

Agenda Item 7.

TITLE	Requests for Overview and Scrutiny Reviews and Committee Work Programmes 2016-17
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 31 May 2016
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The report proposes the development of a programme of reviews for the forthcoming year. By focusing on appropriate topics the Overview and Scrutiny Committees can help improve future policy and provide assurance to residents around the delivery of Council and other local public services.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the current Work Programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix C be noted;
- 2) That the Committee considers the list of suggested scrutiny reviews in Appendix B and decides which suggestions should be added to the Work Programme of the Committee or Overview and Scrutiny Committees, taking into the account the Council's Vision, Priorities and Principles as set out in Appendix A, and available resources.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report sets out the on-going Work Programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees together with a list of new ideas submitted as potential scrutiny review items for the 2016-17 Municipal Year. It also sets out the issues considered in 2015-16 and maps these issues against the Council's Vision, Priorities and Principles.

The report also outlines possible criteria for the Committee to use in order to come to a view on which topics to progress in 2016-17.

Background

Under the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny review suggestions can be submitted at any time throughout the year by Members, Officers or members of the public. This process involves the allocation of topics to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees or to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself.

Analysis of Issues

The ongoing work programmes of the Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is set out in Appendix C. The Committee should bear these existing commitments in mind when deciding whether to add a review to the programme.

The Committee is also asked to note the following Task and Finish Group reviews which are already in progress:

- Better Care Fund (Task and Finish Group reporting to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – due to report shortly);
- Shared Services (Task and Finish Group reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – at the start of its work).

At its meeting on 7 March 2016, the Committee requested an update on the issues considered during 2015-16 mapped against the Council's Vision, Priorities and Principles. This is set out in Appendix A. Again, Members may wish to consider this information to decide if any particular aspects of the Vision, Priorities and Principles should receive particular focus in 2016-17.

New Scrutiny Review Suggestions

Recent Overview and Scrutiny review suggestions have also been received, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

In assessing the new Overview and Scrutiny review suggestions, the Committee is invited to take into account the review selection criteria as previously adopted by the Committee:

- Whether the issue is of local, and preferably current, concern;
- Whether the review can be linked to the Council's Vision, Priorities and underpinning Principles or would help to achieve these;
- Whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council ;
- Is the topic one that is capable of being influenced by the Committee;
- 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 review;
If a review is warranted, should it have a high, medium or low priority?
- Whether the review should be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself, delegated to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group created to undertake the review?

Format of the Meeting

There will be an opportunity for individuals who have submitted a suggestion to briefly

introduce it to the Committee, for approximately two minutes, followed by questions from the Committee. It is intended that all the suggestions will be presented prior to a decision being taken on whether to progress individual suggestions.

Terms of Reference

If a review is approved detailed terms of reference will then be drafted by Officers in consultation with the appropriate Director and agreed by the Committee or Task and Finish Group as appropriate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

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

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Undertaking Reviews will involve Officer time from Democratic Services and/or Service Departments	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact Neil Carr	Service Governance and Improvement Services
Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 20 May 2016	Version No. 1.0

Overview and Scrutiny

Oversight of the Council's Vision, Priorities and Principles – 2015/16

Vision

The Council's Vision for the future is to make the Borough:

“A great place to live, an even better place to do business”.

Principles

- **Offer Excellent Value for your Council Tax**
We will continue to encourage our staff to ensure our services offer excellent value for money in your Council Tax.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight – 2015/16

- Monitored and challenged performance against a range of financial, staffing and operational/project indicators through the quarterly performance management report.
 - Discussed the Public Budget Consultation process and outcomes with the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance.
 - Considered reports on the review of Council Tax Single Person Discounts.
 - Requested updates on the delivery of major Capital projects against project plans.
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- **Provide Affordable Homes**
We will provide a complete range of affordable and flexible homes across the Borough through the provision of general needs housing, shared ownership and other tenures.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored the delivery of affordable homes through the quarterly performance management report.
- Reviewed the legal issues relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation with particular reference to flats and apartments.
- Scheduled a review of the Government's Right to Buy proposals.

- **Look After the Vulnerable**

We will help our residents who are dependent on our support to become self-sufficient and self-reliant. We will provide care to those residents who need our support.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Set up the Better Care Fund Task and Finish Group to review aspects of the ongoing transformation in integrated health and social care.
- Examined the impact of the closure of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) and the transfer of ILF cases to the Council.
- Interviewed the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing on the procedures for residential placements.

- **Improve Health, Wellbeing and Quality of Life**

We will work with our partners to promote health, wellbeing and quality of life. We will ensure our partnerships are focussed on health and wellbeing outcomes and will drive the delivery of public health through the Council's new role. We will continue to ensure safe communities.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Performance Outcomes Report and feedback from Healthwatch Wokingham Borough.
- Reviewed progress following the inspection of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust in 2014.
- Monitored the priorities and delivery of programmes developed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Reviewed performance against the targets developed by the Borough's Community Safety Partnership which included the police, probation and health services.

- **Maintain and Improve the Waste Collection, Recycling and Fuel Efficiency**

We will maintain and improve the weekly waste collection and recycling service driven by the EU directives on landfill charges. We will implement changes to make our buildings more fuel efficient and improve their longer term sustainability.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored the performance of waste collection and recycling services through the quarterly performance management report.
- Reviewed the ongoing Asset Review Programme which was developing a comprehensive understanding of the Council's properties.

- Monitored the ongoing Street Lighting Upgrade Project aimed at introducing low energy lighting columns.
- **Deliver Quality in All that We Do**
We will publish customer service commitments and ensure quality of service. We will clarify and simplify monitoring arrangements to assure improvements.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored performance against customer service targets through the quarterly performance management report.
- Interviewed the Executive Member for Resident Services.
- Set up the Shared Services Task and Finish Group to review a number of joint arrangements including Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards.
- Considered reports on the review of delivery options for the Council's Highways and Transport service.

Priorities

- **Improve Educational Attainment and Focus on Every Child Achieving their Potential**
We will work with partners to achieve our aim of being one of the best local authorities in the country for educational attainment. We will achieve this by maintaining high performance overall, and by focusing on narrowing the gap in the achievement of children from particular groups by delivering targeted support and early intervention.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored of ongoing work to support schools requiring improvement.
- Considered regular school performance data reports and summaries of school Ofsted reports.
- Reviewed the findings of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.
- Considered a follow up report on the implementation of the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group on the Effectiveness of Governing Bodies.
- **Invest in Regenerating Towns and Villages, Support Social and Economic Prosperity, Whilst Encouraging Business Growth**
We will work with residents, businesses and partners to develop and deliver an affordable programme of regeneration in our towns and villages across the

Borough, starting with Wokingham. We will assist our communities to increase trade and provide amenities in the villages that people value. We will focus on supporting business growth.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Considered updates on the proposed regeneration of Wokingham town centre.
 - Scheduled a presentation and interview with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities.
 - Reviewed the development of the new Library Offer.
- **Ensure Strong Sustainable Communities that are Vibrant and Supported by Well Designed Development**
We will concentrate our efforts to plan and deliver services which will support appropriate design and development, creating thriving communities.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Interviewed the Executive Member for Planning and Highways.
 - Reviewed the Council's plans and procedures relating to its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority.
 - Reviewed the management of the Borough's open spaces.
- **Tackle Traffic Congestion in Specific Areas of the Borough**
We will explore different private and public transport options to reduce congestion and improve journey times across the Borough.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Reviewed performance indicators measuring traffic congestion across the Borough.
 - Reviewed procedures relating to communication on road repairs and proposals to improve contact between Officers and Members.
 - Set up a Task and Finish Group to review the issues relating to consumer parking at railway stations around the Borough.
- **Improve the Customer Experience when Accessing Council Services**
We will provide a responsive, flexible and consistent customer service to give you the confidence that your Council Tax is being spent wisely. We will continue to train and develop our staff and working practices to focus on the achievement of our priorities. We will build on the good practice of our Customer Service Centre, resolving your queries at the first point of contact and providing you with modern channels to access our services.

Overview and Scrutiny Oversight 2015/16

- Monitored customer contact and customer facing services through quarterly performance management reports.
- Interviewed the Executive Member for Resident Services.
- Considered the format of the new Borough-wide grass cutting contract including improvements in communication and the handling of customer complaints.

Overview and Scrutiny

New Overview and Scrutiny Requests 2016/17

1. End to End Reporting of Data and Analytics Capability - Requested by Councillor Shahid Younis.

Details of Request

Corporate information is a key strategic asset for any organisation. It needs to be properly collated, stored, monitored and disseminated to people with the authorised access in a timely fashion. After all, this data forms the basis on which the operational and strategic management makes decisions on a daily basis.

The suggestion is for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to review end to end reporting and analytics capability of the Council.

Most of the data presented to Overview and Scrutiny Members is out of date, in some cases 6 months old. By looking at the old data it is difficult for Members to adequately monitor the performance of the Council.

For Members to fully assess the performance indicators and the quality of services provided by the Council, the provided information must be real-time or as up-to-date as possible. With modern technology there is no reason why this should not be possible.

The suggestion is to make holistic evaluation of the end-to-end reporting and analytics capability of the Council – how information is collated, formatted and disseminated across the officials and Members. The reporting areas would transcend all areas of the Council, e.g. workforce management, educational attainments, looked after children, pothole spend, Council Tax collection or any other part of the key performance indicators.

The desired outcome of the review would be to ensure that the Council has the operational and strategic reporting and analytics capability to provide real time information to its stakeholders.

The capability must include having the right access in the right format and at the right time. Capability must include the self-service components so that there is less reliance on the Officers and IT. In addition, predictive analytics capability would help the Council's forecasting.

Comment

This request was considered initially by the Committee at its meeting on 7 March 2016. The Committee supported, in principle, the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to consider the request. It also decided to give further consideration to the request at the meeting on 31 May 2016.

2. Housing Rents and Housing Benefits – Requested by Councillor Lindsay Ferris

Details of Request

I have been working on a Housing Rents/Housing Benefits issue now for over 18 months. Whilst I do not want to go into the case specifically, it has raised a number of issues. In particular I would like Overview and Scrutiny to look at:

- The Housing Benefits Group and Housing Rents Groups seem to be disconnected in some important areas. We need to assess how this can be improved.
- I have seen requests to the same tenant (dated at similar times) asking the said person to do three different actions at the same time (very confusing for the tenant). This issue needs clarification.
- With the likely introduction of Universal Credit in the near future, now is the time to assess how these groups can be made to work better together, including the possibility of merging the groups. For example, why not have one person (or group) dealing with a tenant concerning their rent, housing benefits and Council Tax, rather than three separate groups as at present.

Comment

Detailed comments on this request will be submitted to the meeting.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty – Requested by Councillor Prue Bray

Details of Request

I would like to know what the Council is doing to satisfy its Public Sector Equality Duty. I know that impact assessments are done, but the ones I have seen are not of the quality that the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) would rate highly. For example, the Equality Impact Assessment doesn't appear to be done at an early stage and it doesn't appear to be an iterative process.

The Council has an Equal Opportunity Policy to cover its employment practices, and a web page which deals with equalities at a very high level. But there doesn't seem to be any analysis of the impact of any policies.

Comment

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011. It created a new public sector Equality Duty. The Act requires public authorities to publish relevant information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty and report progress on locally agreed equality objectives.

The public sector Equality Duty is made up of a general duty which is supported by specific duties. The general duty requires public organisations to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (the protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

4. The Cost, Use and Effectiveness of Cycle Lanes – Requested by John Redwood, M.P.

Details of Request

At present, no further details are available. Mr Redwood has been invited to submit further information about the request. Any update and comments will be reported to the meeting.

5. Introduction of Multi-disciplinary Wardens – Requested by Mr P Windley

Details of Request

I gather that control of parking is due to become a matter for the Council soon. I assume you will be appointing wardens for this. In view of the public concern about other anti-social behaviour (litter, dogs, etc.), I would like to suggest that wardens are also responsible for dealing with other problems (perhaps with on-the-spot-fines). The TV programme “The Inspectors are Coming” is a good example of how this could work.

Comment

The Council is undergoing a process to take over enforcement of illegal parking from the police (Civil Parking Enforcement – CPE). The anticipated date for receiving these powers is early May 2017. In order to deliver this service on a cost neutral basis (a requirement for taking on these powers) the Council will tender for the enforcement and fine processing, to be delivered by a third party. Adding additional duties, such as issuing fines for anti-social behaviour, are outside the scope of the tender. This is because issuing anti-social behaviour fines is not cost effective (i.e. cannot be delivered on a cost neutral basis) and would jeopardise the application to take on these powers. In addition, issuing such fines would not achieve the main aim of CPE which is to tackle road congestion.

In the meantime, the Council is reviewing the way services are delivered and could look at other ways of achieving this goal, for example through the roles of community warden or highway inspector.

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive an update on progress relating to CPE in due course.

6. Speed of Trains into London Waterloo from Wokingham – Requested by Mr S Stockford

Details of Request

I note your tweet in which you ask for suggestions for areas of concern. I would like to propose the speed (not frequency or capacity) of the train line into Waterloo. A large number of people commute from Wokingham to Waterloo each day. It stops 13 times and takes 1 hour and 10 minutes. This is very poor when compared with other towns a similar distance away (Farnborough for example is a similar distance from Waterloo but the trains are nearly twice as fast (38 minutes)).

Could this please be looked at. If it does not change we as a family will move out of Wokingham in the next five years. I know there are several big employers in the Thames Valley area but London has a more robust and resilient market should there be another downturn. Having a quick train in increases the attractiveness of Wokingham for London commuters.

Again I just want to emphasise this is not a frequency or capacity issues. I think two trains an hour is plenty.

Comment

Detailed comments on this suggestion will be submitted to the meeting.