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| <b>TITLE</b>                | <b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2020/21</b>          |
| <b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b> | Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 22 January 2020 |
| <b>WARD</b>                 | None Specific   |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER</b>         | Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance                |

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to improve services, holds decision makers to account and engages with local communities. In so doing it helps to demonstrate that the Council and other public service providers are open and transparent and are delivering high quality, value for money services.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) consider potential items for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2020/21;
- 2) agree the process for public consultation on the draft work programmes;
- 3) agree to finalise the work programmes at its meeting on 25 March 2020;
- 4) agree in principle that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee carries out one or more detailed Scrutiny reviews during 2020/21.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Effective work programming is a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Council Plan and major policy or service changes. It aims to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Committee approves work programmes for itself and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report reviews the issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2019/20 and the process for identifying potential items for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2020/21.

## **Background**

An effective Overview and Scrutiny function is underpinned by robust work programming. Effective work programming lays the foundations for targeted scrutiny of issues of local importance. It helps to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference. Effective work programming helps to:

- prioritise issues for in-depth work where Overview and Scrutiny can make an impact and add value;
- reduce the need for “information only” reports;
- achieve a balance between pre-decision scrutiny, policy development and performance/budget monitoring;
- contribute at an earlier stage in the decision making process;
- increase public and stakeholder involvement in Overview and Scrutiny;
- retain flexibility in order to respond to urgent issues arising during the year.

At previous meetings the Committee has considered different approaches to work programming adopted by a range of Councils across the country. These include:

- seeking ideas from Members, Officers, Parish and Town Councils and partner organisations;
- engaging with community groups and special interest groups;
- encouraging public views via social media and the Council website;
- carrying out public surveys or use of Citizens’ Panels and focus groups;
- analysing corporate complaints and customer feedback;
- reviewing key corporate documents such as the Council Plan, peer reviews and major service inspection reports.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a template for developing an annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The key elements and suggested timetable are:

- January/February – initial consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Members, Executive Members, senior Officers and partner organisations. Public engagement with residents, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and partners via the Council’s website and social media;
- March – Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to finalise the work programmes;
- April – publication and implementation of the work programmes;
- November – mid-year review of the work programmes by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **Policy Development and Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny can assist in the development of new policies in support of the Council’s priorities. In recent years the Leader of the Council and Executive Members have attended the Committee’s meetings to discuss priorities for the year ahead

and to identify issues which could benefit from input from Overview and Scrutiny. The discussions indicated a consensus that Overview and Scrutiny could play a larger role in policy development. This could be via pre-decision scrutiny of new policies or in depth reviews of specific issues which could lead to new policy development. Executive Members have been asked to suggest issues for inclusion in the 2020/21 work programmes along with the other stakeholders.

### **In Depth Scrutiny Reviews**

An important strength of Overview and Scrutiny is the capacity to carry out in depth reviews of policies or services provided by the Council or its partners. In depth reviews allow Members to drill down into a particular issue and consider evidence from service users, community groups, experts and other stakeholders. They also enable Members to carry out research and broaden their knowledge of best practice in the public and private sectors.

In 2018 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee carried out an in-depth Scrutiny review of the Council's Grounds Maintenance service, resulting in the submission of detailed recommendations to the Council's Executive in January 2019. Feedback indicated that the Committee's recommendations had led to specific improvements in the Grounds Maintenance service in 2019 and an improved approach to the management of other large contracts.

In 2019 a Task and Finish Group was established to review the Council's policies and procedures relating to the adoption of new roads and open spaces. The Task and Finish Group report is included elsewhere on the Agenda.

2019/20 also saw the first iteration of Budget Scrutiny, carried out by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee examined draft proposal for growth, savings and Capital investment. Members scrutinised Executive Members and senior managers about Budget options, risk and the longer term financial horizon.

Building on the successful outcome of the two reviews and Budget Scrutiny process, highlighted above, it is suggested that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee identify one or more topics for in-depth review during 2018/19, the reviews to be carried out by the Committees themselves or by Task and Finish Groups.

### **Scrutiny Review Issues**

The issues identified for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny should be of interest or concern for local residents and generate public interest and involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

In order to generate ideas and involvement from local residents, community groups and stakeholders, it is suggested that the Council's website and social media be used to publicise the development of the work programme and to invite suggestions for inclusion. In considering potential issues for review, Members should take into account the previously agreed selection criteria:

- Whether the issue is of local, and preferably current, concern;

- Whether undertaking the review can be linked to the Council’s Vision, priorities and underpinning principles or would help achieve these;
- Whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council (e.g. as part of the Continuous Improvement Programme);
- Is the topic one that is capable of being influenced by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Is the topic of manageable scope – not too wide-ranging and yet of sufficient size to warrant a scrutiny review;
- Whether sufficient resources are available to support the scrutiny review;  
If a review is warranted, should it have a high, medium or low priority?
- Whether the review should be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself or be delegated to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group.

### Scrutiny Issues

As a reminder, the Annex to the report sets out the work programme for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2019/20. The work programmes allow flexibility for the consideration of urgent issues and the call-in of decisions made by the Executive. Once approved, the work programme issues will be timetabled into the programme of Overview and Scrutiny meetings during the year.

Potential issues for consideration in 2020/21 include:

- The new Council Plan;
- The Climate Emergency Action Plan;
- WBC Local Plan;
- Briefings from the Council Leader, Executive Members and Chief Executive;
- Budget Scrutiny;
- Town Centre Regeneration Audits;
- Narrowing the Gap in Educational attainment;
- The Local Enterprise Partnership.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

**The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.**

|                                   | How much will it Cost/ (Save) | Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall | Revenue or Capital? |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Current Financial Year (Year 1)   | 0                             | NA  | NA                  |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2)      | 0                             | NA  | NA                  |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | 0                             | NA  | NA                  |

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| <b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b> |
| None   |

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| <b>List of Background Papers</b> |
| None                             |

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| <b>Date</b> 10 January 2020       | <b>Version No.</b> 1.0                  |

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES 2019/20****1. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

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| 1.  | Development of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes and coordination of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees                 |
| 2.  | Discussions with the Leader, Executive Members and Chief Executive to identify future priorities and monitor performance against targets      |
| 3.  | Scrutinising the development of the new Council Plan, the underpinning priorities and the Quarterly Performance Management Report             |
| 4.  | Reviewing implementation of the Council's 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Council programme and the successor Continuous Improvement Programme       |
| 5.  | Scrutinising the implications of Climate Emergency for the Borough and the Council's proposed Action Plan for a net-zero carbon Borough       |
| 6.  | Scrutinising the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the impact of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership           |
| 7.  | Scrutinising the Council's approach to public consultation and compliance with its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010               |
| 8.  | Scrutinising the impact of Brexit on the Borough  |
| 9.  | Reviewing progress of the council's Grounds Maintenance service following the Committee's Scrutiny review in 2018                             |
| 10. | Reviewing the Government's updated Statutory Guidance on the operation of Overview and Scrutiny and considering the implications for WBC      |
| 11. | Approving the annual Overview and Scrutiny reports to Council   |
| 12. | Undertaking Call-In reviews of Executive decisions  |
| 13. | Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate  |
| 14. | Reviewing the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function and the underpinning support and training provided for Officers and Members |

## 2. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| 1.  | Monitoring the effective delivery of safeguarding services, including social worker recruitment, retention and training                                  |
| 2.  | Reviewing services that contribute to the achievement of the Council's Vision and priorities for children and young people                               |
| 3.  | Reviewing progress in relation to narrowing the gap in educational attainment for children from disadvantaged backgrounds                                |
| 4.  | Reviewing key Children's Services performance indicators and major projects  |
| 5.  | Reviewing school performance indicators and Ofsted reports   |
| 6.  | Scrutinising the performance of any schools causing concern  |
| 7.  | Reviewing the allocation of school places across the Borough   |
| 8.  | Monitoring the impact of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Council change programme and the successor Continuous Improvement Programme on Children's Services |
| 9.  | Scrutinising progress of key strategic initiatives such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  |
| 10. | Considering the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board   |
| 11. | Reviewing the Education Vision Strategy  |
| 12. | Reviewing the Strategy for children with special educational needs and disabilities  |
| 13. | Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to Children's Services   |
| 14. | Call-In of Executive decisions relating to Children's Services   |
| 15. | Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate   |

### 3. Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| 1.  | Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services                               |
| 2.  | Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes    |
| 3.  | Scrutinising the delivery of the Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) and progress relating to the Local Plan Update and the Five Year Land Supply   |
| 4.  | Reviewing the Assets Review Programme and the operation of the Council's Property Portfolio Investment Fund  |
| 5.  | Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's partnerships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector                                       |
| 6.  | Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy   |
| 7.  | Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity   |
| 8.  | Scrutinising the Council's Localities service and measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils                       |
| 9.  | Scrutinising the Council's Budget development process and the emerging Budget for 2020/21  |
| 10. | Scrutinising the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Programme, including the Safety and Financial Audits relating to the Market Place highways project |
| 11. | Scrutinising service and policy developments relating to the Council's public facing services and its in-house support services                        |
| 12. | Reviewing highways and transport issues including highways contracts, customer service, car parking, Bus Strategy and cycling infrastructure           |
| 13. | Reviewing the Business Case supporting the development of the Coppid Beech Park and Ride site  |
| 14. | Scrutinising the implementation and impact of Civil Parking Enforcement across the Borough   |
| 15. | Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met                                  |
| 16. | Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements  |

#### 4. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| 1.  | Monitoring health and social care outcomes and the performance of the local NHS Foundation Trusts   |
| 2.  | Reviewing progress on the integration of health and social care services  |
| 3.  | Monitoring progress relating to the development of community hubs   |
| 4.  | Considering reports and updates from Wokingham Healthwatch  |
| 5.  | Reviewing the provision of community mental health services   |
| 6.  | Considering updates on the work of the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)   |
| 7.  | Reviewing access to primary care services within the Strategic Development Locations  |
| 8.  | Joining West Berkshire, Reading, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Councils in joint scrutiny of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Plan |
| 9.  | Scrutinising the Planning process in relation to the consideration of health issues   |
| 10. | Call-In of Executive decisions relating to adult social care  |
| 11. | Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to adult social care  |
| 12. | Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate  |

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