

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANNUAL COUNCIL – 22 MAY 2023
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with Part 3a of the Constitution, the Council will receive an Annual Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to its work. This report illustrates the work of the Committee and its Task and Finish Panels during the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Council note the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/23.

3 Membership and Work Programme 2022/23

- 3.1 The Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23 was Councillors G. Michaelides (Chair), F. Marsh (Vice-Chair), M. Holloway (Vice-Chair), L. Chesterman, L. Crofton, A. Hellyer, C. Juggins, T. Rowse, M. Siewniak, C. Stanbury, S. Thusu, T. Travell, and R. Trigg.
- 3.2 An Annual Work Programme was set at the start of the municipal year in liaison with Members and relevant Officers. The work programme was then reviewed at each meeting of the Committee, which met four times during the municipal year: 27 September 2022, 22 November 2022, 17 January 2023 and 14 March 2023.
- 3.3 Committee Work Programme – The business considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee included:
- a) Food Safety Service Plan: The Committee noted the annual service plan and report.
 - b) Annual Budget Setting: The Committee received the report of the Task and Finish Panel it had established.
 - c) Garage Maintenance: The Committee received the report of the Task and Finish Panel it had established.
 - d) Streetscene Contract: The Committee received the report of the Task and Finish Panel it had established.
 - e) Review of Provision of the Discharge of Crime and Disorder Services in the Borough: The Committee received an update from officers on the work of the Community Safety Partnership over the past year and also looked at the year ahead.
 - f) Covid Vaccine Champions Project: The Committee received an update from officers which included a summary of how the funding was used to support the uptake of the covid vaccine in hard-to-reach communities.

3.4 **Task and Finish Panels:** Three Task and Finish Panels operated during the year, and reported their findings to the January and March meetings of the Committee:

a) Budget Setting Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors J. Broach (Chair), J. Boulton, F. Marsh, G. Michaelides, and P. Smith.

The Panel met on three occasions between November 2022 and January 2023 as part of the budget setting process. The budget was fully scrutinised by the panel who received an overview of the savings proposals, growth proposals, and fees and charges. The Panel made no changes from the recommendations that came out of Cabinet.

b) Garage Maintenance Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors M. Holloway (Chair), J. Cragg, S. McNamara, J.P. Skoczylas, and S. Thusu.

The Panel met on three occasions between November 2022 and January 2023 and considered; Occupancy rates; the number of repairs with completion rates; rental comparisons with other Hertfordshire local authorities; waiting list numbers; the number of complaints over the past 20 months; marketing objectives; and details of an ongoing data review.

c) Streetscene Contract Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors F. Marsh (Chair), C. Juggins, C. Stanbury, K. Thorpe, and S. Tunstall.

The Panel met on three occasions in November and December 2023 and considered; missed bin numbers and performance against KPI's; missed bin reporting for communal properties; access issues for refuse collection vehicles; use of CCTV and surveillance to prevent fly tipping; contractor staff morale; complaint numbers; recycling banks; waste cage days; use of social media to educate residents; recycling in flats; leaf clearance; gritting of pavements; vehicle numbers on the contract; contract inflation; spillages by collection crews; integration of council systems with Urbaser waste systems; commercial waste collection; and the accidents and collisions process.

Following disruption to waste collections during the snow and cold period in December it was agreed that a further meeting of the Panel would take place on 7 February 2023. At this meeting Urbaser delivered a presentation on the issues and lessons learned. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. There were questions raised on gritting of side roads and some town centre locations. Officers advised that this was the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council.

3.5 **Cabinet Response to Recommendations:** One recommendation was made by the Committee to Cabinet:

a) At its meeting on 24 January 2023, Cabinet considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 17 January 2023 on the budget proposals for 2023/24.

The draft budget was previously considered at Cabinet on 10 January 2023, following its review through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Task and Finish Panel. The budget was fully scrutinised by the Task and Finish panel who received an overview of the savings proposals, the growth proposals, and the fees and charges.

The panel acknowledged the challenges faced by the council in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, the limits on council tax and the medium-term uncertainties around government funding. No changes were proposed by the panel, which was supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme 2023/24

- 3.6 Prioritisation is necessary to ensure that the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority.
- 3.7 Members of the Committee can, during the course of the year, add items within the remit of the Committee that they wished to be considered, and discussed.
- 3.8 Once the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023/24 has been appointed at Annual Council in May, Committee members will be invited to a work-programming workshop on 25 May 2023. A further workshop is scheduled for 1 June 2023 where officers can be invited to help aid discussion arising from the first workshop.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 The requirement for local authorities in England to establish Overview and Scrutiny Committees is set out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Council itself cannot undertake the Overview and Scrutiny function and must establish a committee to do so.

5 Financial Implication(s)

There are no financial implications. Officer support for the Overview and Scrutiny function is met from existing resources.

6 Risk Management Implication(s)

- 7.1 None

8 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 None

9 Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 None

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 None

11 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 11.1 None

12 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

12.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee discharges the function of Health Scrutiny.

13 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

13.1 None

14 Link to Corporate Priorities

14.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority of a well-run council which puts our customers first, and specifically to the achievement of delivering modern, efficient and transparent services for everyone.

15 Equality and Diversity

15.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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