

TITLE	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2022/23
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 17 March 2022
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive

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 the Scrutiny requests received for 2022/23 (Annex A);
- 2) consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2022/23 (Annex B);
- 3) note that additional items can be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes during the year;
- 4) note that any additional Scrutiny requests will be reported to the meeting in June 2022.

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 Community Vision and Corporate Delivery 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. Recent discussions have indicated the need for the work programming process to be more robust and for improved monitoring during the year.

Suggested work programme items are appended to the report for Member consideration and approval. These include items suggested following a public consultation exercise.

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.

Scrutiny Review Criteria

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 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 the undertaking of the review can be linked to the Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan;
- Whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council;
- 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;
- 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.

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.

Building on the successful outcome of recent Scrutiny Task and Finish reviews, it is suggested that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee identifies one or more topics for in depth review during 2022/23, the reviews to be carried out by the Committees themselves or by Task and Finish Groups. Recent in depth Scrutiny reviews include Climate Emergency and Tree Protection and Biodiversity.

Suggested Scrutiny Items for 2022/23

Annex A sets out a number of potential new Scrutiny items suggested by Members and residents following the Committee's public consultation exercise. Members are requested to consider the suggestions against the criteria set out above and determine whether they should be included in the work programmes for 2022/23, i.e. be merged into the items in Annex B.

Annex B sets out the draft work programme for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2022/23. Members should note that a number of work programme items are included each year, such as potential call-in items and Budget Scrutiny carried out by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members should factor this ongoing workload into their deliberations.

The work programmes allow flexibility for the consideration of urgent issues and the call-in of decisions made by the Executive or individual Executive Members. Once approved, the updated work programme issues will be timetabled into the programme of Overview and Scrutiny meetings during the year. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will determine its priorities within the programme and allocate specific items to specific meetings.

If any further suggestions are received after the meeting on 17 March 2022 they will be reported to the Committee's meeting in June 2022.

Members will also be aware that the report of the LGA Peer Review and the refresh of the Corporate Delivery Plan have been considered recently by the Executive. These documents may generate further ideas for inclusion in the work programmes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the Covid-19 crisis. It is, therefore, imperative that Council resources are focussed on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	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

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to drive service improvement, policy development and the achievement of value for money for the Borough's residents.
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Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard has been given to Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The issues scrutinised during 2022/23 will raise the profile of Overview and Scrutiny for residents across the Borough, including residents with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The aim is to achieve better/fairer outcomes and increased value for money for residents.
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Climate Emergency – The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has acted as a “critical friend” to the Council's Climate Emergency activities through the work of the Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group. The annual update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan will be submitted to the Committee in June 2022.
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List of Background Papers

None

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Date 8 March 2022	Version No. 1.0

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Requests 2022/23

No	Request	Request By	Committee
1	<p>WBC are in the process of pushing through new builds via new estates. These new estates are delivered by building developers and remain in their care until various parts are adopted by the Council. Plots and houses can be sold, meaning that residents move in. The residents will be paying Council Tax. There is a problem with the processes that needs to be addressed. As it stands before the adoption process has completed residents face many issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being caught between a case of finger pointing - the Council says not adopted by us, it is the builder; the builder says operating to the spec dictated by the Council. Nothing happens. • it takes a long time get the builder to deal with issues on the estates (for example addressing a broken street lamp, dealing with graffiti). • Important issues left until the last moment – e.g. Montague Park – flood controls. • incomplete infrastructure in place (flood defences, missing benches). <p>The process needs to be better, there needs to be accountability throughout the whole build process and not just at the end of the process when the adoption is signed off. The benefit to residents is realising that the new developments do matter and are cared for.</p> <p>Requested Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A documented process with publicly available reports which deals with the metrics on customer calls to the developer. • Continued tracking of the outstanding planning issues on the sites (for example SANG development, allotment development etc). • Any suggestions that the Committee and the officers feel would be apparent to ensure that the new residents are treated well and fairly. • Phased handover: this will allow more control on completing each phase and making the final adoption process easier due to less outstanding items and stopping the developer starting the next phase until all defects are addressed 	Cllr Peter Dennis	OSMC
2	<p>Footpaths – developers and the Council should upgrade footpaths before the developments are completed and not after. Could the Committee suggest an assessment of the current footpath network (not just public) the state of these and plans to make them more accessible.</p>	Jon Sellars	C&C

3	<p>Over some years I've contacted various Councillors about the town centre bus stops. I'm always fobbed off with it being an engineering problem. Isn't that what engineers are for - solving structural problems?</p> <p>The kerbs are far too low. All other bus stops have raised kerbs and yet the most important ones don't. Even if the bus kneels it is still difficult for certain people. Many older friends struggle getting on and off and even harder with a shopping trolley to lift and/or walking stick. Then mums with pushchairs need to tip them more and with shopping on board, a toddler as well, it's an utter disgrace and shameful that Wokingham council are not concerned to find a solution to the engineering issues.</p> <p>The drivers are obliged to put the ramp down for wheelchairs etc. but not for the above groups. Perhaps you are waiting for an accident to happen and meanwhile content to let people struggle. It should be made lawful to ensure bus stop safety.</p>	Pam Small	C&C
4	Litter - Would it be possible for a team to litter-pick on the A327 on a regular basis, it's an absolute disgrace with all manner of rubbish littering the hedgerows.	Rita Carr	C&C
5	Litter – the volume of litter around the Borough is the worst I have ever seen, but obviously a consequence of a higher population, increased number of outlets selling fast food and the amount of waste produced from the building activity. Could the Committee consider ways to encourage developer responsibility for their waste materials and their workforce, school interventions, CCTV (as being used in many other boroughs as a deterrent and to fine offenders littering from vehicles). Could S106/CIL monies be used to employ contractors to at least undertake some litter clearance particularly along road margins and around footpaths.	Jon Sellars	C&C
6	Air Pollution – this is an issue that is only going to get worse as the vast amount of new properties being built with the borough and surrounding boroughs continues. The more green space that is removed for concrete the more air pollution and the associated health issues becomes a problem. Could the committee discuss realistic ways of measuring and combating this issue.	Jon Sellars	OSMC
7	<p>Transparency and honesty – could the Committee discuss ways in which the Council could be more transparent and honest in its communication material for example (taken from the regular WBC email updates):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its public and overriding support for the Shinfield Studios – the whole site is an environmental disaster and now not the 'world leading' science park previously gushed about by WBC. The propaganda has gone from 500 jobs to 1500 jobs in the space of a few months. Jobs in studios are transient with very few permanent positions for local communities. Telling locals that the new 8ft metal fence surrounding the two huge hangers is an upgrade from the mature hedge that used run the length of this footpath is just embarrassing. 	Jon Sellars	OSMC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British museum – promised visits for locals, schools etc. How well is that going? • Tell the full story about the ‘award’ winning bridge over the Arborfield by-pass i.e. the success of it for wildlife will not be known until the survey work is complete. By their own admission the developers say it may not work. 		
8	<p>The Council’s commitment to active travel and the climate emergency. It is shocking that I have been told that the Finchampstead Road is a safe cycle route to school for a 4 year old. Most adults won’t cycle along that road due to rife close passing. It is also shocking that road designs are not updated to the latest guidance before being built, resulting in brand new out dated infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Spending money on ‘reducing congestion’ to encourage more car use should be challenged in the context of a climate emergency. It should be questioned why spending money on proper segregated safe cycling routes that link across the Borough to all schools, leisure centres, shopping areas etc. is not higher than that dedicated to building roads.</p>	Wendy Measures	OSMC
9	<p>I would like the Committee to scrutinise the process for the Secondary School Strategy which is several years late and doesn’t give a solution to the lack of secondary school places in the south of the Borough. This links into the climate emergency too - with children having to travel past their local secondary schools to get to schools with places available.</p>	Wendy Measures	CS
10	<p>Now that we’re exiting COVID restrictions review whether the constraints on having to book a refuse site visit are still valid. I suspect that many find the practice restrictive and that may lead to a decrease in recycling, and increase in illegal fly tipping.</p>	Steve Davies	OSMC
11	<p>Local highway reviews. The state of our local roads and repairs upon them is poor. We seem to be spending funds on temporary patching rather than responsive strategic fixes and preventative maintenance.</p>	Steve Davies	C&C
12	<p>The immediate area around Hawkedon Primary School. Local traffic does NOT abide to the 20mph speed limits at school times and this is in no way enforced. School parent parking behaviour is hugely unsafe and chaotic on the local streets, particularly around Easington Drive and Hollym Close where there is no footway provision to enable children to safely walk to school. There is also a lack of safe pedestrian crossing points over Rushey Way and Kilnsea Drive. Numerous complaints to the Council on these matters seem to fall on deaf ears.</p>	Madeline Stonehill	C&C
13	<p>Anti-social Behaviour Service – particularly operating hours</p> <p>We have suffered for a long time Anti-Social Behaviour in Wokingham Town due to late night drinking. The problems are very particular to the times when people are heading home after a night out and include broken glass on the streets, loud and noisy behaviour, broken windows, fighting, stabbings and</p>	Cllr Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	C&C

	<p>damage to our Christmas tree, lights, hanging baskets & planters. I do not believe that the service will tackle these issues if it closes at 2am at weekends, when the late night licenses run to 3am. People are not feeling safe in Wokingham in the early hours and we would like people to feel safe coming and living here. This would require better management of people when they leave light night venues. We would also prefer that people walking their dogs in the morning or taking their children to the parks did not having to negotiate broken glass from these venues.</p> <p>There was no Consultation about the ASB service with Town and Parish Councils. Wokingham Town Council has CCTV around the Town Hall and have video of people causing trouble in the early hours. According to Police.uk data, there were 59 violence and sexual offence crimes, 19 anti-social behaviour incidents and reported in Wokingham in December 2021 alone.</p> <p>We do not see how the ASB service will report back to councillors and how the effectiveness of this service will be accounted for? Will it regularly report to Licencing and Appeals or to one of the Scrutiny Committees?</p> <p>Outcomes requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and regular reporting lines to Councillors. • A service that is available in the hours when we actually need it to be. • A service that is accountable. • A service that is aware of the problem areas and can tackle them – along with the police. 		
14	<p>The youth shelter adjacent to the play park at Maiden Place is often vandalised and frequented by hooded youths with foul language and smoking cannabis which wafts into the adjacent play area. There is no evident police presence within this area and the youths make the whole area feel unsafe, threatening and unwelcoming and set an awful example to younger children wanting to use the park. The play park itself is a really poor level of provision and it doesn't cater for different child's needs. This area has real potential to provide high quality play equipment and act as a catalyst to draw people in and generate revenue for the local shops at Maiden Place (which in itself are really substandard and provide little offer to the immediate area).</p>	Madeline Stonehill	?
15	<p>I would like to know where our recycling actually goes. I've responded a few times to posts from RE3 about high recycling rates (which is well and good), but not had any response.</p> <p>The question is - how much of it is being recycled in the UK, how much is being incinerated and if it's being exported, where is it going?</p>	Tim Watson	OSMC
16	<p>Introduce a stage 3 to the Complaints procedure to align it with other Councils (Bracknell Forest is one example) and add the use of Trust Pilot or similar schemes to the process so as to show openness and transparency to how the Council does its business. Reasons for suggestion: the current system is biased</p>	Cllr Gary Cowan	C&C

	<p>towards the department the complaint is being made against so in effect it is Judge and Jury. It is not truly independent. A Council that prides itself in its own vision and principles should not be afraid of being open to the strictest of scrutiny.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest or other Councils, Trust Pilot and Resolver are examples where if used the system would be much more open and transparent.</p>		
17	GP performance within central Wokingham, in particular the Wokingham Medical Centre, which in the NHS nationwide patient survey was ranked in the bottom 5% in the UK.	Cllr Charles Margetts	HOSC
18	<p>We are residents of Milton Road, Wokingham which is a no entry Road when coming from Broad Street and buses only when leaving Milton Road heading towards Broad Street. The signage is very clear although one no entry sign has a broken light. We are finding more and more drivers ignoring both signs and driving straight through. Its normally fairly obvious that somebody is about to break the law and ignore the signs as invariable they are breaking the speed limit. I have even witnessed people leaving via the no buses exit and then ignoring the red traffic lights and driving either left into Rectory Road or straight across into Broad Street, this is an accident waiting to happen due to the speed of cars coming from Shute End. The issue occurs 24 hours a day especially taxis in the early hours on the weekends but is worst between 5-8am and 6-8pm most other days so imagine this is commuter traffic coming and going from The Matthews Green development. I also suspect Waitrose employees starting the 6am shift add to the problem.</p> <p>I see that CCTV has been added to the Shute end junction, Is there anything that can be done to have some monitoring of the issue in Milton Road please.</p>	Mark Rath	?

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT WORK PROGRAMMES 2022/23

1. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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 and Chief Executive to identify future priorities and monitor performance against priorities and targets
3.	Scrutinising WBC's response to the pandemic – including the Council's Recovery Strategy, Green Recovery and the Anti-Poverty Strategy
4.	Scrutinising the underpinning priorities and KPIs for the Corporate Delivery Plan 2020/24 and the Quarterly Performance Management Reports
5.	Scrutinising the Council's Continuous Improvement Programme
6.	Scrutinising the Climate Emergency Action Plan and progress against the recommendations of the Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group
7.	Scrutinising the Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan Update and progress against the Tree Protection and Biodiversity Task & Finish Group's recommendations
8.	Scrutinising progress on the Local Plan Update and the Council's Five Year Land Supply
9.	Scrutinising the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the impact of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
10.	Scrutinising the Council's Equality Plan and the Council's compliance with its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010
11.	Scrutinising the emerging Waste Strategy
12.	Scrutinising the Council's policies and procedures relating to Unauthorised Traveller Encampments
13.	Scrutinising the Customer Excellence Programme and the improvement plans for the WBC website
14.	Scrutinising progress against Motions agreed by full Council
15.	Approving the annual Overview and Scrutiny reports to Council
16.	Undertaking Call-In reviews of Executive decisions as necessary
17.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate
18.	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

1.	Scrutinising progress against the Children's Services Strategy
2.	Monitoring the effective delivery of safeguarding services, including social worker recruitment, retention and training
3.	Reviewing services that contribute to the achievement of the Council's Vision and priorities for children and young people
4.	Reviewing updates on developments relating to Education and Learning Achievement and Partnerships (including narrowing the gap)
5.	Scrutinising progress relating to the Wokingham Borough Education Partnership
6.	Reviewing key Children's Services performance indicators and major projects
7.	Reviewing school performance indicators and Ofsted reports
8.	Scrutinising the performance of any schools causing concern
9.	Scrutinising the allocation of school places across the Borough
10.	Monitoring the impact of the Council's Continuous Improvement Programme on Children's Services
11.	Scrutinising progress of key strategic initiatives such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
12.	Considering the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board
13.	Scrutinising implementation of the Travel Assistance Policy (formerly the Home to School Transport Policy)
14.	Reviewing appeals against the service - in terms of number and outcomes
15.	Scrutinising the Strategy for children with special educational needs and disabilities and the SEND innovation and Improvement Programme
16.	Scrutinising the Fostering Transformation programme
17.	Call-In of Executive decisions relating to Children's Services
18.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

3. Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.	Scrutinising the development of the Council's Budget for 2023/24
2.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services
3.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes
4.	Reviewing the Assets Review Programme
5.	Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy
6.	Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity
7.	Scrutinising the Council's Localities service and measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
8.	Scrutinising service and policy developments relating to the Council's public facing services and its in-house support services
9.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including highways contracts, customer service, car parking, Bus Strategy and cycling infrastructure
10.	Scrutinising the Council's Arts and Culture Strategy
11.	Scrutinising the implementation of the in-house enforcement and safety service
12.	Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met
13.	Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements
14.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

4. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.	Monitoring the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic
2.	Monitoring health and social care outcomes and the performance of the local NHS Foundation Trusts
3.	Reviewing progress on the integration of health and social care services
4.	Monitoring progress relating to the development of Primary Care Networks
5.	Considering reports and updates from Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
6.	Scrutinising the impact of the Council's Continuous Improvement Programme on Adult Social Care
7.	Reviewing the provision of community mental health services
8.	Considering updates on the work of the NHS Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
9.	Scrutinising the Council's plans to improve air quality across the Borough
10.	Reviewing access to primary care services within the Strategic Development Locations
11.	Joining West Berkshire, Reading, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Councils in joint scrutiny of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (ICS)
12.	Scrutinising the Planning process in relation to the consideration of health issues
13.	Call-In of Executive decisions relating to adult social care and public health, as necessary
14.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to adult social care
15.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

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