



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

### **Annual Reports 2015-16**

Produced: March 2016  
Received by Council: 24 March 2016

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>Foreword by Councillor Tim Holton, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1 – Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 2 – Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 3 – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 4 – Report of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Section 5 - Report of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Section 6 – Report of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Section 7 - Getting Involved in Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Section 8 - Dates of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings 2016-17</b>	<b>26</b>



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

Welcome to the Annual Report of Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2015-16. The report looks back on another busy year during which the Management Committee and the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees reviewed the delivery of key services and raised the profile of topics of local importance.

Effective scrutiny is essential to good governance and good governance leads to better outcomes for the residents of the Borough. So, Overview and Scrutiny Members have continued to hold the Executive and partner organisations to account, using their experience and local knowledge to review existing policies and influence the development of new policies. In so doing Members have been keenly aware of their role as a "critical friend" and have sought to act in a supportive and bipartisan manner.

A wide range of issues were considered during the year, from road repairs and flooding to community safety, integration of health and social care and the safeguarding of vulnerable children. The Committees received presentations from several partner organisations and questions and submissions from local residents and community groups. Executive Members and Directors also attended to answer questions about the performance of key services. I believe that the discussions were robust and challenging but were also constructive and fair.

In addition to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees specific issues were addressed by time-limited Task and Finish Groups. The issues considered included closer working between the NHS and Local Authorities, commuter parking at railway stations and the development of shared services. Task and Finish Groups allow Members to carry out a "deep dive" into topics of particular interest and to engage more closely with local communities. They are an effective way to review service delivery in detail and to influence policy development.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to the Members, Officers, partner organisations and residents who took part in the Overview and Scrutiny process during the year. The financial and demographic challenges facing the Council will continue to grow year on year. Consequently, it is important that the Council continues to make effective decisions which deliver high quality, value for money services. Overview and Scrutiny will continue to deliver the "high support, high challenge" role which underpins the achievement of this goal.

**Tim Holton,  
March 2016**

## SECTION 1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview and Scrutiny is a key element in the system of checks and balances which ensure that Wokingham Borough Council and its partners make and implement effective decisions for the benefit of the residents of the Borough. The Council's Executive is empowered to take decisions within the financial and policy framework set by the full Council. Non-Executive Members of the Council are appointed to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review those decisions and the way they impact on the performance of key services.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny function is delivered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and three Committees focussing on Children's Services, Community and Corporate Services and Health issues. Overview and Scrutiny Committees make recommendations for improvement to the Council's leadership and to partner organisations.

The report sets out the range of issues and submissions considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2015-16, including:

- Regular review of performance indicators which highlight how services are performing.
- Review of the findings of the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services.
- The Council's response to flooding and measures to improve flood prevention.
- Performance of health services, including hospitals, GPs and the ambulance service.
- Submissions from Executive Members and Directors on key service developments.

In addition to the work of the Committees, specific issues were tackled by time-limited Task and Finish Groups. The following Task and Finish Groups met during the year:

- Commuter Parking – examining issues surrounding commuter parking at the railway stations inside the Borough, and at Crowthorne station.
- Better Care Fund – examining new arrangements to deliver closer working between the NHS and Councils, including self-care, prevention and access to GP services.
- Shared Services – examining the current operation of Shared Services, the lessons learned to date and the opportunities for further development.

Effective Overview and Scrutiny utilises information and ideas from a wide range of sources including residents, service users and community groups. During 2016-17 Members involved in Overview and Scrutiny will continue to hold leaders to account, providing "critical friend" challenge to the Council's Executive and other public service providers. In so doing they will seek to reflect the aspirations and concerns of local residents and communities.

The report outlines the range of Overview and Scrutiny issues to be considered in 2016-17 and explains how residents and community groups can get involved in the process.

## SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

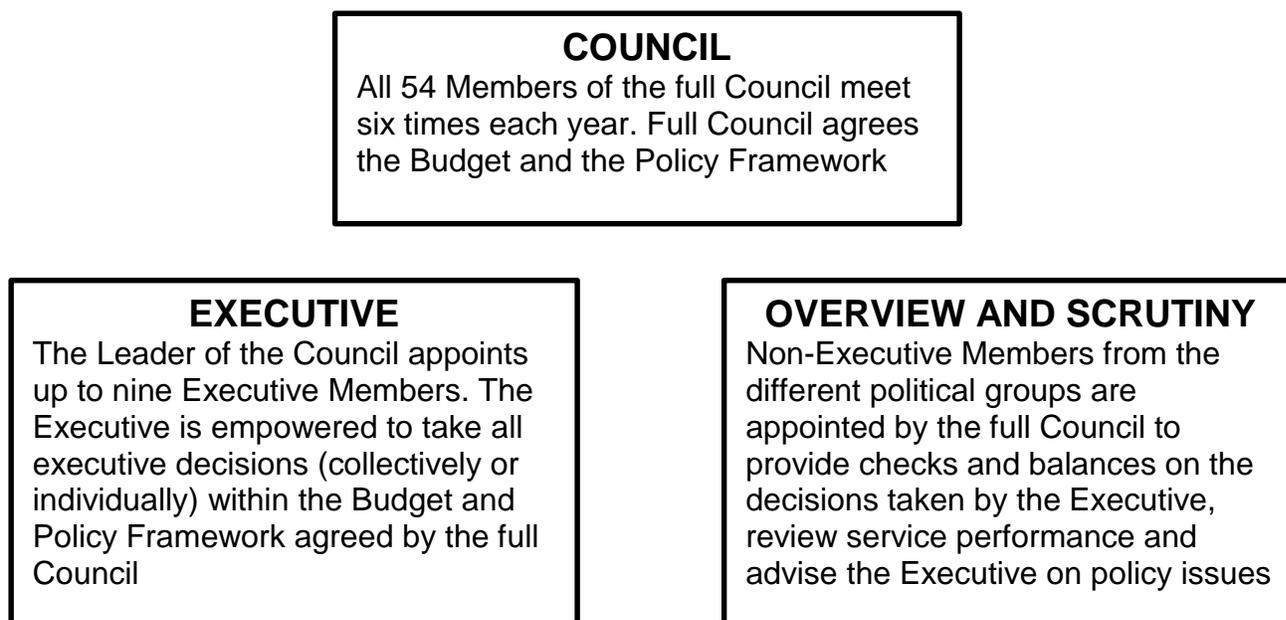
### Context

Wokingham Borough Council is a large, complex organisation with an annual budget in excess of £100m. The Council's Vision is to make the Borough "a great place to live, an even better place to do business". The Council makes major strategic decisions which affect the long-term future of the area and its communities. It also makes decisions on a daily basis which affect the lives of some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents. In order to ensure that the Council spends public money wisely and makes well informed decisions about key services it is essential that an effective system of checks and balances is in place.

Overview and Scrutiny is a key element in that system of checks and balances. In her report on Rotherham Council Louise Casey stated: "Scrutiny in its widest sense is an essential component of Cabinet (Executive) government. It is important that Councillors test proposals by reference to their broad experience and their knowledge of the Borough and their own constituents".

The Council's Executive is empowered to take decisions within the financial and policy framework set by the full Council. Non-Executive Members of the Council (representing each of the political groups) are appointed to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review those decisions and the performance of key services. The relationship between Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny is illustrated in the diagram below.

### Diagram: Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny



## Origins

Following legislative changes to the old Committee system in 2000, the (then) Wokingham District Council adopted the Leader and Cabinet (Executive) model whereby the Council Leader and up to nine Executive Members take key decisions either collectively or individually. In order to provide checks and balances for these powers Councils were given Overview and Scrutiny functions to be exercised by non-Executive Members. Subsequent legislation provided further powers relating to the scrutiny of health services and local arrangements for tackling crime and disorder.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny can be summarised as:

- Being a “critical friend” - holding the Executive to account by scrutinising decisions and “calling in” any decisions causing concern.
- Policy development and review – participating in the development of new policies and reviewing the effectiveness of existing policies.
- Performance monitoring – driving improvement in services by reviewing key indicators which underpin delivery of the Council’s Vision, Priorities and plans.
- External scrutiny of public services such as health, crime reduction and community safety and flood risk management.
- Engaging with residents and community groups to ensure that their concerns are heard and are reflected in the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

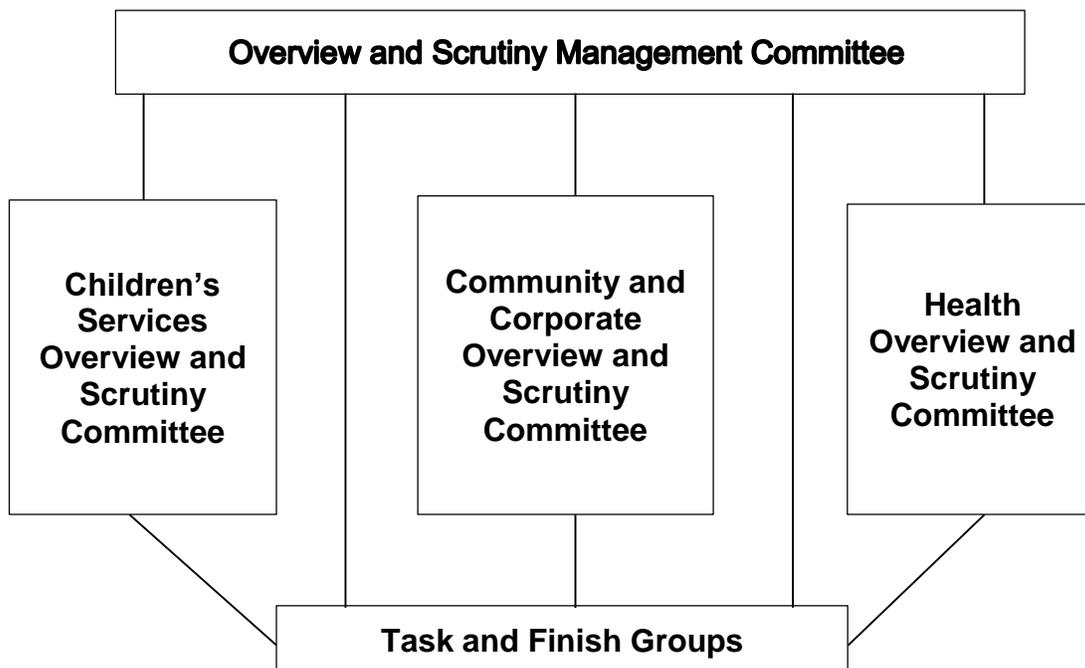
## Structure

In order to deliver the Overview and Scrutiny function the Council has established the following Committees:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – responsible for overseeing the Overview and Scrutiny function and developing an annual work programme for each of the Committees.
- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of services relating to schools, safeguarding and child protection, looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - responsible for scrutiny of Council services, crime reduction and community safety and flood risk management.
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of local NHS bodies, public health arrangements and the work of the Local Healthwatch service.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure is illustrated in the diagram below.

**Diagram: Overview and Scrutiny Structure**



Each of the Overview Scrutiny Committees is made up of non-Executive Members of the Council. The membership of each Committee is set out later in the report. In addressing specific issues the Committees may decide to appoint time limited Task and Finish Groups. Meetings are held in public and residents and community groups are encouraged to attend. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are supported by Officers from the Council's Democratic Services team.

Overview and Scrutiny aims to provide an open and inclusive forum where a range of contributors can be heard – Members, Officers, partners and members of the public. Effective Overview and Scrutiny results in greater openness and accountability and a more robust decision making process. This is increasingly important as the demographic, financial and service challenges facing the Council continue to grow.

### **Exclusions**

Overview and Scrutiny is not about the investigation of minor matters or individual complaints. The Council has a separate corporate Complaints procedure which is used to investigate individual complaints about services. Similarly, Overview and Scrutiny does not look at quasi-judicial matters such planning or licensing issues. Finally, Overview and Scrutiny is not used for raising issues of a party political nature. These matters can be addressed through debate at the meetings of the full Council. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees rely on evidence rather than opinion and seek to work together to confirm that the actions of the Council and its partners are in the best interests of the residents of the Borough.

## SECTION 3

### REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**Councillor Tim Holton, Chairman  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The report highlights the issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2015-16. The role of the Management Committee is twofold. The first role is to oversee the operation of the corporate Overview and Scrutiny process, ensuring that it is fit for purpose. This involves reviewing the work programmes of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure that key policies and services are scrutinised without duplication or inconsistency. It also involves developing an ongoing programme of training and development to ensure that Members and Officers are well equipped to carry out their duties effectively and in line with best practice. The Committee's second role is to investigate issues formally referred to it and to scrutinise matters which fall outside the remit of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, either itself or through dedicated Task and Finish Groups.

During the year the Management Committee considered a number of issues which impact on the residents of the Borough. These included the development of a new grass cutting contract, delivery options for the Council's Highways and Transport service and the effectiveness of the Council's public Budget Consultation process. The Committee also agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at the development of Shared Services to date and to explore opportunities for Shared Services in the future.

The Committee also invited Executive Members and Directors to give evidence about the performance of key services and upcoming challenges. This helped to strengthen the working relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive and gave early warning of emerging topics of importance. The Committee also considered ideas to improve engagement with and input from residents and community groups.

I would like to thank the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for their hard work and support during the year. They have put party political considerations to one side, focussing on the evidence in front of them and the achievement of positive outcomes for the residents of the Borough.

**Tim Holton**

## **Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the Council's Scrutiny function and is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the work programmes of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee also organises a training programme to ensure that non-Executive Members involved in Scrutiny have the requisite skills and knowledge to carry out their roles.

### **Membership**

Councillor Tim Holton (Chairman).

Councillors Prue Bray, Michael Firmager (Vice-Chairman), Kate Haines, Pauline Helliars-Symons, John Jarvis, Norman Jorgensen, Dianne King, Ken Miall, Malcolm Richards and Shahid Younis.

**Substitute Members:** Councillors Laura Blumenthal, Lindsay Ferris, Abdul Loyes and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

**Officer contact:** Neil Carr            neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

## **Work Programme 2015-16**

### **Consideration of 'Call-Ins'**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has the power to review decisions made by the Executive and decisions made by individual Executive Members. Under the Council's Constitution five Members who are not members of the Executive can request that decisions made, but not yet implemented, be reviewed. No "Call-Ins" were received in 2015/16.

### **Performance Management**

Throughout the year the Committee received a quarterly performance management report setting out details of the Council's performance against a number of financial, staffing and operational/project indicators. The reports included a commentary section with information on indicators falling below target and the proposed actions to bring performance back on track. Members asked questions on the key indicators and asked for further information about target setting and the involvement of Executive Members in the process. The Committee questioned the timeliness of the performance management reports and suggested that Officers consider ways to improve both presentation and timetabling.

In addition to the performance management reports, Executive Members were invited to attend to provide an update on their service areas and to answer questions from the Committee. In discussions with the Executive Members the Committee highlighted a number of issues including the need for:

- More detailed information on the delivery of Capital projects to specification as well as to budget.

- Information on feedback provided by residents during the 2015 Budget Consultation events and how the feedback was used to inform the 2016-17 Budget process.
- Updates on progress in developing the Vision for the Borough's country parks.
- Information on measures used to monitor traffic congestion at peak periods.

## **Open Green Spaces**

The Committee received a presentation on the management of the Borough's open spaces following the creation of the Cleaner and Greener team in March 2015. The presentation also covered the preparations for the re-let of the current grass cutting contract with the new contract due to start in April 2016. Members asked about the format of the new grass cutting contract and sought assurances about procurement, contract management, contract penalties and break clauses. Members recognised the improvements in the management of public open space and requested a further update report when the new grass cutting contract was established.

## **Highways and Transport Review**

The Committee received reports on the review of delivery options for the Council's Highways and Transport service. The options under consideration included extending modified contracts with the existing contractors (WSP and Balfour Beatty) and re-letting the contracts with a more outcome focussed specification. Members asked about the current state of the market and any ongoing performance issues with the current contractors. Members supported the direction of travel of the review and requested a further update when the preferred delivery option had been established.

## **Council Tax Single Person Discount Reviews**

The Committee received update reports on the latest review of Council Tax Single Person Discounts (SPD). Reviews to date had identified additional Council Tax income totalling £820k with the 2016-17 review expected to generate a further £100k. Members welcomed progress in reducing fraudulent claims and asked Officers to investigate the potential for requiring SPD claimants to sign an annual declaration form in support of their claim.

## **Consideration of the Executive Forward Programme**

At each meeting the current Executive Forward Programme is considered. If 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.

## **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 are considered. In addition, the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have an opportunity to provide feedback on the operation of their Committees.

## **Update Reports from the Scrutiny Committees**

At each meeting the Chairman of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to present a short report. The purpose of this item is to share information on the key topics under consideration, reduce the potential for duplication and enable the Management Committee to carry out its oversight role.

## **Task and Finish Group**

Following a request from Councillor Prue Bray the Committee established a Task and Finish Group to examine the Council's approach to the delivery of Shared Services. The Task and Finish Group comprised Councillor Shahid Younis (Chairman) and Councillors Prue Bray, David Chopping, John Halsall and Barrie Patman.

The remit of the Task and Finish Group was to review the Shared Services established by the Council to date, establish areas of good practice and consider the potential for the further development of Shared Services. The Task and Finish Group held its first meeting in March 2016 and will submit its report later in the year.

## **Training and Development**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees recognise the importance of ongoing training and development to ensure that skills and knowledge are constantly upgraded. During 2015-16 Members attended a training session which examined key elements of effective Overview and Scrutiny, including the scoping of reviews, questioning techniques, interpreting evidence and following up on recommendations. Further sessions will be held in 2016-17 to ensure that Members are aware of changes in legislation and best practice in Overview and Scrutiny. Training and support will also be provided for Members newly appointed to Overview and Scrutiny roles.

## **Work Programme 2016-17**

The Committee will continue to carry out its challenge and support functions through consideration of key performance indicators and the Executive's Forward Programme. Executive Members and Service Directors will also be invited to attend and discuss specific issues relating to their portfolios.

The Committee will also consider the outcome of specific projects considered in 2015-16 such as the review of Highways and Transport and the operation of the new grass cutting contract. Members will also review the updated Council Plan and the findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken by the Local Government Association in February 2016. Finally, the Task and Finish Group looking at Shared Services will submit its report to the Committee during the year.

## SECTION 4

### REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Pauline Helliard-Symons, Chairman  
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee's work is split almost equally between children's social work and educational attainment. As well as monitoring all the recommendations put in place by earlier Committees and Task and Finish Groups, the new work that has come its way is outlined below. This is as well as the normal performance monitoring that we do each meeting – sometimes challenging the targets that Officers have set - and which keeps the Committee in touch with how both the Service's social care, and schools that have had Ofsted inspections, are doing.

We also monitor what the Service is doing to help schools requiring improvement to improve. This is now more complex, with the advent of the new academies and free schools, as we have little control over what they do, yet the department is still accountable for their standards.

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 and Governor training being done by the Department), since Ofsted now makes a specific comment on how well Governors are challenging their Head teachers about the performance of the schools, and there are far more positive comments than there used to be.

The department's OFSTED inspection was considered, and the action plan that was outlined as a result was related to the Council's own performance targets. The new social workers' recruitment and retention package has proved a success with some new staff being recruited from Australia (whose qualifications are similar to ours) and will soon start to save money over the cost of using agency staff; there is also already a better rate of retention, as the Service seeks to develop a better career path for our social workers.

Some of the most important work we have looked at this year has been the new 'MASH' work – a partnership between the Council, Police and NHS, as well as other partners, to identify and hopefully prevent the abuse of children, including sexual abuse; this has been of particular interest to all Councillors; it has now appointed its first Chief Executive, who is based in WBC's offices. This is perhaps an example of the much closer trust and partnership

working generally that has developed in recent years, between schools, social care workers, the Police and the Health Service.

All members of the committee and their substitutes are expected each year to attend training at the start of the first meeting, as this is an area where so much changes so quickly, and we are keen to keep up to date with new legislation and developments.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee, and the substitutes who have frequently been asked to attend, for their commitment to and interest in the work that we do, and for all the positive and useful contributions that they have all made.

**Pauline Helliar-Symons**

## **Remit of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny and assisting with policy development in relation to services for children and young people. This includes schools, early years settings and children’s centres, safeguarding and child protection, looked after children and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Committee also considers the parts of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that relate to children and young people.

### **Membership**

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons (Chairman).  
Councillors Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Lindsay Ferris, Ken Miall, Bill Soane, Alison Swaddle, and Shahid Younis (Vice-Chairman).

**Substitute Members:** Councillors Prue Bray, Tom McCann, Malcolm Richards and Bob Wyatt.

Representatives of the Church of England Diocese and the Roman Catholic Diocese, together with a Parent Governor are also able to attend meetings of the Committee when Education issues are being considered.

**Officer contact:** Luciane Bowker      [luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:luciane.bowker@wokingham.gov.uk)

## **Work Programme 2015-16**

### **Performance Management**

At each meeting the Committee reviewed the performance of the service in relation to key Performance Indicators. These indicators demonstrate the contribution made by Children’s Services to achieving key Council priorities relating to looking after vulnerable people, improving educational attainment and focussing on every child achieving their potential. Members asked detailed questions on the performance indicators and requested further information to support the direction of travel set out in the report. At its meeting in February 2016 the Committee mapped the service’s direction of travel evidenced by the regular performance management reports against the direction of travel evidenced by the Ofsted inspection of the service carried out in October/November 2015.

### **School Performance Data**

The Committee also received regular School Performance data reports, 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 were also considered. Members noted the revised inspection approach adopted by Ofsted and the ongoing examples of high performance in light of the difficult funding settlement for local schools.

## **OFSTED Inspection**

At its meeting in February 2016 the Committee considered the findings of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The Ofsted report also reviewed the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The Ofsted inspection had taken place during October/November 2015. Members considered the overall inspection finding that Children's services required improvement to be good. At the same time Members noted Ofsted's recognition of the significant progress being made across the service underpinned by a strong leadership team. Examples of good practice included a clear Vision for service improvement, a number of well-coordinated services, good adoption services and evidence of a more stable workforce. The Committee considered the performance evidence in the Ofsted report and compared it to the performance management information provided to Members.

In relation to the inspection of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Committee considered the overall finding that the Board required improvement to be good. Members welcomed the progress made by the Board in areas such as partnership working, multi-agency audits and involving young people in its work. The Committee also welcomed the positive impact made by the new Chairman of the Safeguarding Board.

## **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

The Committee received update reports on the establishment of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which was due to go live in March/April 2016. The aim of the MASH was to improve information sharing arrangement amongst the key agencies involved in safeguarding, including the Council, Thames Valley Police and local health services, Public Health and probation. An effective MASH would result in earlier identification of potential risks to children and vulnerable adults. A single point of contact and a streamlined decision making process would also result in a consistent approach to risk management. Members welcomed the development of the MASH as part of the broader assurance on risk management and information sharing to identify and support vulnerable children.

## **Effective Governing Bodies Review**

The Committee considered an update report on progress following the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Effectiveness of Governing Bodies Task and Finish Group. Members noted that significant progress had been made which was evidenced by feedback from Ofsted inspections. Ofsted had commented that Governors were more capable and able to provide robust challenge to Headteachers about school performance. Members supported the proposal to develop an advertising campaign to attract potential new governors.

## **Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board**

The Committee considered the annual Review of the Corporate Parenting Board which gave details of progress towards the Council's commitment to being an outstanding corporate parent. Members considered the work undertaken over the previous year to ensure year-on-year-progress in outcomes for children in care and care leavers. Members welcomed improvements such as more robust and timely initial health assessments.

## **Staff Recruitment and Retention**

The Committee considered a report on the refreshed workforce development strategy, specifically the measures introduced to improve the recruitment and retention of Children's social workers. These measures include a decision to attract social workers from overseas with a focus on Western Australia which had a similar system in terms of the legal framework and qualifications model. Members requested information about the cost effectiveness of this element of the strategy and were informed that a significant amount of interest had been generated resulting in the recruitment of five senior social workers from Australia. Members welcomed the overall progress of the strategy which had made the workforce more stable and reduced the previous reliance on agency staff.

## **Training**

It is important that Members involved in scrutinising the work of Children's Services are fully aware of how quickly the landscape changes. Consequently, training sessions take place each year to keep all members of the Committee up to date on the many developments that take place, both relating to schools and to child protection and wellbeing.

## **Task and Finish Group**

During the year the Committee considered reports on the emerging Primary School Planning Strategy. Development of the strategy had identified three "hot spot" areas of the Borough, Earley, Shinfield and Woodley, where there was an existing or potential shortfall in the number of reception places. In order to oversee the development and implementation of the updated strategy a Member Task and Finish Group was established under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services. Councillor Ken Miall was appointed to the Group as the representative of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Primary School Planning Strategy for 2016-18 was subsequently submitted to the Executive in January 2016 with proposals to deliver new primary school places to meet demand generated by a changing pattern in house occupation.

## **Work Programme 2016-17**

The Committee will continue to monitor 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 high and low achievers and the delivery of effective safeguarding services for children. The Committee's work programme for 2016-17 will include regular monitoring of the following:

- annual report of the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board;
- update on the Early Years Help and Innovations programme;
- update on the implementation of the MASH;
- annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board;
- implementation of the Special Needs and Disabilities Strategy;
- update on the recruitment and retention strategy.

## **SECTION 5**

### **REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



**Norman Jorgensen, Chairman  
Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

2015-16 was the first year of operation for the Committee following the merger of the former Corporate Services and Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

During the year the Committee looked at a number of issues which are important to the residents of the Borough and to the delivery of high quality services by the Council and key partners. These included parking, flood risk management, road repair notifications, community safety, houses in multiple occupation and representation by the Council on outside bodies.

The Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group carried out an extensive piece of work investigating a topic of local importance which involved the consideration of evidence from the rail operators, residents, community groups and local MPs. The recommendations from the Task and Finish Group were submitted to the Executive for consideration and adoption.

We already have a number of important 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 evaluated and prioritised.

I thank the Members of the Committee, Officers and those others who took part in our meetings for their valuable contributions during the year.

**Norman Jorgensen**

## **Remit of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006 which involves oversight of the operation of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership. The Committee is also responsible for scrutiny of flood risk management, partnership working and internal Council operations.

The Committee held its first meeting in October 2015 following the merger of the former Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the former Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny, both of which held their final meetings in June 2015.

### **Membership**

Councillor Norman Jorgensen (Chairman).

Councillors Chris Bowring, Michael Firmager (Vice-Chairman), Ken Miall, Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey, David Sleight, Bill Soane and Shahid Younis.

**Substitute Members:** Councillors Mark Ashwell, Lindsay Ferris, Tom McCann and Alison Swaddle.

**Officer contact:** Colm O Caomhanaigh: [colm.ocaomhanaigh@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@wokingham.gov.uk)

## **Work Programme 2015-16**

### **Flooding**

The Committee exercises the Council's flood risk management responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011. It received an update report on flooding in 2015 at its meeting in January 2016. The report outlined progress in fulfilling the Council's statutory obligations as Lead Local Flood Authority. It was expected that progress leading into 2016 would be sustained further following the appointment of three Officers to deal with flooding issues. The appointments included a Flood Risk Manager and Officers working to mitigate the flooding risks in new housing developments. Following a period of consultation, the Council's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was published on the Council's website in March 2015.

The Committee was informed that the 2013/2014 winter floods had been analysed by means of parish-based flood investigations for the affected areas. The resulting reports were made available via the Council's website in early 2016. The Council had allocated Capital resources of £4 million, to be spent over three years, for improvements to the strategic road network and other roads that flooded previously during major weather events. The Council was in the process of investigating potential schemes to alleviate flooding which impacted on the Borough's roads. The Committee welcomed the progress being made and asked for the next flooding update report to be submitted in June 2017.

## **Road Repairs**

The Committee discussed the existing procedures relating to road repairs and communication between Officers and Members on this matter. The discussion covered both planned and reactive repairs and dealt with new procedures for inspections of roads and dealing with works arising from them. Members stated that a single point of contact on road repair issues would improve the flow of information enabling them to communicate progress to residents more effectively.

The Committee welcomed proposals to introduce a new single email address for Member enquiries on road repairs and maintenance. The Committee requested that proposals be brought to its March 2016 meeting on keeping Members informed of the road repair work programme. The Committee agreed to review how the new procedures were working at its June 2016 meeting.

## **Houses in Multiple Occupation**

The Committee received a report on the legal issues relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation with particular reference to flats and apartments. It heard from residents on the problems that arise when a large number of houses in an area are converted to apartments. It emerged from the discussion that parking was the biggest problem. The Committee requested further updates on this issue including a specific briefing on how licensing and the Borough Design Guide might be used to help deal with these problems.

## **Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Scheme**

The Committee received updates on the scheme proposals to regenerate Wokingham town centre. Officers and the Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities provided updates and answered questions on issues such as the overall financial situation, development plans and monitoring procedures. The Committee noted that the regeneration scheme model was based on a nil cost to the taxpayer with the Council aiming for a 5% return as a contingency. The Committee requested further updates as the scheme progressed.

## **Review of Outside Bodies**

The former Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to review the list of “outside bodies” with Council representation. The review aimed to determine the reasons why the Council was represented and the desirability of maintaining that presence. A second strand of enquiry emerged to look at the accountability and reporting structure of the voluntary/community organisations working in partnership with the Council.

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee took on this piece of work and requested a report to its March 2016 meeting. The report included details of the Outside Bodies including their aims, the Council representative, reasons for Council involvement and any Council funding provided.

## **Task and Finish Group**

The Committee received and agreed the report of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group which was established at the suggestion of Councillor Lindsay Ferris and operated under the Chairmanship of Councillor David Sleight. The Task and Finish Group examined the problems relating to commuter parking near the six railway stations in the Borough and at Crowthorne Station which lies just outside the Borough boundary in Bracknell Forest.

The report examined the challenges arising out of the growing demand for rail services combined with the relatively static car parking provision at local stations. It recommended a three-pronged approach to tackle the detrimental effects of commuter parking:

- alternative provision of access to stations by cycle, bus or parking provision;
- effective enforcement of restrictions by the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement;
- a consistent approach to the application of parking restrictions.

The report recommended that some form of metered parking on public roads near railway stations should be considered. The Task and Finish Group's recommendations were submitted to the Executive Member for Planning and Highways and the Director of Environment for their responses before the report was submitted to the Executive.

## **Work Programme 2016-17**

Apart from receiving further updates mentioned above on Road Repairs, the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Scheme and Houses in Multiple Occupation, the Committee will examine the implications of the Government's Right-to-Buy Scheme, the impact of new legislation on procurement policy and progress on the proposed community café at Shutters. It will also complete a review into the Council's representation on outside bodies, including an assessment of the value for money achieved from Council funding.

The Committee's meeting in March 2016 included a review of the operation of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership which was made up of the Council and representatives from the police, probation and health services. The Committee considered performance against the partnership's key priorities for 2015-16 and any proposed changes for 2016-17.

## SECTION 6

### REPORT OF THE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Ken Miall, Chairman  
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The challenges facing the health service continue to dominate the headlines. As costs relating to the ageing population and lifestyle factors continue to increase, the financial challenges mean that efficiencies and new ways of working are essential. It is difficult at times to keep up with the speed of changes in the operation of Health and Social Services. Against this backdrop the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to test the delivery of local health services and to explore the potential for more collaborative working between health and social care.

It has been another busy year for the Committee. Our work programme has been supported and enlivened by contributions from health service providers, the Borough's Healthwatch team, residents and service users. The range of contributors and expert witnesses ensured that our meetings were lively, informative and, above all, demanding in seeking answers to our questions.

During the year we focussed on a number of key local issues such as the improvement plan for the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the challenges facing the local ambulance service. We also looked at specific issues such as the local impact of the closure of the Independent Living Fund and the recommissioning of sexual health services. A major piece of work was also undertaken by the Better Care Fund Task and Finish Group which met throughout the year to examine proposals for closer working between health and social care services. This was a difficult and technical piece of work which will help to inform the development of major service changes.

The Committee has worked hard to build effective working relationships with key health service providers, the Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. The Committee will continue to develop these relationships in future years for the benefit of the residents of the Borough.

Finally, my thanks go to the Members, Council Officers, external partners and residents who contributed their time and efforts to the work of the Committee during the year.

**Ken Miall**

## **Remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Borough. This includes hospital and community health services, family and public health services and the work of the Local Healthwatch team. In so doing, the Committee 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.

### **Membership**

Councillor Ken Miall (Chairman).

Councillors Laura Blumenthal, UllaKarin Clark, Kate Haines (Vice Chairman), Philip Houldsworth, Malcolm Richards, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, David Sleight, Alison Swaddle and Bob Wyatt.

**Substitute Members:** Lindsay Ferris, Abdul Loyes, Tom McCann, Bill Soane.

All attendees at HOSC meetings, including members of the public, may ask questions after each presentation is delivered.

**Officer contact:** Madeleine Shopland [madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk)

## **Work Programme 2015-16**

### **Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust**

The Trust had been inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in March 2014 and overall had been rated 'Requires Improvement.' The Committee received an update on the improvements that the Trust had made and the action it had taken since the inspection. In particular Members sought assurance about Maternity Services, which at the time of the inspection had been rated 'Inadequate' for Safety. The Committee also asked about staff recruitment and retention. Members acknowledged the action being taken by the Trust and the progress being made.

### **South Central Ambulance Service**

An update presentation was received from the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), the local ambulance provider. Members had requested information on the following:

- Financial challenges faced by the Trust;
- Impact on performance of increased severity levels of calls;
- Ambulance handovers, crew change delays and ambulance response times;
- National Ambulance Response Programme pilot;
- Progress made against the Operational Plan 2015/16;
- Co-responding with the Fire Service;
- Staff recruitment and retention;

- CQC inspection September 2014.

The Committee recognised the national shortage of paramedics and the recruitment difficulties in the Thames Valley due to high living costs. Members welcomed the piece of work being undertaken by SCAS to fill paramedic vacancies through measures such as recruiting from Australia and Poland.

### **Suicide Audit**

Members were informed of the pan Berkshire suicide audit. The presentation covered suicide and unexplained death rates and statistics regarding method and location of suicide, gender and age of deceased and contributing personal and social factors. Members welcomed the work being undertaken on suicide prevention. The Committee agreed that it wished to monitor this topic by means of a further update at its March 2016 meeting, in order to better identify any patterns.

### **Independent Living Fund**

Members examined the impact the closure of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) and the transfer of ILF cases to the Council would have on residents and the Council. The ILF had been established in 1988 to make direct payments to enable disabled people and (where appropriate) their carers to purchase support that could not be obtained from councils. Members were advised of the progress of the 18 transferred cases and requested that a briefing be provided once all reviews had been completed.

### **Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing**

The Committee questioned the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Julian McGhee-Sumner, on his areas of responsibility and, in particular, sought and received clarification on the processes relating to residential placements.

### **Sexual Health Service Recommissioning**

The Committee considered a report on the recommissioning of sexual health services. Members were informed of the anticipated process and outcomes of the re-procurement and recommissioning, the rationale for the re-tendering and benefits already achieved. Members welcomed the savings that the new contract was estimated to bring about. The Committee asked for information regarding the age range and genders of sexual health treatment service users and the different infections and treatments to provide a clearer picture of local service users, the different infections and treatments available.

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

The priorities and programmes of the Health and Wellbeing Board were subject to scrutiny primarily by HOSC. The Committee monitored the delivery of one of the Board's statutory responsibilities, the production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The Committee commented on the refreshed JSNA and emphasised that it should be easy to access on the Council's website. Members asked for a demonstration of the JSNA website prior to its public launch.

## **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

The Committee were updated on the work of the Care Quality Commission, the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England, in the Borough and specifically Primary Medical Services.

## **Healthwatch**

At each Committee meeting Healthwatch Wokingham Borough updated Members on its work. Members noted that, as a result of a deaf blind Healthwatch champion walkabout at Wokingham Medical Centre, a number of changes had been made to make the centre more accessible.

## **Better Care Fund Task and Finish Group**

Announced by the Government in the June 2013 spending round, to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care, the Better Care Fund (BCF) created a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and Councils to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services.

At its June 2015 meeting HOSC agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of two Wokingham Better Care Fund schemes: Neighbourhood Clusters, Primary prevention and Self-Care and Access to General Practice.

The Task and Finish Group sought to understand changes outlined in the Better Care Fund and specifically those relating to the two schemes. The Task and Finish Group were informed of how plans were progressing and how the Council was making the most of opportunities that were available when implementing the BCF in relation to its Care Act duties on prevention, wellbeing and information, advice and guidance.

Members established how the Council and the NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group were engaging with residents regarding Neighbourhood Cluster arrangements and access to General Practice and gained an understanding of the increasing demand on General Practice and how this might be managed in future. It is likely to submit its final report in the Summer of 2016.

## **Work Programme 2016-17**

The Committee's work programme for 2016/17 will be an evolving piece of work. The Committee will continue to receive the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group Performance Outcomes Report and updates from Healthwatch. It will also continue to monitor current health related consultations. The Committee will also receive the final report of the Better Care Fund Task and Finish Group during 2016.

## SECTION 7

### GETTING INVOLVED IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Council is committed to making Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings accessible to all residents of the Borough. A key aim is to increase public involvement in the process and to remove barriers to participation.

Residents can get involved in Overview and Scrutiny by attending meetings - all Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and are held in the early evening to make attendance easier. In addition, copies of Agendas including reports to be considered are published five working days before each meeting and can be accessed on the Council's website:

[www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings)

Residents can also elect to receive automatic notification when new Overview and Scrutiny Agenda and Minutes are published.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting includes a Public Question Time session which allows residents to raise issues of general interest and/or specific issues relating to the items under consideration.

Members of the public are also able to contribute to Scrutiny reviews by giving evidence either as an individual or as part of a community group. Residents can also request that a specific item is considered by Overview and Scrutiny as a review item. Residents can complete an online Scrutiny review suggestion form at:

[www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/decisions/ask-for-a-scrutiny-review)

During 2016-17 the Council will be seeking to make more use of local and social media to raise awareness of issues coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to allow residents to provide comments and feedback.

The Council's Twitter feed is accessible here: [WokinghamBorough@WokinghamBC](https://twitter.com/WokinghamBC)

If you want to learn more about Overview and Scrutiny or want to discuss a specific issue, please contact Neil Carr, the Council's Scrutiny Officer:

by telephone: 0118 974 6058, or

by email: [neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk) or by post:

Democratic Services, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

## **SECTION 8**

### **DATES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN 2016-17**

- **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

Tuesday 31 May 2016 at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 12 July 2016 at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 20 September 2016 at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 22 November 2016 at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 24 January 2017 at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 7.30pm

- **Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Thursday 23 June 2016 at 7pm  
Tuesday 13 September 2016 at 7pm  
Tuesday 15 November 2016 at 7pm  
Tuesday 17 January 2017 at 7pm  
Tuesday 21 March 2017 at 7pm

- **Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Monday 20 June 2016 at 7pm  
Monday 5 September 2016 at 7pm  
Monday 7 November 2016 at 7pm  
Monday 9 January 2017 at 7pm  
Monday 13 March 2017 at 7pm

- **Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday 1 June 2016 at 7pm  
Monday 11 July 2016 at 7pm  
Thursday 8 September 2016 at 7pm  
Monday 16 January 2017 at 7pm  
Wednesday 8 March 2017 at 7pm