

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

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## Acknowledgements

I am pleased to present this year's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, which contains information about the Committee's activity over the past year.

It has been a demanding year for the Council which continues to face challenges in delivering services to the residents of South Derbyshire. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been tasked with analysing and monitoring services in order to provide constructive feedback to increase efficiency as well as, where possible, reduce costs.

This Annual Report demonstrates the wide range of issues that have been considered within the scrutiny process and providing committee members the opportunity to select areas to review.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognises and appreciates the valuable contributions that Elected Members, Officers and representatives of organisations have made towards its work, and acknowledges that without this support and co-operation, it could not fulfil its aim to improve services for the benefit of South Derbyshire residents.

Councillor Andrew Billings  
Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

# 1. **Background**

## 1.1 **Purpose of the Report**

This is the Annual Report to Council from Overview and Scrutiny, as required by Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Overview and Scrutiny plays an important part in local government decision-making and is a principal way of achieving open, democratic accountability for the provision of public services. The aim of Overview and Scrutiny is to improve public services and quality of life for local residents. Its main value is in holding the Council and other service providers to account, monitoring performance and in its capacity to inform and influence the actions of the Council and its partners. Overview and Scrutiny is a legal requirement, introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, extended in later legislation, and consolidated in the Localism Act of 2011. Overview and Scrutiny allows Councillors to examine, question and evaluate various functions of the Council and other providers of public services on behalf of the public in an open and effective way.

The report outlines how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has discharged its functions during the municipal year 2017/18 and details the current position and outcomes of its activities.

## 1.2 **Composition of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee consists of eight Members; five Members of the Conservative Group and three Members of the Labour Group, in accordance with the political balance of the Council.

*For the period of May 2017 to January 2018, the following Members were appointed to the Committee:*

### **Conservative Group**

Councillor Swann (Chairman), Councillor Billings (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Atkin, Councillor Mrs Coe and Councillor Mrs Patten

### **Labour Group**

Councillor Bambrick, Councillor Dr Pearson and Councillor Mrs Stuart

*For the period of January 2018 to May 2018, the following Members were appointed to the Committee:-*

### **Conservative Group**

Councillor Billings (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Wyatt (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Atkin, Councillor Mrs Coe and Councillor Mrs Patten

### **Labour Group**

Councillor Bambrick, Councillor Dr Pearson and Councillor Mrs Stuart

### **1.3 Main Purposes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The main purposes of the Committee are as follows:-

- (a) Write reports and/or make recommendations to Council, Policy Committees or Area Forums in connection with the formulation of policy and the discharge of any functions.
- (b) Consider any matter affecting the District or its residents.
- (c) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.
- (d) Exercise the Call-In procedure in respect of decisions made, but not yet implemented, by any Policy Committee or Area Forum.
- (e) Oversee the appropriate processes and report findings to the relevant Policy Committee.

### **1.4 Functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- (a) Holding the Council and its statutory partners to account in the public interest, enabling transparent and effective decision-making. This includes the power to 'call-in' a decision made by any policy committee that has not yet been implemented. (See 1.6)
- (b) Supporting effective policies and initiatives, which have a beneficial impact on the community through policy review and development.
- (c) Contributing to continuous improvement in services through monitoring quarterly departmental performance reports and the implementation of improvement plans.
- (d) Having a positive impact on the work and outcomes of external agencies and providers of public services.
- (e) Aiding Councillors in engaging with their communities and playing the role of community representatives and leaders.

### **1.5 Meetings**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee usually meets every six weeks, on Wednesday evenings at the Council's Civic Offices. In order to engage on a more direct level with residents, meetings can also be taken out into the community. Meetings are held in Open session, unless there are Exempt items for consideration by the Committee. Additional task groups can be set-up to undertake work on the Committee's behalf, which usually happens when there is a need to review a topic in greater depth.

## **1.6 Call-In of Policy Committee Decisions**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to determine 'call-in' requests of any policy committee decision made but not implemented. During the year 2017/18, the Committee was not required to deal with any 'called in' decisions or requests from Policy Committees for specific investigations.

## **2. Specific Areas of Activity**

### **2.1 The Annual Report**

In March 2018, the Committee considered the draft Annual Report for the 2017/18 municipal year, which looks at each of the priorities in turn and provides an overview of some of the outcomes achieved by the Committee and how it has discharged its function throughout the year.

### **2.2 Setting the Committee Work Programme**

The Committee held a scoping meeting in June 2017 outlining suggestions on how the Committee might identify and agree possible issues to form the basis of its Work Programme during the forthcoming municipal year. Members considered a range of potential areas for the Committee to review and the specific focus of their attention.

The key areas identified were:

- (a) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000
- (b) Review of Funding to Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations
- (c) Review of Area Forums / Safer Neighbourhood meetings
- (d) Review of Etwell Leisure Centre Contract / Community Access
- (e) Review of Grounds Maintenance Services, Street Scene Services and Waste/Cleansing Services
- (f) Review of Approach to Customer Services / Engagement
- (g) Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2017/18
- (h) The Budget 2017/18
- (i) Public Health
- (j) Member IT Provision
- (k) Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions
- (l) Medical Provision - Stenson Ward
- (m) Recreation Facilities in Rural Villages
- (n) Implementation of Universal Credit

*A short summary of the Committee's work during the year is set out below.*

**(a) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)**

The Committee has a standing function to monitor the Council's use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) on a quarterly basis, following the Council's Inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners. The Committee was satisfied the Council's use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy and Guidance during the municipal year 2017/18 had been carried out in accordance with the Act.

**(b) Review of Funding to Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations**

The Committee undertook a review of funding and support granted to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations with a view to ensure that a full spectrum of organisations were being represented. Services currently offered by voluntary organisations were reviewed in line with the Corporate Plan and information outlining details of the organisations in receipt of funding, the level of funding and how this is distributed was considered by the Committee. The importance of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and their assistance to this Council in the provision of services was highlighted. The information provided was noted and the Committee agreed to the submission of an annual report detailing voluntary and community sector organisation funding.

**(c) Review of Area Forums / Safer Neighbourhood Meetings**

The Committee reviewed the current structure of Area Forums and Safer Neighbourhood meetings with a view to increasing engagement within the community. A report was put to the Committee and recommendations to seek a revised, combined format with a joint agenda for both the Safer Neighbourhood meetings and Area Forums were progressed to the Chief Executive for referral to Council. Subsequently, a report was submitted to Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, where Members approved the recommended merger of the public Safer Neighbourhoods Meetings and Area Forums into one single meeting.

**(d) Review of Etwell Leisure Centre Contract / Community Access**

As part of a comprehensive review of the current situation the demand for, and utilisation of, a second pool, the take-up of early morning swimming sessions, the potential for increased community usage, the effective use of space and plans for addressing the growing need for additional sports provision were considered. Additionally, the relationship with the school under new academy management, the potential revisions to the current Agreement and the withdrawal of County Council funding were also noted.

**(e) Review of Grounds Maintenance Services, Street Scene Services and Waste/Cleansing Services**

The review of the Grounds Maintenance, Street Scene and Waste/Cleansing Services continued in 2017/18. Reports were presented to the Committee highlighting the impact of growth in South Derbyshire on service provision. A site visit to North Warwickshire Borough Council was undertaken by Members of the Committee, where enhanced collaboration between different teams, such as litter

pickers, fly tipping teams and the refuse round teams, including some outsourcing were cited as good practice. The information provided was reviewed by Members and, subject to the submission of further detail; recommendations are to be made to the relevant policy Committees during 2018/19.

**(f) Review of Approach to Customer Services / Engagement**

The Committee expressed the importance of customer services standards being embedded in all staff and the need for a common approach across the Council. It was agreed that the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) would progress the matter to Corporate Management Team to initially review the requirements and tailor the training appropriately. It was also noted that it is a common requirement of job specifications for posts that deal with the public to have customer service experience in accordance with the Council's Competency Framework.

**(g) Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2017/18**

The Committee has a specific role to assist the Finance and Management Committee with the Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account budget (HRA) and to subject it to a detailed review of future capital investment plans to ensure that the HRA could meet commitments for debt repayment and maintain a minimum working balance in accordance with the Financial Strategy. The Committee was satisfied with the work undertaken and the outcome of the HRA review.

**(h) The Budget**

The Committee has a responsibility to assist the Finance and Management Committee to review the budget proposals. The Committee considered the Budget, the General Fund and capital at two of its meetings in January and February 2018. Members were also invited to attend policy-setting meetings and Area Forums where detailed presentations were given. The Committee was satisfied with the work undertaken and the outcome of the review of the Budget. The Committee Chairman also delivered a verbal update to the Finance and Management Committee, noting its review of the budgetary matters presented by the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources). He reported that the Committee had carefully considered the budget reports and acknowledged the potential financial challenges facing the Council, but no matters of significance from an overview and scrutiny perspective were cited for further investigation.

**(i) Public Health**

**i) East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)**

Following attendance to Committees in 2016/17, the East Midlands Ambulance Service have continued to provide ongoing updates which are circulated to all Members.

**ii) NHS Hospital Trusts**

The Committee was updated on the collaboration of Burton Hospitals and Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. An informative presentation

was delivered by the Chief Executive of Derby Teaching Hospitals and the Director of Strategy Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust updating Members that the Boards of both Trusts had approved the Outline Business Case to deliver a partnership forming one single organisation. The benefits to both organisations, engagement of stakeholders including patients, and the importance of sustainability were explained in detail to the Committee. The process and timescale for implementation was outlined and the importance of sustaining services in both Burton and Derby were emphasised. In order to monitor the success of the merger, the Committee was advised that the completion of a Benefits Realisation Plan and communication with stakeholders would assist in this regard. Regular updates have been received and circulated to all Members, including invitations to Drop-In Information Sessions that were held in the Community Hospitals.

#### **(j) Member IT Provision**

In order to determine which new mobile devices would be the most effective, the process of evaluation and testing was instigated by a small focus group. Feedback was incorporated where the decision was made to move to a Lenovo tablet. The procurement process has been commenced, with configuration and training to be arranged in due course.

#### **(k) Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions**

The review into Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions is ongoing, with the Committee monitoring allocations. A representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group has been invited to attend a future meeting.

#### **(l) Medical Provision - Stenson Ward**

A specific request was received from Councillor Shepherd and his fellow Ward Member in relation to medical provision in the Stenson Ward. A number of complaints had been received from residents highlighting the difficulty experienced in obtaining a doctor's appointment and concerns that further planned developments within the Ward would exacerbate the situation. The Committee agreed to include the matter as part of its review of Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions.

#### **(m) Recreational Facilities in Rural Villages**

The Committee reviewed the provision of recreational facilities across the District, including the funding options available. Members approved that an audit of play area facilities be completed, enabling the Committee to review the matter at a future meeting based on the information provided.

#### **(n) Implementation of Universal Credit**

Members considered the information made available in preparing for the implementation of Universal Credit in the District, which included installation of additional computers for public use to assist with online applications, ongoing provision of Tenant workshops and continued collaboration with Citizens Advice and Community Voluntary Services. Members considered the current position and planned actions for supporting tenants and potential claimants of Universal Credit.

### **3 Challenges for 2018-2019**

- To build on, and update, the achievements of Overview & Scrutiny.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny continues to make a positive contribution to the development of policy and the continuous improvement of the Council's operations.
- To continue to ensure the Overview and Scrutiny work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and the public.
- To continue to ensure Overview and Scrutiny works with the community and key partners to respond to local concerns.
- To continue to ensure that the work of Overview and Scrutiny has a positive effect on decision-makers and provides evidence that it has made a real difference.
- To ensure Overview and Scrutiny takes a more active, appropriate role in respect of the work of the Policy Committees and their decisions.

Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
March 2018