



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Annual Reports 2014-2015

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**Foreword by Tim Holton
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Management Committee**

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have looked at a variety of issues during the year as detailed in the following report. All agenda items have been thoroughly discussed and when appropriate Task and Finish Groups have reviewed topics in great depth often taking several months. At every meeting the objective has been to advance the Council's priorities by challenging decisions, reviewing performance and contributing to policy setting.

This municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, (OSMC) has continued taking a more strategic role delegating the undertaking of detailed investigations to the most relevant overview and scrutiny committee. The focus of the OSMC has been on ensuring that the Overview and Scrutiny activities are supporting the Council's priorities and shaping the types of reviews being undertaken.

OSMC has looked at a number of key issues during the year which were particularly important to residents, in particular that of grassing cutting. During the course of three meetings a series of recommendation were put forward for the Executive Member to consider. We have embraced social media and regularly put out information to the residents of Wokingham highlighting forthcoming agenda items.

As the lead member for Scrutiny the support I have had from all 3 parties has been exemplary. Members have looked at the issues and not the politics. For the coming year I hope the new committee will be able to build on this ethos. Scrutiny is not a Committee that can claim ever to have completed its job, even when recommendations are submitted.

Tim Holton – Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)

THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

What we do

Overview and Scrutiny was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 as part of a series of measures that saw the replacement of the Committee system. In Wokingham, the Leader and Cabinet model was chosen, whereby executive decision making powers are invested in a Leader and Cabinet, (referred to as the Executive) of up to ten members having power to take decisions either collectively or individually. To counterbalance these powers, local authorities were given Overview and Scrutiny functions which can only be exercised by councillors who are not members of the Executive.

The Local Government Act 2000, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and other legislation sets out the role of Overview and Scrutiny for Councils, the objectives of which are to:

- Hold the Executive to Account – which can involve scrutinising decisions of the Executive before they are made, before they are implemented or after they are implemented.
- Policy Development and Review – by using the unique insight of Members as representatives of their communities to look at issues facing local residents and/or to use that insight to challenge the effectiveness of existing policies.
- Performance Monitoring – by considering information on a regular basis setting out how the Council is performing and if necessary investigating where improvement is required.
- External Scrutiny by considering issues that are of importance to local people but are the responsibility of other agencies.

All councils operating Executive governance arrangements must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Wokingham Borough Council operates with one Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and four Overview and Scrutiny Committees, but either the Management Committee or Committees may create time limited task and finish groups if considered expedient.

The four principles of good scrutiny as identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny are:

- To provide a ‘critical friend’ challenge to decision making in the Council as well as external authorities and agencies
- To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- To take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- To make an impact on the delivery of public services

What we do not do

Overview and Scrutiny is not a mechanism for the investigation or settling of individual complaints for which the Council has separate processes. Nor is it able to look at individual planning or licensing decisions. However, suggestions from residents as to wider issues that could be looked at by overview and scrutiny are welcome.

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TEAM

Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 2014-2015

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee during 2014-2015 comprised 12 backbench Councillors appointed by the Council according to political balance.

Each political group is entitled to a maximum of two Councillors who can, subject to an agreed process, substitute up to two members of the Committee and continue with a particular issue as it proceeds.

Councillors



Tim Holton
Chairman



Michael Firmager
Vice-Chairman



Parry Batth



Prue Bray



Mike Gore



Pauline Helliard-Symons



Norman Jorgensen



Nicky Jerrome



Ken Miall



Malcolm Richards



David Sleight



Shahid Younis

Substitute Councillors



Mike Haines



Abdul Loyes



Rachelle
Shepherd-
DuBey



Dee Tomlin

Overview and Scrutiny at Wokingham

Overview and Scrutiny at Wokingham Borough Council aims to provide constructive challenge by being a 'critical friend' to the Council and its partners. In practice this means using the unique insight that backbench Councillors have as representatives of their community to highlight possible areas of improvement, highlight and congratulate achievement and contribute to the development of future ideas.

Councillors sitting on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Committees see themselves not as the adversary of the ruling Executive or the Officer core, but as being supportive of what is good and a robust and a fair critic of anything that is not. This is important because whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees do not have any decision making powers, they do have the ability to use the position of critical friend to influence decisions taken by the Council.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has developed a work programme for itself and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the past year which is considered, and if required, updated at each meeting. The aim is to address issues it considers to be of interest to the Council and the community.

The work programme has to remain flexible in order that any urgent pieces of work that have come to light, but which had not been planned for, or which must be undertaken because of legislation or because they are of sufficient importance, can be considered.

The current Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out in Chapter 6 of the Wokingham Borough Council Constitution.

OUR WORK

The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2014/2015

Meetings

The Committee has met on six occasions and has considered/dealt with the following business:

Consideration of 'Call-Ins'

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the ability to look at decisions made by the Executive as a collective and those made by individual Executive Members. Under the Council's Constitution five councillors who are not members of the Executive can request that decisions made, but not yet implemented, be reviewed. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision was taken appropriately. However, no 'Call-Ins' had been received during 2014/2015 as of the date of this report.

Performance Management

- **Balanced Scorecard Updates.** Throughout the municipal year the Committee has continued to regularly receive a performance management report setting out the Council's performance against a number of financial, staffing and operational/project indicators. The report includes a section setting out by exception those indicators not reaching their targets including a narrative giving an explanation of the reasons and management actions being taken to address performance and a full report setting out the performance of all the adopted indicators. The Committee receives the same information that is supplied to the Council's Executive.
- The Committee has asked questions and sought further information in respect of indicators that have not met their performance targets. Where it has been felt that further information was required or that an issue needed to be investigated in more detail it has requested that these be looked at by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees or has requested further information itself.
- The Committee has noted with interest the work undertaken during 2014/2015 to improve the format, design and methodology of the report so that the Council can move to a performance management framework that is closer in practice to the best practice model of the 'Balanced Scorecard' approach and thus contain a high level financial and non-financial 'dashboard' view of the Council with more detailed information being available at the operational level. The Committee has commented on the type of measures it felt should be included within the revised Balanced Scorecard and will be considering a draft of the revised Balanced Scorecard at its meeting in March 2015.

Summary of Briefings/Topics

- **Updates on Business Continuity/Information Technology** – In February 2013 the Council suffered a significant failure of its Storage Area Network, (SAN) which lasted several days. Since then the Committee has received a number of regular updates to assure themselves of the robustness of the Council's Business Continuity Systems and Information Technology systems. The Committee received updates at its meetings in

October 2014 and January 2015 and was pleased to note that Business Continuity Plans were in place for all of the Council's service areas. It was commented upon that the robustness of Business Continuity Plans was something that needed to be tested on a regular basis. The Committee has also explored the contingency arrangements in place for the delivery of the Council's information technology systems and the how volunteers' networks might be used to assist in the event of a business continuity incident arising in the Borough.

- **Grass Cutting and the Maintenance of Public Open Spaces** – following concerns expressed to a number of members of the Committee from local residents regarding the length of grass in a number of Council owned parks, sport pitches and open spaces the Committee discussed the issue at its meeting in July 2014. A number of witnesses were invited including a local resident who had organised a public petition on the issue, the Executive Member for Environment, the Director of Environment, a representative of Earley Town Council and other appropriate Officers. The Committee explored the circumstances behind the increase in residents' concerns and complaints and learnt that a public review of how grass cutting was managed was due to take place during the autumn of 2014.
- In addition to requesting that additional information on grass cutting be placed on the council's website regarding past grass cutting dates, the Committee asked the Executive Member for Environment to continue to ensure that the grass cutting contract was monitored as effectively as possible, that discussions with parishes over possible partnership arrangements on grass cutting continue and that the committee be informed of the results of the review of the service and the public consultation undertaken as part of the review/
- To date the Committee has received two further update reports on the review of the service and the public consultation in November 2014 and January 2015. It is due to receive a further update in March 2015. The Committee considered the results of the public consultation and review of the service and suggested that in the future the Council considers a move to a more outcomes rather than outputs contract framework. This would move away from stipulating a set number of cuts to other measures, e.g. a maximum length of grass allowable or similar measure.
- **Internal Audit Review -Scrutiny Arrangements** - During the 2013/2014 municipal year an Internal Audit Review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements had been undertaken. At its meeting in March 2014 the Committee considered the management action plan in response to the audit report. The plan included actions to further promote the work and role of Overview and Scrutiny, and strengthen the relationship between the Committee and the Corporate Leadership Team, reduce the opportunity for duplication with other Member/Officer groups and other measures aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee.
- In November 2014 the Committee considered the implementation of the management action plan arising from the review and noted the progress made.
- **Broadmoor Hospital Alert Sirens** - In July 2014 the Committee was informed by Bracknell Forest Overview and Scrutiny Commission of proposals by the West London Mental Health Trust, (WLMHT) to decommission a number of the existing escape alert

sirens which would be activated in the event of an escape of a patient from Broadmoor Hospital. Whilst the hospital is located within the Bracknell Forest Borough Council area, a number of the sirens proposed to be decommissioned were within Wokingham Borough. After considering the information available and the deliberations of the Bracknell Forest Overview and Scrutiny Commission, the Committee felt that notwithstanding the high level of security measures in place leading to the extremely unlikely probability of an escape from the hospital and the duty of the hospital to spend its budget prudently, that the escape alert sirens did provide an important level of assurance to local residents and should be retained. The Committee decided to agree with the concerns expressed by the Bracknell Forest Overview and Scrutiny Commission and support the Commission in its request that the WLMHT reconsider its proposals and in expressing concern over the lack of consultation by the WLMHT of the two Councils as the principal authorities in the area.

- In October 2014 a number of members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee attended and participated in a meeting of the Bracknell Overview and Scrutiny Commission at which the Chief Executive, Chairman and Director of Security were present to answer questions regarding the Trust's proposals for the sirens. Feedback from this meeting was given to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in November 2014. It was noted that at the Bracknell meeting the WLMHT had agreed to re-examine their proposals for the sirens and had also extended an offer for Members from both authorities to visit the hospital to see the security arrangements in person.
- At the joint meeting, the Members in attendance had noted that some concerns had been expressed regarding the effectiveness of a schools cascade system which would be triggered in the event of an escape from the hospital. It was decided that this was an area that Members wished to investigate further with regard to schools in Wokingham. The Committee was also updated that the issue had been considered by the Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Board.
- In January 2015 the Committee received an update on the visits undertaken by a number of the members of the Committee in late November 2014, the results of its high level investigation of the effectiveness of the schools cascade system and the consideration of the Trust's proposals by the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership. The Members that had undertaken the visits commented on how useful they had found it and that they had been reassured by the level of the security measures in place. With regard to the effectiveness of the school's cascade system, it was noted that whilst the majority of the schools which had responded had indicated they did receive test calls through the cascade system, a small number indicated that they had not and it was decided to look into this further.
- With regard to the future of the sirens it was suggested that one way forward might be for the WLMHT to retain the present sirens as long as they remained operable until other more modern alert systems were put in place.
- In considering the issue, the Committee has acknowledged the case put forward by the WLMHT and other professionals that in many ways the sirens represented a historical anachronism, were not present at other secure hospitals and could be considered to perpetuate stigma towards people with mental health issues. However, Members have

also commented on the role of Councillors to act as leaders and a bridge between the professional view and the genuinely felt concerns of their residents.

- The Committee will be considering a further update at its meeting in March 2015.
- **Council Efficiency Brainstorming Session** – In October 2014 the Committee considered a report setting out an overview of the financial challenges facing the Council in the future and a number of possible ‘blue sky’ ideas for ways that the Council could consider saving money in the future and also generate additional income. The consideration of the item followed the submission by the Chief Executive of a scrutiny review suggestion on the subject earlier in the year.
- Arising from the discussion at the meeting, the Committee decided to investigate a number of issues in more detail including asking for a report on actions taken by the Council and other local authorities to minimise the number of improper single person council tax single person discounts granted, to receive a briefing from the Chief Fire Officer of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on opportunities for joint working, to receive a paper on the Strategic Assets Project Group and to take forward a number of other issues delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- **Council Tax Single Person Discount Reviews** – At its meeting in November 2014, the Committee considered a report setting out information on council tax single person reviews as requested at the October 2014 meeting. The report included information on how the Council had over several years reviewed the number of single person discounts applied which had led to a decrease in the number of erroneous discounts applied. As a result the Council’s revenue had increased. The report also provided comparison data where it was available from the other Berkshire unitary councils. The Committee felt that a good service was being provided by the Council in seeking to reduce erroneous discounts which was to the benefit of the Borough’s council tax payers as a whole.
- **Possible Implications For Overview and Scrutiny of the Francis Review Working Group** – In October 2014 the Committee considered the report of the Francis Review Working Group. The working group had been established by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to focus upon whether there were any implications for the practice of health overview and scrutiny arising locally from the recommendations of the Francis Report into failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, (the Francis Report). Whilst the majority of the review’s conclusions and recommendations related to the health overview and scrutiny area, it was noted that there were common aspects that related to overview and scrutiny generally. The Committee considered these recommendations as set out in the working group’s report which included recommendations around preparedness for meetings, use of pre-meetings, selection of work programme items, monitoring of local and national news items and training. It was decided that all of the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should take the recommendations of the working group into consideration in the operation of their respective committees.
- **Briefing From Andy Fry, Chief Fire Officer, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue** – At its meeting in January 2015 the Committee received a presentation from Andy Fry, Chief Fire Officer of the Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and David Phillips, Area Manager of the Fire and Rescue Service. The presentation covered the financial challenges facing the fire and rescue service and how it was responding to those challenges to meet the

needs of residents in the future and the opportunities that existed for the fire and rescue service to work more closely with the Council and other local authorities to reduce costs and improve the service offered to residents.

- The Committee felt that the presentation and opportunity to have a discussion with Chief Fire Officer to be very useful and particularly acknowledged and valued the role that fire and rescue service is playing in supporting the wider agenda of improving the health and wellbeing of residents. As a result of the Committee's discussions it has asked that consideration be given to the inclusion of a representative of the fire and rescue service on the Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Board and Officers from a number of the Council's service areas be asked to explore the potential opportunities for further joint working in the areas of planning and work with young people and children.

Standard Work Programme Items

In addition to individual items of business the Committee has as part of its Work Programme discussed a number of regular business items:

- **Consideration of the Work Programme** – at each meeting the work programmes of the Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are examined and requests for additions to the work programme, such as a review request, are considered. In addition, the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have an opportunity to feedback to the Management Committee on the operation of their committees.
- **Update Reports From Chairman or Nominated Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees** – at each meeting the Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to present a short written or verbal report. The objective of this item is to help facilitate the management of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees by providing a mechanism for Chairman to highlight the keys pieces of work that their committees are undertaking and if they feel it appropriate to seek the Committee's view on future potential pieces of work they are considering undertaking. Members of the Committee who are not members of the various committees also have an opportunity to ask questions for knowledge to be shared.
- **Consideration of the Current Executive Forward Programme** – at each meeting the current Executive Forward Programme is considered. If felt necessary, the Committee can ask for further information or request the attendance of witnesses in order to seek further information on a particular forthcoming Executive decision. A continuing issue of concern for the Committee has been the accuracy of the Council's Executive Forward Programme in setting out a list of expected decisions requiring Executive approval within a four month period and that the four month cycle was not sufficient to provide enough notice for the Committee to identify areas of interest and investigate them before a decision was taken by the Executive.

Task and Finish Groups

Under the Terms of the Constitution there is provision for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to establish Task and Finish Groups in order to undertake reviews into specific subjects.

During the 2014/2015 municipal year the Committee has not decided itself to establish any Task and Finish Group. This is consistent with the change in focus of the Committee from May 2013 which was intended to strengthen the Committee's strategic oversight role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees work programmes.

How Overview and Scrutiny has helped hold the Council's Executive to Account and achieve the Council's Vision, Values and Priorities

During 2014/2015 Overview and Scrutiny contributed to the Council holding the Executive to account in the following areas:

- Examination of performance management information including challenge to areas of underperformance including through examination of the Balanced Scorecard both within the Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- Consideration by the Committee and within the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of reports and briefings from Officer on particular issues of interest and/or concern;
- Consideration by the Committee of the grass cutting service and maintenance of the Borough's open public spaces following the expression of concerns by residents;
- The undertaking of scrutiny reviews has contributed towards policy development and the improvement of services.

Overview and Scrutiny Support

Policy and practical support to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees is provided by Officers within the Democratic Services Team as part of its wider role in supporting the democratic core of the Council. The objective of this support is to provide an efficient, independent, evidence based function that enhances the democratic accountability of the Council to its residents.

The function involves working closely with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Executive, Senior Officers and other members of the Council.



Further information or answers to any queries relating to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny functions or this report can be obtained from Kevin Jacob, Principal Democratic Services Officer and Statutory Scrutiny Officer. Contact details are set out below:

Democratic Services
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN
Tel: 0118 974 6058
Fax: 0118 919 7757 Email: democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

Dates for Meetings in 2015/2016

The following dates have been agreed, but could be subject to change. *Please see the Council's website or contact the Democratic Services Team to check a particular meeting is taking place as it can be subject to change.*

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

1 June 2015
27 July 2015
7 September 2015
2 November 2015
11 January 2016
7 March 2016

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 July 2015
22 September 2015
27 October 2015
2 December 2015
23 February 2016

Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 June 2015
9 September 2015
9 November 2015
18 January 2016
14 March 2016

Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 June 2015
23 September 2015
23 November 2015
20 January 2016
22 March 2016

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 June 2015
28 July 2015
29 September 2015
30 November 2015
26 January 2016
23 March 2016

Work Programme for 2015-2016

It is important that the Management Committee takes continued ownership and control of its work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees by deciding what topics are important and what should and should not be included.

The Committee has previously agreed six review topic selection criteria to assist in this process:

- the issue should be local, and preferably of current concern.
- the issue has a bearing and is linked to the Council corporate objectives
- the issue is not being reviewed elsewhere
- the issue is capable of being influenced by Overview and Scrutiny
- the issue is of manageable scope and is not too wide ranging and yet of sufficient size to warrant a scrutiny review
- there are sufficient resources to support the scrutiny review.

It is expected that in May 2015 the Committee will seek suggestions from Members, the Corporate Leadership Team and the public for possible review items for inclusion into the work programme for 2015-2016. It is anticipated that topics will be allocated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in June 2015 so the Overview and Scrutiny Committees can continue their work as soon as possible in the new municipal year.

The Management Committee will also consider other topics for inclusion and the following section sets out how local residents can become involved in Overview and Scrutiny.

In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have themselves developed on-going work programmes which are referred to in individual Committee Annual Reports.

Community Involvement and Engagement in Overview and Scrutiny

Wokingham Borough Council wants Overview and Scrutiny to be open and accessible to as many residents as possible. A central aim of the process is to seek to improve outcomes for residents through the scrutiny process. Residents can become involved by:

- Attending Overview and Scrutiny meetings – All meetings are open to the public to attend and are held in the evening to seek to encourage wider participation.
- Copies of Agendas and Minutes relating to Overview and Scrutiny can be accessed via the Council Offices and online at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/> Residents can opt to receive automatic notification when new Agendas and minutes are added to the Council's website.

- Members of the public have the right to ask questions on general matters relating to Overview and Scrutiny and on specific agenda items and in 2014/2015 this facility has been taken up on a number of occasions;
- Members of local organisations or individual local residents may be asked to contribute to a review by supplying information, advice or views and/or attend meetings as a witness.
- Request that an issue be considered by overview and scrutiny as a review item. It is now possible for local residents to use the Council's website to complete an on-line scrutiny review suggestion form. This is available at www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review/
- It had been recognised in the Committee's 2013/2014 Annual Report that levels of public participation and engagement could be improved significantly and that consideration was being given to the proactive use of press releases regarding scrutiny activity and the appropriate use of social media. This has been put in practice and social media used to promote the publication of the agenda and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Agenda and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, it is recognised that public engagement in the Overview and Scrutiny process remains an area for development.

**CORPORATE SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

**BY
COUNCILLOR NORMAN JORGENSEN
CHAIRMAN**

**FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR NORMAN JORGENSEN
CHAIRMAN OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee has during the last year looked at a number of issues which are important to residents in the Borough and to how the Council delivers services. These have ranged from parking to planning enforcement. We are pleased that following work by Officers, consultants and this Committee the Executive adopted the new Planning Enforcement Plan at a recent meeting.

We already have a number of topics on the agenda for coming meetings as you can see from this report and more will be added during the next two months as proposals are sifted.

I thank the Members of the Committee, officers and those others who contributed to our meetings for their valuable contributions

Introduction

1. The role of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise, review and assist with:
 - a) the Council's budget and policy framework;
 - b) services that support the Council's vision and corporate priorities, excluding matters relating to Children and services which are covered by other scrutiny bodies.
2. The work of the Committee is overseen by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, of which the Committee Chairman is a Member. At each Management Committee meeting the Committee Chairmen report back on the work of their particular Committee.
3. The Committee can create time limited; subject specific, Task and Finish Groups to review particular issues should they wish to.
4. The Committee is made up of eight Members, seven Conservatives and one Liberal Democrat. Each party also appointed two substitutes. The Committee will have held five scheduled meetings this year.
- 5.



Norman
Jorgensen
Chairman



Michael
Firmager
Vice-Chairman



Parry Batth



Chris Bowring



Kate Haines



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Shepherd-
DuBey



Ken Miall



Shahid Younis

Substitute Councillors



Prue Bray



Dee Tomlin



David Sleight



Bill Soane

2014/15 Work Programme

6. During 2014/15, the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised and received an update on a number of issues, including:
 - Planning Enforcement Service Action Plan;
 - Advanced Signing During Road Flooding;
 - Wokingham Borough Council – How it Learns as an Organisation;
 - May 2015 Election Counts;
 - Wokingham Town Car Parks and Council Car Parks Strategy; and
 - Review of Commuter Parking.

2015/16 Work Programme

6. The Committee's work programme for 2015/16 will be populated further over the next couple of months and will be an evolving document. The Committee will continue to scrutinise the key areas which come under its remit such as:
 - a) Planning Enforcement Service Action Plan; and
 - b) Burials Review.
7. The Committee will also be considering items referred to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as follows:
 - a) Upkeep and Maintenance of Sports Pitches;
 - b) Decent Homes Standard; and
 - c) Review of Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.

Norman Jorgensen

Chairman of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

BY

**COUNCILLOR PAULINE HELLIAR-SYMONS
CHAIRMAN**

FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR PAULINE HELLIAR-SYMONS CHAIRMAN CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee's work is split about equally between children's social work and educational attainment. This has been a very busy year, not least because the Committee monitors annually what has happened to all the recommendations it put in place in earlier years, on top of new work that has come its way and which is outlined below. This is as well as the normal performance monitoring that we do each meeting, and which keeps the committee in touch with how both the Service's social care, and schools who have had Ofsted inspections, are doing: a few schools have dropped a grade this year, largely as a result of the harder Ofsted expectations, and we monitor what the Service is doing to help schools requiring improvement to improve. Our earlier work on the role of Governors (the work we did at a task and finish group) has been paying off, however (as well, of course, as the work being done by the Department), since Ofsted now makes a specific comments on how well Governors are challenging their Head teachers about the performance of the schools, and there are far fewer negative comments than there used to be.

We have noted that the Service has done a good deal of work on narrowing the gap, reducing the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment (NEETS), and listening to the voice of young people, which we have been monitoring. Also we are currently monitoring the new social workers recruitment and retention package which, although it appears expensive on the surface, is within the Service's budget and will soon start to save money over the cost of using agency staff; it is also already showing a better rate of retention, as the Service seeks to develop a better career path for our social workers.

Some of the important work we have looked at has included the contents of the Children and Families Act of 2014, which constrains partners to work more closely in serving the needs of Special Educational Needs children, recognising that many of their educational difficulties stem from health or social problems, which everyone involved with the child need to know about. This is perhaps an example of the much closer partnership working that has developed in recent years, between schools, social care workers, the Police and the Health Service.

It is important that Councillors who are involved with children's work are fully aware of how quickly the ground changes in this world, and for this reason we have training each year to keep all members of the Committee up to date with the many changes that take place, both relating to schools and to child protection and wellbeing.

Introduction

1. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by Council in May 2010.
2. The role of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise, review and assist with the policy development of:
 - a) those matters relating to the Children's Act 2004, "Every Child Matters" and any subsequent legislation relating to the delivery of Children's Services by the Council;
 - b) those matters set out in Section 499 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 9 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) and all other legislation such as the Children Act 1989;
 - c) services that support the Council's vision and corporate priorities for children and young people including, amongst others, the following areas:
 - i) Schools;
 - ii) Early Years Settings and Children's Centres;
 - iii) Safeguarding and Child Protection;
 - iv) Looked After Children and Young People;
 - v) Family Support Services for Children and Young People;
 - vi) Services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities;
 - vii) Inclusion and Attendance;
 - viii) School Transport; and
 - ix) Youth Services.
 - d) those matters that relate to the implementation of designated programmes within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that relate to children and young people.
3. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the work of the Committee, as well as that of the other two Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Chairman of the Committee is a Member of the Management Committee and reports back on the work programme of the Committee at each meeting. The Committee may create time limited task and finish groups if expedient.
4. The Committee has eight Members, initially six Conservative and one Liberal Democrat, and one for the Group of Three, two Parent Governor Representatives; and a representative from the Church of England Diocese, and the Roman Catholic Diocese. Two substitutes each for the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups are appointed. During the year there has been no representation from either of the Dioceses, and part way through the year, the Parent Governor Representatives' term of office came to an end, and a recruitment process has not yet found any replacements.
5. The Committee Members in 2014/15 were:
Councillors Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Parry Bath (Vice Chairman), Mark Ashwell, Lindsay Ferris, Ken Miall, Bill Soane, Shahid Younis. Nicky Jerome (Group of Three) was appointed to the Committee initially, but was replaced by Alison Swaddle

(Conservative) in November 2014. Chris Bowring, Bob Wyatt, Kay Gilder, and Dee Tomlin were appointed as substitutes. Karen Knight, was Parent Governor Representative until September 2014.



Pauline Helliarsymons -
Chairman



Parry Bath
Vice-Chairman



Mark Ashwell



Lindsay Ferris



Nicky Jerrome



Ken Miall



Bill Soane



Shahid Younis

Substitute Councillors



Kay Gilder



Chris Bowring



Dee Tomlin



Bob Wyatt

2014/2015 Work Programme

6. At every meeting, the Committee monitors the Performance Indicators for Children's Services in the Balanced Scorecard those scrutinised relate to: 'Keeping Children Safe'; 'Narrowing the Gap'; and 'Opportunity for All'. The new indicators include those on Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attainment, and the gap between the performance of those children eligible for Free School Meals and their peers.
7. The Committee also receives regular information on School Performance data, with an annual report on the overall results for Wokingham schools across the whole age range of assessments, tests and examinations from Early Years to Key Stage 5 (A levels). Summaries of recently published School OFSTED reports are reviewed at each meeting, and since March 2014 the Committee has monitored 23 schools. This is in the context of our work on scrutiny of School Improvement.
8. The Committee has scrutinised and advised on a range of issues during 2014/15 at the five meetings since the last report, including:
 - Update on the new arrangements for the provision for Special Education Needs and Disability
 - Wokingham Schools Performance Data in 2013 – a detailed analysis and implications of the test results across all phases.
 - Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board including an update on the delivery of the Children in Care Pledge
 - Looked After Children Review – update on implementation of the review recommendations from the Corporate Parenting Board, as included in the Board's Annual Report.
 - Children and Families Act 2014 - Update on the latest situation in relation to the Act and its implications requiring substantive changes to the way in which services for vulnerable children/young people with special educational and disabilities will be provided from September 2014.
 - Assessment Arrangements for Primary Schools – information on the implications of the changes to the way that primary pupils will be assessed, from September 2014.
 - Annual report of the work of the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board
 - Mid-Year Review of the Effectiveness of Services to Safeguard Children - giving details of the three independent reviews that have taken place since April 2014 to ensure that the Council's systems are effective in keeping children safe in Wokingham
 - Schools Performance data at the end of 2013/14 – analysis of the preliminary test data across all phases.
 - Narrowing the Gap – reports to two meetings giving detailed information and specific analysis of the 2014 pupil and schools performance data and outcomes relating to the issue of improving the achievement of pupils on Free School Meals in relation to their peers which was identified in the report of Ofsted' inspection of the arrangements for the protection of children;
 - Future Role of Wokingham Borough as a provider of statutory school improvement services – consideration of a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – setting up a Task & Finish Group and receiving update reports.
 - Effectiveness of Governing Bodies and Local Authority Support Review –

monitoring the implementation of the recommendations from the Review - a further update

- Delivering Effective Safeguarding Services for Children – regular updates and details of the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy for social workers.
- Delivering Effective Safeguarding Services for Children – Information on the Early Help and Innovations Strategy

Task and Finish Groups

9. Following a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to look into the future provision of school improvement services, the Committee agreed to set up a Task & Finish Group comprising all Committee members, to receive a briefing by the Director of Children's Services setting out the current situation and plans for the future of the service with a view to giving advice on the different options. The briefing led the Task & Finish Group to ask for more detailed information on different models adopted by other authorities and two presentations were made. Representatives of primary and secondary Head teachers organisations, and the both the Executive and Deputy Executive Members for Children's Services have been involved in the discussions at the Group's meetings. A final report will be agreed by Group members, and then run past Head teachers to ensure they can identify with the recommendations, since they are so key to the good cooperation that exists in Wokingham between its schools, and between schools and the Department.

Training

10. Training took place for all members of the Committee, before the September meeting to give them up to date information on legislative changes that relate to children and to education, and to the work of the Service

2015/2016 Work Programme

11. The Committee will continue to monitor the Key Performance Indicators to track the overall improvement of Children's Services and will continue to monitor school improvement, particularly in relation to 'narrowing the gap' between the high and low attainers and the delivering of effective safeguarding services for children.
12. The Committee's work programme for 2015/16 will include regular monitoring of the following:
 - update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Effective Governing Bodies Review;
 - Annual report of the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board;
 - Annual report from Corporate Parenting Board monitoring the implementation of the recommendations from the Review of Services for Looked After Children.

13. The Chairman would like to thank the Committee Members and their substitutes for their very useful work throughout the year.

Pauline Helliard-Symons

Chairman

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

BY

COUNCILLOR DAVID SLEIGHT

CHAIRMAN

Foreword by David Sleight
Chairman of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Welcome to the Committee's annual report. It has had a varied programme ranging from the Armed Forces Community Covenant to examining Member's participation on Outside Bodies, a term covering a range of external bodies including numerous charitable bodies. The one contentious issue was the examination of the amenity vehicle service, which Wokingham Borough Council provided to various parishes.

I am grateful to the Members of the Committee for their contributions during the year and to Susan Coulter from Democratic Services for providing the Committee with administrative support.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

1. The role of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be to:
 - a) scrutinise and review the relevant work of the Health and Wellbeing Board's Partnership Groups;
 - b) exercise the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities as set out in Section 19 of the Police Justice Act 2006;
 - c) exercise the Council's flood risk management responsibilities under Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
2. The work of the Committee is overseen by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, which also monitors the work of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a member of the Management Committee and reports back at each meeting on the work programme of the Committee.
3. The Committee may create time limited task and finish groups if required.
4. The Committee is made up of eight Members, seven Conservatives and one Liberal Democrat. Each party also appointed two substitutes. The Committee will have held four scheduled meetings this year.



David Sleight
Chairman



Shahid Younis
Vice-Chairman



Barry Batth



Michael Firmager



Lindsay Ferris



Mike Gore



Abdul Loyes



Bill Soane

Substitute Members



Dianne King



Tom McCann



Dee Tomlin



Malcom Richards

2014/2015 Work Programme

5. During 2014/15 the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised and received an update on a number of issues including:
 - a) Advanced Signing During recent Flooding;
 - b) Wokingham's Older Housing Person's Strategy;
 - c) An update on Adult Social Care Task and Finish Group;
 - d) The Armed Forces Community Covenant;
 - e) Review of Amenity Vehicle provision; and
 - f) Review of Outside Bodies Appointments.

2015/2016 Work Programme

6. The Committee's work programme for 2015/16 will be populated further over the next couple of months and will be an evolving document. The Committee will continue to scrutinise the key areas which come under its remit, such as:
 - a) Update on the Police Crime Commissioner and the work of the Police Crime Panel;
 - b) Update on the work of the Community Forums; and
 - c) Flooding and Sustainable Planning Bi-Annual Report;

7. The Committee will also be considering the possible income generation opportunities from the Crossrail project, which was referred to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

David Sleight
Chairman of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

**HEALTH
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

BY COUNCILLOR KEN MIALL

CHAIRMAN

Foreword by Ken Miall
Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

This year has been very busy ensuring that the relevant scrutiny took place to envisage forthcoming problems or shortfalls and addressing problems that have arisen. This helps ensure matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Borough were scrutinised fully.

This municipal year we have held a total of eleven meetings which Members have participated in, six of which were meetings of Task and Finish Groups.

We have also engaged with the public, allowing questions from the floor on the presentations given at Committee meetings. Social media has been used to further the participation of the residents of the Borough. In addition the Chairman and Vice Chairman attended a meeting of the West Berkshire Overview and Scrutiny Commission as public guests and were able to observe their examination of maternity services provided by the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, which also affects Wokingham Borough residents. This will allow the Committee to ask further questions when representatives from the Trust attend a future meeting of the Wokingham Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This year we will continue to build on relationships with the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch and Care Quality Commission in addition to other key organisations providing or regulating health and social care in the Borough. Whilst building on these relationships, Members will not forget that it is the committee's role to work with or hold these bodies to account for the benefit of residents.

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Membership of the Committee

1.3 2014/2015

2.1 Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

2.2 Female Genital Mutilation

2.3 Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group

2.4 NHS England

2.5 Public Health

2.6 Health and Wellbeing Board

2.7 Care Quality Commission (CQC)

2.8 Safeguarding

2.9 Healthwatch

3.1 Consultations

3.2 Potential Implications for Scrutiny of the Francis Report Working Group

3.3 Implementation of the Care Act Task and Finish Group

4.1 2015/2016 Work Programme

1.1 Introduction

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) can review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Borough. It exercises powers conferred through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

The Committee has ten members and will have held five scheduled meetings this municipal year.

The work of the Committee is overseen by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, of which the HOSC Chairman is a member. At each Management Committee meeting the Chairman reports back on HOSC's work.

Much of the Committee's scrutiny activity this year was linked to the following of the Council's Underpinning Principles:

- 'Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life;'
- 'Look after the vulnerable.'

HOSC tweets prior to each of its committee meetings to let the public know what it will be considering. At meetings, all attendees, including members of the public can, after each main presentation, ask questions regarding the presentation, through the Chairman.

1.2 Membership of the Committee



Ken Miall
Chairman



Tim Holton
Vice-Chairman



Mark Ashwell



Kay Gilder



Kate Haines



Philip Houldsworth



Malcolm Richards



Nick Ray



David Sleight



Wayne Smith

Substitute Members



Abdul Loyes



Bill Soane



Rachelle Shepherd-
DuBey



Lindsay Ferris

1.3 2014/2015

During 2014/15 HOSC has maintained a continual interest in the local and national health scene. Throughout the year it has scrutinised and received updates on various issues including:

2.1 Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

HOSC received a presentation from the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on cancer services provided by the Trust, cancer pathways and diagnostics. Members sought an explanation of the pathway process following referral (via GP or screening) and how these were applied, what measures were taken to ensure that the cancer wait time standards were achieved and how waiting lists were managed, the main causes of breaches of waiting time standards when they occurred and the issues which had an impact on the pathway's effectiveness.

2.2 In response to a request from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel the Committee sought information from the Trust regarding measures taken to identify cases of Female Genital Mutilation.

2.3 Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group

At each meeting the Committee considered and asked questions on, the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group Performance Outcomes Reports.

HOSC sought an update on the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust from the CCG as commissioners. Members asked the CCG's views on whether there were any areas of performance where the CCG had or had had concerns and action that the Trust was taking to make improvements, the Trust's progress against the action plan developed following the Care Quality Commission inspection in March 2014, quality of patient care and how the CCG was working with the Trust's new Chief Executive.

HOSC was also updated on A&E attendance of Wokingham residents aged 40 to 60 years by a representative from the CCG.

2.4 NHS England

The creation of four Sustainable Development Locations within the Borough would see a large number of new homes and associated infrastructure being built. Alongside this there were plans for further residential developments as well as the town centre regeneration programmes. HOSC received a presentation on and discussed with representatives from NHS England and Public Health, the implications for the provision of healthcare services that the anticipated growth in population would have. The Committee also considered future primary care facilities and capacity.

2.5 Public Health

From April 2013 the Council, through its Public Health function, was responsible for commissioning and coordinating the NHS Health Check programme. HOSC requested an update on the NHS Health Check programme and the offer and uptake levels.

A member of the public submitted a scrutiny suggestion regarding the effect of particulate air pollution on public health within the Borough in light of data from a report from Public Health

England published April 2014 which was reported to have attributed a local mortality rate of 5.7% to long term exposure to this form of pollution. In response the Committee requested a briefing from officers in order to determine whether the effect of air pollution was a particular issue to residents' health. The Committee agreed that it wished to monitor this topic by means of a further update.

2.6 Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board was the key forum where leaders from the health and care system worked together to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities. Throughout the year Members were informed of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, such as the delivery of its statutory responsibilities, including the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Wokingham Needs Assessment.

2.7 Care Quality Commission (CQC)

HOSC considered the Care Quality Commission survey of adult inpatients 2013 for Royal Berkshire Hospital in order to gain information on patients' views of adult inpatient services provided by the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

2.8 Safeguarding

The Committee received the Wokingham 2013/14 Annual Safeguarding Report and considered progress made against priorities.

2.9 Healthwatch

The Committee was regularly updated on the work of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough, how it was engaging with residents, and projects that they were undertaking.

3.1 Consultations

At each meeting the Committee was informed of current consultations and identified those which it wished to respond to. HOSC responded to the Council's consultation on changes to charging for Adult Social Care Services.

The Committee may create time limited Task and Finish Groups as necessary. During 2014/15 the following Task and Finish Groups were operational:

3.2 Potential Implications for Scrutiny of the Francis Report Working Group

The purpose of the scrutiny review undertaken by the Working Group was:-

- to identify the key potential implications for overview and scrutiny from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry (the Francis Report) and to identify any areas of further development for health scrutiny in Wokingham and;
- to recommend any improvements to the health scrutiny practices in Wokingham, to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

HOSC agreed all of the Working Group's recommendations regarding the health scrutiny process.

3.3 Implementation of the Care Act Task and Finish Group

The Care Act 2014 will bring about a number of life changing reforms for Wokingham residents.

At its July 2014 meeting HOOSC agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of the implementation of elements of the Care Act 2014. The Task and Finish Group sought to gain an understanding of the changes outlined in the Care Act, and the likely impact on the Council. Members focused in particular on the implementation of the Council's duties in relation to:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Wellbeing;
- Information, advice and guidance

The Task and Finish Group also considered how the Council was engaging with residents with regards to the changes coming out of the Care Act 2014 and the impact these may have on the public.

4.1 2015/2016 Work Programme

The Committee's work programme for 2015/16 will be an evolving document.



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – WORK PROGRAMME SUGGESTION FORM

I would like to suggest a Scrutiny or Policy Review item for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee’s next work programme.

Name:	
Daytime Contact Number	Email Address
Evening Contact Number	
Address:	

I would like to suggest that the following matter is reviewed:

.

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

<p>Reasons for suggestion:</p> <p>(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>Please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should there be a review on this? • Any linkages with the Council’s Vision, Priorities and Underpinning Principles – you can find these at http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council/decision/s/vision/ • What benefits would there be to residents?
---	--

Are there any specific aspects of the issue you would like scrutiny to focus upon or supporting evidence?

Please consider:

- What evidence is there to support the above reasons?
- What are the facts?
- Are there specific organisations or documents you would like a review to refer?
- Do you have any suggestions for potential witnesses?

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

What would you like to see coming out of the review in terms of desired outcomes?

Please consider:

- What would you wish to see happen as a result of any review?
- Why do you think the desired outcome is achievable?

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Would you like to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to make a short statement in support of your request?

Yes

No

I am (Please tick appropriate box)

- A Member or Officer of Wokingham Borough Council
- A group with an interest in the Wokingham Borough Council area
- A local business situated in the Wokingham Borough Council area
- A resident of the Wokingham Borough Council area

Please return this form to:

Kevin Jacob
Democratic Services
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1BN

Tel 0118 974 6058

Email
democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

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