

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

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Acknowledgement

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 the challenge of 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.

It is also appropriate to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of Councillor Gill Farrington, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's late Chairman.

Councillor Stuart Swann
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 2016/17 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 2016/17, the following Members were appointed to the Committee:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs Farrington (Chair), Councillor Swann (Vice-Chair), Councillor Billings, Councillor Mrs Coe and Councillor Mrs Patten

Labour Group

Councillor Bambrick, Councillor Dunn and Councillor Dr Pearson

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 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 2016/17, 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 2017, the Committee considered the draft Annual Report for the 2016/17 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 workshop in June 2016 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) Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions
- (b) Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000
- (c) Festival of Leisure
- (d) Public Health
- (e) Trident Housing Association
- (f) Telecare Provision
- (g) Street Scene, Recycling, Bulky Waste Collections
- (h) Voluntary Sector
- (i) Member IT Provision
- (j) Member Training
- (k) Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2015/16
- (l) The Budget 2016/17

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

(a) Section 106 Health Based NHS Contributions

The work relating to Section 106 Contributions continued in 2016/17. The Committee invited representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group to attend a Committee Meeting, where an update was provided by the Commissioning Manager of Primary & Community Services, of the NHS Southern Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group, who commented that, in relation to Section 106 matters, South Derbyshire was one of the more engaged authorities in the county. The Committee resolved that the work undertaken in conjunction with the Planning Department and Clinical Commissioning Group had made substantial progress, and allocated funds were in the process of being dispersed accordingly.

(b) 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 2016/17 had been carried out according to the Act of 2000.

(c) Festival of Leisure

This item had been requested to appear on the Work programme as some Members of the Committee felt that the original direction of the festival as a community event had perhaps changed over the last couple of years, and was now looked upon as a more commercial event. The Director of Community and Planning Services delivered an update to the Committee, emphasising the joint aims of keeping net costs to a minimum and maximising community participation. The Committee was satisfied with the proceedings relating to the Festival of Leisure and that local groups and charities had been given the opportunity to attend the event at reduced prices or at no cost.

(d) Public Health

i) Derbyshire Community Healthcare

A Derbyshire Community Health Services General Manager attended a Committee meeting presenting a comprehensive overview of the Community Nursing Service in the Swadlincote and surrounding area. This provided the Committee with a greater understanding of the issues involved, including the difficult decisions faced in facilitating the appropriate care to all service users.

ii) East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)

An EMAS External Relations and Engagement Manager attended a Committee Meeting and informed Members of how the service is currently run including its call prioritisation criteria. Information regarding service improvement plans were also outlined. Ongoing updates from EMAS continue to be received and circulated.

iii) NHS Hospital Trusts

Following an initial meeting with the Chief Executives of both Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, representatives from both Trusts delivered an informative presentation on the planned collaboration between the two bodies to a subsequent Committee Meeting. This provided an in-depth insight into the potential benefits of the partnership. As this collaboration develops, further updates have been promised, including a potential public meeting on the subject once further decisions have been made.

(e) Trident Housing Association

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman along with another committee member met with representatives from Trident Housing regarding a number of serious issues of concern raised by residents of Oakland Village. Feedback was provided to the Committee and it transpired that significant progress had been made on the issues for the benefit of residents. It was subsequently reported that residents had relayed positive comments as a result of this involvement

(f) Telecare Provision

A presentation was delivered to Committee by the Housing Operations Manager outlining the current and proposed telecare provision within the District. The vital

nature of this service and its importance in helping reduce hospital admissions was noted. Future funding and home alterations were explained, aimed at helping individuals return home and releasing hospital beds. Committee was advised that policies in this area are currently being reviewed, including housing allocation.

(g) Street Scene / Recycling / Bulky Waste

The Director of Housing and Environmental Services presented a report to Committee highlighting that the review of services had become crucial in order to deliver value and operate efficiently, particularly in view of the continuing growth within the district and its subsequent impact. It was clarified that a review of recycling provision at Civic Amenity sites would evaluate whether these sites are financially effective by assessing the cost of clearing dumped waste, the subsequent loss of recycling credit and the impact of waste going into landfill. Members suggested that identifying and addressing seasonal pressure points combined with educating residents through the provision of clear information on waste allowance would be of assistance in addressing these issues, particularly in relation to fly-tipping. It is expected that further reports, particularly relating to Street Scene issues, will be considered during the next municipal year.

(h) Voluntary Sector

The Committee commenced a review of funding and support granted to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations in order to ensure that a full spectrum of organisations are represented.

(i) Member IT Provision

The Committee has worked with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to review the current Member IT Provision specifically the use of the current iPads. This review was brought about by concerns that the iPads were not being used to their full potential and that changes to the current set-up could give Members additional functionality from the existing provision. Given the age of the existing iPads and potential conflicts with the Council's IT infrastructure that could be caused by opening up access to additional functionality; it was determined that new mobile devices would be the most effective solution and the process of evaluation and testing was instigated. This would initially take the form of a small focus group and feedback would be incorporated into the decision-making process.

(j) Member Training

The Director of Planning and Community Services presented the report to the Committee providing Members with a draft programme of training. It was agreed that the Director would liaise with the Member Champions for Training as well as this Committee in order to identify and co-ordinate any further training requirements.

(k) Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2016/17

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.

(I) The Budget 2017/18

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 2017. 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 2017/18. The Vice-Chairman also delivered a verbal update to the Finance and Management Committee, noting its review of the budgetary matters presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. 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.

3 Challenges for 2017-2018

- 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 respect of the work of the Policy Committees and their decisions.

Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
March 2017