digitalisation
- Waste and recycling policies
- Performance data

Subsequently, reviews on the topics of fly tipping, litter, minimising waste and recycling levels were agreed for inclusion in the work programme to be carried out by task groups.

STANDING ITEMS

There are a number of standing items that return to scrutiny every year. They include:

AIR QUALITY MONITORING - to examine progress of the Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report, progress on the Local Air Quality Management Action Plan Annual Status Report and implications of new residential and infrastructure developments planned in the borough.

CRIME AND DISORDER - in accordance with Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, scrutiny has responsibility to carry out an overview of crime and disorder at no less than one meeting each municipal year to scrutinise decisions made, and actions taken, by the responsible authorities that make up the Rugby Community Safety Partnership in connection with the discharge of their crime and disorder functions. The item had been included in the work programme for consideration on 2 April 2020. Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19.

WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES was included in the future work programme for annual review.

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE reports are reviewed by scrutiny on a quarterly basis.

HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT is one of the primary responsibilities of scrutiny to ensure that Cabinet is making decisions effectively and acting in the best interests of the local community. A joint meeting of both overview and scrutiny committees is held based on question and answer style sessions with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Director.

Each Portfolio Holder is invited to attend at least one committee meeting each year to give an overview of their portfolio areas of responsibility and the challenges ahead, and to answer questions from committee members.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING

Following a review of the future of overview and scrutiny, at the recommendation of Council, overview and scrutiny training was carried out in November 2019. This was facilitated by an external training provider with separate workshop style sessions for members and officers.