

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL COUNCIL – 20 MAY 2024  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION)

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

**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 2023/24 Municipal Year.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Council note the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24.

**3 Membership and Work Programme 2023/24**

- 3.1 The Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023/24 was Councillors L. Musk (Chair), A. Hellyer (Vice-Chair), T. Rowse (Vice-Chair), L. Crofton, G Michaelides, T. Mitchinson, A Nix, D. Panter, B. Sarson, M. Siewniak, C. Stanbury, K. Thorpe, S. Thusu, 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 Committee met five times during the municipal year: 18 July 2023, 26 September 2023, 14 December 2023, 16 January 2024 and 12 March 2024.

**Committee Work Programme**

- 3.3 The business considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee included:
- a) Housing Maintenance:  
The Committee noted the report which identified actions undertaken by the Cross Party Housing Maintenance member group and Cabinet Housing Panel.
  - b) Cyber Security:  
The Committee noted the measures in place to prevent cyber attacks and mitigate against them.
  - c) Street Scene:  
The Committee received the report of the Task and Finish Group it had established.
  - d) Recruitment, Retention and Leaver Processes:  
The Committee received the report of the Task and Finish Group it had established.
  - e) Budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast 2024/24 and budget consultation:  
The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair of the Task and Finish Group it had established, which had received an update on the

provisional local government finance settlement and an overview of the approach to fees and charges.

f) Crime and Disorder Update for the Borough:

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Inspector from Welwyn Hatfield Police.

g) Health Offer for the Borough:

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director, Leisure, Community and Culture.

**Task and Finish Panels:**

3.4 Three Task and Finish Panels operated during the year, and reported their findings to the Committee between December 2023 and March 2024:

a) Budget Setting Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors G. Michaelides (Chair), S. Boulton (Vice Chair), M. Birleson, H. Goldwater, F. Marsh, L. Musk, and P. Smith.

The Panel met on three occasions between October 2023 and January 2024 as part of the budget setting process. The budget was fully scrutinised by the panel which received an overview of the savings proposals, growth proposals, and fees and charges. No recommendations were made to Cabinet.

b) Recruitment, Retention and Leaver Processes Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors A. Hellyer (Chair), P. Smith (Vice Chair), M. Birleson, A. Nix, R. Platt, C. Stanbury and K. Thorpe.

The Panel met on three occasions between January and February 2024 and considered; staff turnover; recruitment; home working arrangements; staff retention; learning and development; health and wellbeing; staff empowerment; and the handover process when staff leave the Council. The Panel made three recommendations: a formal buddying system for new staff; adding fifty reasons to work for the Council to the new recruitment website; and undertaking regular staff surveys.

c) Street Scene Task and Finish Panel:

The Membership of the Panel was Councillors B. Sarson (Chair), S. Kasumu (Vice Chair), J. Cragg, R. Grewal, L. Mush, A. Nix and T. Rowse.

The Panel met on four occasions in September and October 2023 and considered; an overview of the Urbaser contract; complaints, performance and missed bin data; fly tipping data and the Council's approach to reducing fly tipping; recycling; bin collection calendars; information provided to students about waste and recycling; and waste cage days.

The Committee made a number of recommendations including: cardboard collections to be presented alongside blue lidded bins (implemented as a trial scheme in December 2023); a review of the bring back service and types of bin used; investigating options for entering a 12 month pilot contract with an external provider for environmental enforcement; continuing to collect paper separately to dry mixed recycling as this provides a greater income; a communications campaign be developed that seeks to change behaviour to encourage civic pride for the borough and enhanced education and publicity about matters such as waste disposal, recycling and tackling of illegal waste dumping including enforcement; a briefing note be distributed to members through the information hub on the responsibility for verge protection across the borough; consideration of sponsorship for Waste Cage Days; and that a Cabinet Street Scene Panel is introduced to provide regular oversight on the performance of the outsourced waste and cleansing contract.

3.5 One recommendation was made by the Committee to Cabinet:

- a) At its meeting on 9 January 2024, Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Street Scene Task and Finish Group and received an update on those recommendations by the Executive Member for Environment. Cabinet noted the Group's report and the update from the Executive Member and approved the recommendations.

### **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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