

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Council Offices,
Urban Road,
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Agenda

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday, 5th June, 2018**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road,
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

Lynn Cain

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01623 457317

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Membership

Chairman: Councillor Lee Anderson

Councillors:

Amanda Brown

John Knight

Lachlan Morrison

Jackie James

Glenys Maxwell

Christine Quinn-Wilcox

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SUMMONS

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.



R. Mitchell
Chief Executive

AGENDA

Page

1. To receive apologies for absence, if any.
2. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests.**
3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15th February, 2018. 5 - 12
4. Overview and Scrutiny Workplan Annual Refresh 2018-19. 13 - 18

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
on Thursday, 15th February, 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor John Knight in the Chair;

Councillors Rachel Madden, Cathy Mason,
Lauren Mitchell, Christine Quinn-Wilcox,
Paul Roberts, Mike Smith (as substitute for
Helen Hollis) and John Wilmott.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Lee Anderson and Helen Hollis.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Lynn Cain, Joanne Froggatt,
Mike Joy, Sharon Lynch, Alexia Massey and
Robert Mitchell.

In Attendance: Councillors Cheryl Butler, Jackie James,
Robert Sears-Piccavey, Helen-Ann Smith and
Jason Zadrozny.

OS.21 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

OS.22 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 16th November and
12th December, 2017, be received and approved as a correct record.

OS.23 Presentation - Budget Update

Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Finance Manager (and
Section 151 Officer) outlining an update position on the Council's Budget
following the budget presentation previously given in October 2017.

An update was given in respect of the following:-

Revised Budget 2017/18

- Discretionary Rate Relief
- Business Rates – one-off return
- Reduced Capital Financing
- Section 31 Grant – potential for increase
- Earmarked Reserves
- General Fund Balance;

Updates from Provisional Settlement for 2018/19

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- New Homes Bonus
- Revenue Support Grant;

Budget 2018/19 – Savings/Income Generation

- Commercial Property Update
- Pay
- Housing Benefits
- HRA IT Purchases
- Service Reviews and savings
- One-off budgets savings for 2017/18
- Service Reductions
- Recharges
- Borrowing and Capital Financing
- Total Expenditure
- Earmarked Reserves;

Housing Revenue Account

- Revised Budget 2017/18
- Budget – Net Income;

HRA Budget 2018/19

- Main Variances between 2017/18 and 2018/19
- Movement in Earmarked Reserves
- Overall Position.

RESOLVED

that the update position on the Council's Budget for 2017/18 and 2018/19, as presented, be received and duly noted.

OS.24 Review of Peer Challenge Recommendations

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager presented a progress report in relation to the implementation of key recommendations following the LGA Peer Challenge review in March 2017. The findings from the review were extremely positive and showed a significant improvement in Leadership and culture since the previous challenge in 2013.

Progress on the recommendations were outlined as follows:-

Annual Review of Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan was reviewed and published in June 2017 and the refresh included a Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) review of priority projects and Corporate Scorecard measures. The Council's Project Management Framework continued to manage key projects and activity against annual priorities for delivery and the 2018/19 review of the Corporate Plan was already in progress.

Strategic Opportunities and Partnership Working

The Council continued to exploit opportunities for collaborative working with partners including joint funding with D2N2 LEP, approved LEP investment through the Town Centres Programme for the Kirkby Leisure Centre, an incorporate set of 3 highway priorities in the County Council's Place Plan and effective project governance by the Regeneration Programme Board.

Senior Officer and Member time had been invested in key partnership meetings and the new Place Leadership Board (Ashfield Aspire) was progressing well engaging key businesses and community groups.

Prioritisation of New/Key Initiatives

A single transformation vision has been set out in the 'Strategic Direction' that was agreed by Cabinet in October 2017. Work was continuing to ensure alignment of the Council's strategic direction and the commercialism agenda has been further developed over the last 12 months with focus on commercial property investment.

The transformation and service review programme was currently being delivered by the Corporate Transformation and Efficiency Programme Board and external specialist support (Socitm) had recently been commissioned to enable the Council to further understand how new technology can be used to deliver transformation.

Agreement of Financial Targets

The Council's Corporate Savings Plan, linked to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), collates financial targets for key saving streams and performance against targets and is monitored by XLT, CLT and Cabinet. Potential savings streams were currently being considered for procurement opportunities.

Combination of MTFS, Budget and Capital Programme into a Comprehensive MTFS document

A review to consider the best approach for presenting the Council's financial position in a clear and consistent manner is due to be undertaken in 2018/19 with implementation envisaged for 2019.

Involvement of Opposition Members in Strategic Scrutiny Reviews

A recent service review has resulted in the creation of a dedicated scrutiny officer resource within the Democratic Services Team to undertake research and enable the development of a different approach to the scrutiny work programme. The scrutiny work programme continued to be aligned to the Corporate Plan.

Two non-voting tenant representatives have been appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for housing performance issues and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also taken the opportunity to utilise social media (facebook Live Streaming and Twitter) to widen engagement in the meetings. Further use of social media is also being planned for selective future meetings.

Induction Programme for Councillors

It was agreed that Members should be involved in designing an Induction Programme for Councillors and a Cross Party Working Group was due to be established towards the end of 2018 to devise a suitable programme for the new Member intake following the 2019 District Elections.

Project Management, Performance Management and Area Committees

The Council was continuing to review its Project and Performance Management Frameworks to identify opportunities to reduce bureaucracy whilst improving governance and process. Performance Management had been further strengthened through the introduction of a new competency framework that would be incorporated into personal development reviews (PDR's) for employees.

A review of community engagement had also recently concluded with a decision taken to cease Area Committees with effect from December 2017.

Communication Channels and Member Access

The Cross Party Update Group continued to meet on a regular basis and the Members' Digest was produced and circulated on a monthly basis. The current access arrangements for Members had not changed.

Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Process Review

A Cross Party Working Group had been established and was currently considering changes to the Complaints Process and the Members' Social Media Policy. The revised process and policy would be reported to the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee in March 2018.

Following the presentation the Chairman thanked the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager for her presentation and requested that the Committee's thanks be passed onto the relevant officers for their hard work and continued commitment towards supporting improvements at the Council.

RESOLVED that

- a) the progress report in relation to the implementation of key recommendations following the LGA Peer Challenge review, as presented, be received and noted;
- b) it be agreed that progress is sufficient enough not to warrant further consideration and it be removed from the Scrutiny Workplan.

Reasons:

In June 2017 Cabinet endorsed the findings of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge, whilst seeking approval for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor the implementation of approved actions arising from the peer challenge for the municipal year 2017/18.

The Peer Challenge Review undertaken by the Local Government Association in March 2017 was designed to support Councils and was part of a sector led improvement programme. There is an expectation from the LGA and Government that the findings will be used to support improvements. Cabinet sanctioned all actions arising from the LGA report.

OS.25 Corporate Scorecard – April to September 2017

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager presented the Quarter 2 Corporate Scorecard to enable Members to review the levels of performance achieved and assist with the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The year-end figures for 2016/17 were very positive with an 80% improvement across the corporate scorecard and 91% achievement against targets. The outturn from Quarter 2, 2017/18 was also promising to date indicating a 65% improvement across the scorecard with 77% of measures achieving or exceeding their targets.

Improved Performance

Areas of improved performance were highlighted as follows:

- Rent collection levels were at the highest comparative Quarter 2 position;
- Processing of all types of planning applications were well above nationally prescribed standard targets and last year's performance outturns;
- Void turnaround was currently 5 days quicker than previous years;
- Tenants being assisted with money advice was increasing and greater than target;
- Homelessness levels due to domestic violence were two thirds less than Quarter 2 last year;
- Private sector enforcement activity nearly doubled to those achieved last year and also the year before, particularly for damp and mould;
- Service requests regarding dog fouling were 40% lower than last year and 68% lower than 2013/14 levels;
- A 10% reduction in levels of anti-social behaviour across the District;
- Direct debit payments increased by 4% with a continued review of payment channels and digital accessibility for customers.

Areas for Improvement

Outdoor Market Stall Occupation

Current market stall occupation levels were 6% lower than the same period in 2016/17. A slight reduction had been anticipated due to a change in market days offered but Sutton were particularly underperforming whilst Hucknall were improving following the town centre improvements. It was also noted that footfall was currently down in Sutton town centre by 11%. The Council however, were continuing to actively promote the market incentives currently on offer both within and outside the District.

Long Term Empty Properties

14% less long term empty properties had been brought back into use compared to the same period last year but this had now been turned around in Quarter 3 with a 22% improvement. Loss of capacity within the team had contributed to the dip in performance but due to proactive enforcement activity and exceptional work from the team this had enabled good outturn figures to be achieved. An imminent report to be considered by Cabinet in relation to an Enforced Sales Procedure would hopefully improve performance further.

Affordable Homes

The number of affordable homes within Ashfield was significantly lower than the previous year. It had been recognised that this was due to a lack of local registered provider development resulting from reduced access to grants and S106 opportunities.

Fly-Tipping Service Requests

Service requests for removal of fly-tipping had increased by 32% with indicators that the trend was due to worsen still further. It was acknowledged that the worsening trend was unfolding nationally and also being experienced by neighbouring authorities. A District Councils Network event had been run recently which had identified some proposals that would be submitted to Government top endeavour to tackle the issue more effectively.

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Committee that fly-tipping was also subject to a stand alone Scrutiny review following its addition onto the Workplan at the end of 2017.

Following presentation of the Corporate Scorecard outturn position, Members debated the Council's current performance and discussed the following:-

- concerns regarding the increase in fly-tipping service requests and the requirement for the Council to address this as a priority;
- acknowledgement that the increase in fly-tipping service requests was not particularly due to improved Council reporting mechanisms but more to do with increased concern from the public regarding the eyesores of fly-tipping;
- the local authorities included within the East Midlands District Council network;
- concerns regarding the number of empty homes within the District and the rising numbers of homeless people who could potentially benefit from these properties being brought back into use;
- concerns regarding the accuracy of the dog fouling data due to many anecdotal comments from residents stating they no longer contact the Council because have lost faith that officers will respond and clean up the mess;
- the lack of lighting available to outdoor market stall holders and its possible contribution to the decline in market stall take up;

- the publicity available, or otherwise, for promoting the use of direct debit facilities to make payments for Council services;
- the possibility of mapping litter and fly-tipping service requests by wards to allow Members to better pinpoint any hotspots or problem areas for action.

RESOLVED

that the level of performance achieved against the Quarter 2 Corporate Scorecard for 2017/18, as presented, be received and noted.

Reasons:

1. The Council's ambitions for the next three years are clearly identified in the Corporate Priorities which are presented in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019. In March 2016, Cabinet agreed the use of a balanced scorecard methodology to enhance the organisations performance framework and ability to understand how successfully the Corporate Priorities are being delivered, the approach providing a more rounded view on performance with a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and quality.
2. The Corporate Scorecard has previously been agreed by Cabinet.
3. Performance outturn for the Corporate Scorecard will be monitored and managed at CLT, Cabinet and Scrutiny.

OS.26 Overview and Scrutiny Workplan 2017-18

Committee considered the latest position on the remaining topics from the 2017/18 work plan. Members were informed that an additional topic had been suggested for the workplan regarding a review of Council support for Christmas Events. It was envisaged that Members will consider how best the Council can support communities with their planning and implementation of future Christmas events (i.e. trees, lights and entertainment).

RESOLVED that

- a) the ongoing topics included on the 2017/18 Scrutiny Workplan, be noted;
- b) the review of Council Support for future Christmas Events, be added to the 2018/19 Scrutiny Workplan.

Reason:

Consulting, reviewing and agreeing items for the Scrutiny Workplan provides guidance and direction for the work undertaken by Scrutiny in the coming year.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman.

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Report To:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Date:	5 JUNE 2018
Heading:	SCRUTINY WORKPLAN ANNUAL REFRESH 2018-19		
Portfolio Holder:			
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Agenda. Each year the workplan is reviewed and refreshed. This report aims to focus Members on reviewing the suggestions that have been received following consultation with Members and officers. It also takes into account any suggestions that have been received from the community.

Members are requested to discuss the topics received so far detailed in the report with the aim of approving those that the Committee perceive can be positively influenced by Scrutiny involvement. The Committee is also asked to consider any additional items that may be beneficial for review, taking into account reasons for any future review, potential value added, timescales and priorities.

The workplan is a live document and ongoing consultation will continue to be undertaken with Service Directors, Third Tier Officers and Members. Community engagement will also form part of an ongoing consultation process. All suggestions received will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the aim of developing a sound, informed and flexible workplan that will add value to the community and the work carried out by the Council and its partners.

Recommendation(s)

- **Discuss the new suggestions received for consideration;**
- **Consider any additional future topics for the 2018/19 workplan that may benefit from Scrutiny involvement**
- **Approve the 2018/19 Scrutiny Workplan**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Consulting, reviewing and agreeing items for the Scrutiny workplan 2018/19 provides guidance and direction for the work undertaken by Scrutiny in the coming year.

Alternative Options Considered

(with reasons why not adopted)

No alternative options have been considered, as agreeing the Scrutiny workplan is part of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution.

Detailed Information

What is a Work Plan?

The Scrutiny Work Plan outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months / year by or on behalf of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels A and B. Topics added to the workplan should have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of Ashfield residents.

It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work plan so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with as and when they arise. It is suggested that the number of items placed on the workplan should be limited to no more than 8.

Sources of Work Plan Ideas

Numerous sources of information can help to inform topic selection, including:

- Concerns that have been raised by the public relating to Council delivered services
- Issues of community concern – not necessarily services delivered by the Council
- Issues that have been flagged up by reviews, audits or inspections (past and present).
- Issues relating to Councils outcomes, objectives and priorities
- Consultations and interviews
- Underperformance
- "Stakeholders" concerns – raised by the Council's partners or the users of services
- Partnership objectives
- Cabinet Members, Chief Executive or Service Directors presentations about the pertinent issues that are emerging and any opportunities or threats on the horizon.
- Central government priority changes.
- Analysis of customer complaints.
- Improvement Plans.
- Forward Plan
- Budgetary analysis.

Scrutiny is also encouraged to think about external Scrutiny and the monitoring of other public bodies, and how its activities will engage partner organisations, the media and the public.

Selecting a Work Plan Topics

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best possible workplan for Scrutiny. This means looking at the sources of information that may help and using them to choose the right topics. This involves:

- Drawing out and discussing what matters most to Councillors and to the community at large.
- Finding out about any research that has been completed or that is planned Prioritising topics.
- Looking at what the Scrutiny function has done before.
- Considering what added value is expected as a result of Scrutiny involvement
- Considering whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere
- Planning how to get the best from the Committee and Panel meetings

It is also important to note that Overview & Scrutiny have limited time and resources and therefore workplans need to be manageable. It is not possible to include every topic suggested by Members, Service Directors or the Public in the workplan. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics.

Risks

A common pitfall for Overview & Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to 'add value' to the work of the Council or the well being of the community. As such the selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Overview & Scrutiny as such processes can ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community.

The Peer Challenge in 2017 highlighted that Scrutiny would benefit from an increased focus on strategic issues, therefore it may be informative to consider issues prioritised in both the Corporate Plan and the Forward Plan.

New Topic suggestions

Following consultation with Members and officers the following topics have been put forward for consideration for the 2018-19 Scrutiny Workplan. Detailed in the table are also those topics that have rolled over from 2017-18. For each topic approved the Committee will be required to set out the aims and objectives of the review and detail any anticipated outcomes.

Topic suggested	Status
Commercial Enterprise Strategy / Commercialism	Approved
Fly Tipping	Approved
CCTV	Approved
Digital Service Transformation;	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting

Topic suggested	Status
Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers;	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Leisure Centre project;	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme;	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Selective Licensing.	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Markets (Indoor / outdoor)	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Free Community Skips	For consideration – Aims and objectives to be discussed at meeting
Standing Items	
Performance	
Budget Scrutiny	
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Scrutiny work plan should include issues based on performance, priority objectives and community concerns, many of which contribute to the Councils priorities, vision and outcomes contained in the Corporate Plan 2016 – 2019;

- Health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Economic Regeneration
- Place and Communities.
- Organisational Improvement
- Housing

Legal:

Consultation with Elected Members on items for the Scrutiny workplan is in accordance with procedure rules set out in the Councils Constitution.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None
General Fund – Capital Programme	None
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Without monitoring the workplan, there is a risk that items added may not add value, fall outside of Scrutiny remit or become unmanageable.	The Scrutiny workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda, this allows Members to monitor progress with reviews at each meeting.

Human Resources:

Where there are HR / equality and diversity implications identified through items agreed for the Scrutiny workplan, these will be consulted upon and considered as part of the wider workforce planning and equalities agendas.

Equalities:

There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report.

Other Implications:

Unison / GMB will be consulted upon reviews that have potential staffing issues in a timely manner.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None

Reason(s) for Exemption

None

Background Papers

Scrutiny Workplan 2017/18

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