

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2023/24</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 15 March 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	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 and approve the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2023/24 (Annex A);
- 2) consider the additional Scrutiny requests from residents Members and Town/Parish Councils (Annex B);
- 3) note that additional items can be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes during the year;

**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 following the external Scrutiny Improvement Review 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 2023/24, the reviews to be carried out by the Committees themselves or by Task and Finish Groups.

### **Suggested Scrutiny Items for 2023/24**

Annex A sets out the draft work programme for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2023/24. 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.

Annex B sets out the list of items suggested by residents, Members and Town and Parish Councils. Members are requested to consider the items in Annex B and determine whether any of the items should be included in the 2023/24 Work Programmes.

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. As Members are aware, the Work Programmes are used flexibly, allowing new items to be introduced during the year as necessary.

## **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.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

Due regard has been given to Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The issues scrutinised during 2023/24 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.

**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. In 2022 the Committee established a new Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a specific focus on scrutinising the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

#### **List of Background Papers**

Report of the Scrutiny Improvement Review - 2022

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT WORK PROGRAMMES 2023/24

### 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 (six-monthly) to identify future priorities and monitor performance against priorities and targets
3.	Scrutinising the emerging Borough Vision and updated Corporate Delivery Plan
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 Customer Excellence Strategy and supporting KPIs
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 the Consultation and Engagement Protocol
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 delivery of the Tackling Poverty Strategy and development of the Year 3 Action Plan
12.	Scrutinising the operations and performance of Thames Water and SSE
13.	Scrutinising the Council's policies and procedures relating to Unauthorised Traveller Encampments
14.	Reviewing progress against recommendations from the Estate Infrastructure Task and Finish Group
15.	Scrutinising the impact on the Borough of refugees and asylum seekers
16.	Scrutinising progress against the Council's Air Quality Improvement targets
17.	Scrutinising progress against Motions agreed by full Council
18.	Scrutinising the emerging Member Development Strategy
19.	Approving the annual Overview and Scrutiny reports to Council
20.	Undertaking Call-In reviews of Executive and IEMD decisions as necessary
21.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

22.	Reviewing the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function and the underpinning support and training provided for Officers and Members
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## **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. Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1.	Scrutinising delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the annual update prior to consideration by Council
2.	Reviewing changes to the CEAP following the recommendations from the two Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group reports
3.	Ensuring that the Borough Tree Strategy and tree planting projects are progressing
4.	Scrutinising plans to manage traffic, congestion, and car emissions within the Borough
5.	Exploring what local electricity providers are doing to improve the local network
6.	Scrutinising the home decarbonisation service
7.	Monitoring the delivery and operation of WBC's solar farms
8.	Ensuring that updated planning guidance makes provisions with suitable environmentally friendly, enforceable requirements
9.	Reviewing recommendations from the 'Let's talk Climate' event
10.	Understanding the impacts of behavioural change programmes
11.	Understanding how WBC could work better in partnership with the business community in order to achieve the net-zero ambition
12.	Reviewing the need for and delivery of an energy strategy
13.	Undertaking Call-In reviews of Executive decisions as necessary
14.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

### **4. Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1.	Scrutinising the development of the Council's Budget for 2024/25
2.	Reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the effectiveness of local policing and fire and rescue services
3.	Scrutinising progress on the Local Plan Update and the Council's Five Year Land Supply
4.	Scrutinising delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
5.	Scrutinising delivery of the Anti-Abuse Strategy
6.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with Towns and Parishes

7.	Scrutinising delivery of the Drug and Alcohol Misuse Strategy
8.	Scrutinising the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy
9.	Scrutinising burial capacity across the Borough and the Council's plans to ensure adequate future capacity
10.	Scrutinising measures to develop closer working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
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.	Scrutinising the Council's Arts and Culture Strategy
14.	Scrutinising performance of the in-house Enforcement and Safety service
15.	Scrutinising the Council's Housing Services to ensure that the needs of local residents and communities are being met
16.	Considering the report of the Active Travel Task and Finish Group
17.	Scrutinising the Borough-wide Parking Management Strategy
18.	Scrutinising the operation and performance of the Council-owned companies and shared service arrangements
19.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

## 5. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.	Scrutinising Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
2.	Monitoring health and social care outcomes and the performance of the local NHS Foundation Trusts
3.	Scrutinising progress relating to the BOB Integrated Care System, including joint Scrutiny with partners
4.	Monitoring the operation of the local Primary Care Networks
5.	Considering reports and updates from Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
6.	Scrutinising the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme
7.	Reviewing the provision of maternal mental health services
8.	Scrutinising the Council's emerging Autism Strategy
9.	Scrutinising the service provided by the Coroner's Court



10.	Reviewing access to GP services, pharmacy and dental services across the Borough
11.	Scrutinising performance of the South Central Ambulance Service
12.	Scrutinising performance of Optalis
13.	Scrutinising the Planning process in relation to the consideration of health issues
14.	Call-In of Executive decisions relating to adult social care and public health, as necessary
15.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to adult social care
16.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

**Table: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Requests 2023/24**

No	Request	Request By
1	<p>Lack of safe active travel routes for both cycling and walking. We live less than 1/2 mile from primary school, the sports centre and Wokingham town centre but have no safe walking or cycling routes to any of them. This will be made even worse with the new South Wokingham Distribution Road and a lack of pedestrian crossings and segregated cycle ways. The LCWIP seems to have come to nothing, lots of feedback was given by many as to how unsafe the Finchampstead Road is and it is still very unsafe for cycling and for pedestrians who need to get across it. No safe crossing near Molly Millars or near the town centre and the crossing near Evendons only works about 50% of the time, it has been reported lots of times but still we have to run the gauntlet trying to cross safely with our children because the lights won't turn red for cars. Surely the fail safe should be to allow school children to safely cross the road.</p> <p>Lack of a secondary school strategy. I've been asking for literally years for a long term secondary school strategy that goes beyond 2020. We need to apply for secondary school by end Oct this year but WBC haven't shared where all the school places will be, so it will be a lottery for my child with SEN need.</p> <p>Lack of communication from the SEND Dept. My son was turned down for an EHCP but I don't know why, I've not been given a reason and all of my emails asking why, go unanswered. WBC do not respond to emails. They go into the ether.</p>	Wendy Measures
2	<p>Provision of shopping, sport and community facilities within the major developments in the area for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shinfield new supermarket not built planning permission just approved 4 years after house building started;</li> <li>• Shinfield village centre not started despite 4000 house being completed;</li> <li>• Arborfield new commercial centre not started;</li> <li>• Shinfield new cricket pitch not open;</li> <li>• Arborfield new sports pavilion not started;</li> <li>• Shinfield sports centre not built.</li> </ul> <p>The outcome would be a holistic programme for completion of the shopping, sports and community facilities versus what has been promised to everyone as part of the major developments.</p>	Martin Prosser
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP performance - to highlight good and poor performance;</li> <li>• Access to NHS dentistry - to highlight gaps and put pressure on the NHS to improve this;</li> </ul>	Cllr Charles Margetts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success with planning appeals - to explain the difference between WBC with a Local Plan and without a Local Plan.</li> </ul>	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do highways sign off road resurfacing as complete and satisfactory when they are in just as bad, if not worse, a state as before resurfacing. I'm talking in particular about the ironworks being below the road surface making them as bad as the potholes that were there previously. I'm talking in particular about Wokingham Road from the 3 Tuns to the George and Wilderness Road from the 3 Tuns to Pepper Lane.</li> <li>• Also the traffic lights by the George, Wokingham Road junction with Loddon Bridge Road, do not filter traffic as planned. When coming down the Wokingham Road from Reading the left turn filter onto Loddon Bridge Road stays red even though the turning onto Loddon Bridge Road is clear.</li> <li>• Pedestrian zebra crossings are not illuminated making it difficult to see pedestrians at night especially if they are wearing dark clothing.</li> <li>• Someone needs to drive around the area to see what white lines need repainting as there are many that are worn out.</li> </ul>	Michael Coleman
5	<p>As you are almost certainly aware, an initial investigation into placing a 3G facility at Laurel Park in Lower Earley was cancelled prior to any proper investigation or evaluation being undertaken, the decision was purely based on the feedback from a small number of misinformed residents local to Laurel Park.</p> <p>A second plan was then instigated to install a facility at Maiden Erlegh School, the council's public consultation showed overwhelming support for this idea, but yet again due to a small number of complainants the project has been stopped.</p> <p>Earley and Lower Earley has in the region of 33,000 residents, nearly a quarter of the total residents in Wokingham Borough, and yet we are the only part of the borough with no modern 3G facility.</p> <p>Laurel Park FC teams are currently having to train on sand based MUGAs, tennis courts and facilities that are on the other side of Wokingham because there is just not enough space locally. This will limit any hope of the club expanding to support more children, to enable mixed ability sessions, to introduce adult men's and women's teams or much needed senior walking football. We currently have close to 500 kids training every week but have a waiting list in excess of 100 children that we just can't support due to the lack of facilities. Ideally we'd love to extend our junior section from the existing 33 teams to 45+ in the next 3 years but that cannot happen without new facilities, and in fact it's more likely that we will have to decline in numbers.</p> <p>Increasingly it seems decisions related to sport in the borough are being made by people who are only listening to one side of the issue. At no point has any councillor taken the time to come and speak to the LPFC committee to understand what the real requirement is and the level of support that a new facility actually has. We know that the WBC Executive members were contacted directly by a large number of supporters of the project and each of them were brushed off and ignored.</p>	Ian Jobson

	<p>I'm hopeful that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can review how the decisions relating to the 3G pitch are being made and understand why councillors and the Executive Committee are not taking into account the views and requirements of the majority of the population of the Borough.</p>	
6	<p>To many residents it is irresponsible to grant planning permission for any sizeable new housing development of 50 or more dwellings without first ensuring that local services can cope with the additional demand that new residents will place on them.</p> <p>Planning officers seem too willing to kick the infrastructure can down the road when determining such applications. Their standard response - that NHS services are not within the remit of the planning department - is not only glib but also potentially very dangerous, especially when local GP and dental surgeries and local hospitals are already overloaded before any new development is built.</p> <p>Our society risks falling into terminal decline if we make healthcare, education and road safety less attainable and I suggest that planning officers and their committees should never exercise their power to increase population without first coordinating any necessary guaranteed infrastructure upgrades with the responsible bodies. Otherwise they may be condemning residents to unnecessary illness, accidents and possibly a premature death as well as a sub-standard education.</p> <p>Any person of sound mind would agree with my suggestion so it is a mystery that a properly coordinated approach to housing development planning has not been put in place.</p>	Simon Chapman
7	<p>I would like to have this reviewed please. 'Unofficial' pedestrian access through a hedgerow was available to able bodied and disabled persons at this location until just before Christmas when a 50cm wooden rail was installed to prevent vehicles from parking on the verge. Access remains available to abled bodied people, however disabled people face discrimination as there is no gap for pedestrians. I am no longer able to push my daughter in a wheelchair through the hedgerow at this location. Mothers with buggies need to lift their buggies. This is arguably contrary to the Discrimination Act of 2010 and therefore against the law. When reported to the WBC Inclusion Team, the response was not what I had expected. I had expected a response of 'Yes, we agree the lack of pedestrian access where once there was discriminates against less-able-bodied people'.</p> <p>Aside from acting when disabled people are being discriminated against (abled bodied people can simply step over the rail), WBC should be promoting non-car journeys by maintaining easy access without having to 'go round the houses'. This is an ideal opportunity which would cost nothing; ensure compliance with the law and create value for disabled and young parents with buggies.</p>	Keith O'Leary
8	<p>Please could you scrutinise the fact that the road on the Wokingham side of the Easthampstead Road railway</p>	Peter Turner

	crossing floods frequently, sometimes making it unusable for pedestrians. It has happened for years. The crossing is regularly closed causing disruption for pedestrians, yet the poor drainage issue is ignored.	
9	<p>Winnersh Parish Council would like to submit the following items for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and condition of roads and pavements within the Borough;</li> <li>• Delivery of agreed infrastructure by developers on new estates, i.e. community centres;</li> <li>• Review of the planning enforcement processes and communication. There appear to be some very old, outstanding investigations still ongoing and it is not clear which elements of the application are being investigated.</li> </ul>	Winnersh PC
10	<p>Wokingham Without Parish Council suggest the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway maintenance – specifically in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Potholes – hazardous to both cyclists and cars</li> <li>○ Road sign cleaning and repair</li> <li>○ Roadside ditches and drainage maintenance</li> <li>○ Roadside litter removal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Wokingham Without PC
11	<p>Please accept the following from Arborfield and Newland Parish Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish owned street lighting – move to WBC ownership</li> <li>• Waste collections</li> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Delivery of services and facilities in Arborfield Garrison strategic development location.</li> </ul>	Arborfield & Newland PC

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