

Report to Council

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

Date: 15th November 2017

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

As part of its work programme, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to Full Council summarising the work undertaken by the Committee during the past year.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 Scrutiny is undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself and by smaller working groups, which examine issues and concerns in more detail. This year, the Committee has held decision makers to account, contributed to policy development and made recommendations for improvement. Working groups, which are cross party and non-political, have examined specific recommendations for change to Cabinet Members. Progress on the implementation of accepted recommendations is reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 The Committee scrutinised two areas in depth, income generation and issues relating to an aging population, both reviews made a number of recommendations. The working group that explored income generation was not scrutinising existing services, but was looking to the future and sought to make recommendations that would raise the awareness of the authority's need to develop a trading culture and explore new areas of business. It examined possible ways to increase income through commercial activity and identified and investigated additional sources of income, raising awareness of potential trading opportunities that could be available. The review which considered a range of issues linked to an increasing elderly population focused on how the authority, and partners, could support and improve the lives of socially isolated elderly people in the borough. It recognised that ageing well relies on services that are not just the responsibility of the County

Council or social care. Conclusions and recommendations from the working groups have been submitted to Cabinet. Monitoring the progress of recommendations from earlier working groups, the Bonington Theatre and the Obesity reviews, has continued. Approximately 90% of recommendations from these reviews were accepted by the decision makers and have either been implemented, or are progressing.

- 2.3** The agreed programme of attendance by Portfolio Holders has continued; this enables members of the Committee to examine areas and ask questions about issues and concerns within each Portfolio. Members submit questions in advance and additional questioning takes place at the Committee itself. This programme gives Members the opportunity to examine key service areas and learn more about the authority's work. It holds the Executive to account on performance issues and presents an opportunity to learn about future service developments within individual portfolios. The progress of a number of initiatives has been monitored, including the development of Gedling Country Park, the revitalising of Arnold Market and the recording of Council and committee meetings.
- 2.4** One role the Committee undertakes is to monitor the Council's quarterly performance information against key performance indicators. Members receive a quarterly report which informs them of the position against improvement actions and performance indicators in the Gedling Plan. Issues that Members have expressed concern about, and requested additional information, included residual household waste, fly tipping incidents and the processing of homeless applications. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also serves as the Crime and Disorder Committee and annually scrutinises the work of the South Notts. Safety Partnership. This year the Committee learnt about the increase in antisocial behaviour and criminal activity linked to mental health disorders, they decided that no further action was required from the information they received.
- 2.5** This year the Committee undertook a Councillor Call for Action, which considered the processes undertaken by the Council for issuing Section 215 notices under the Town and Country Planning Act, specifically in relation to the properties on 72-74 Westdale Lane. Members concluded that there had been particular issues that had impacted on the original Section 215 notice not being progressed, and the delay in issuing a new notice. Staffing issues and changes in ownership of the land had prolonged the process. Officers in the Planning Department were aware of the issues that impacted on the delay in actioning the Section 215 notice and systems to ensure that this delay does not happen again are being developed.
- 2.6** The Committee has not only examined activities which are the responsibility of Gedling Borough but also received briefings about the East Midlands

Ambulance Service, questioned the closure of the Willows medical surgery and visited the Mansfield Materials Recovery Facility. Paddy Tipping, the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner attended the committee and discussed front line policing in Arnold and Carlton.

- 2.7** There have been a number of development opportunities attended by members of the Committee, including the Chair attending an Effective Scrutiny event, facilitated by the LGA and a number of East Midlands Councils Scrutiny Network meetings.
- 2.8** We are now reaching the conclusion of the work undertaken by the committee in 2016-2017; and will be developing a programme of work for 2017-2018. Key to developing the Overview and Scrutiny work programme is ensuring that the issues that really matter to local residents are reflected in the work for the year ahead. Scrutiny of Cabinet Members will continue to play an important part of the Committee's agenda and working in partnership with external organisations will remain central to the work of the Committee as it looks to find improvements to important local issues. The Committee will strive to continue to deliver an interesting, varied and challenging work programme.