

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



Background

Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the work it has carried out over the last year and reports its outcomes and achievements. This report presents the Committee's Annual Report for 2018/19. It includes a brief summary of the role and responsibilities of the Committee, the work undertaken over the past year and the areas where scrutiny has made an impact. It also highlights improvement areas for the year ahead.

Every council which operates "executive arrangements", those that have a Leader and Cabinet, must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not make decisions, but acts as a 'critical friend' to the Executive (and partners) and undertakes evidence-based reviews and makes recommendations. It is an essential element of governance arrangements in the Council and seeks to improve policies and services for the people of Gedling. Overview and Scrutiny can scrutinise and review the work and policies of the Council and hold Cabinet Members, chief officers and other organisations that deliver public services to account. The principle power of a scrutiny committee is to examine issues affecting local people and make recommendations for improvement based on their findings. It is not a mechanism for the handling of individual complaints, intervening in planning applications or acting as an appeals mechanism.

Composition of Committee

There are thirteen members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; this reflects the political makeup of the Full Council. The Committee had a busy year examining a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services and local people. This has led to a variety of topics being reviewed, both in Committee and by working groups.

Holding Cabinet Members to account

As in previous years members of the Cabinet attended the Committee to provide updates and answer questions on issues in their Portfolios. The Committee monitored progress of a number of initiatives including the regeneration of Arnold market, mechanisms to stop and remove fly tips and the installation of CCTV in Arnold.

Monitoring Performance

Quarterly performance information has also been examined where positive performance is highlighted and areas of concern discussed.

Working Groups

The Committee can establish working groups that are able to focus on a particular issue and consider it in greater detail than is possible at Committee meetings. These reviews culminate in a final report with recommendations which are then presented to the relevant Cabinet Member for a response. **The Household Refuse Recycling Scrutiny Working Group** reported their findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its July meeting. The group's aim was to increase



the number of people who effectively recycle, reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste placed in recycling bins. Members examined current recycling performance, strategies that are used to encourage recycling, problems related to the contamination of waste and the education and communication strategies used to promote an increase in recycling. They strongly recommended that funding should be made available to employ an officer to assist in increasing recycling rates by enabling performance data to be used effectively to prioritise areas with low recycling or high contamination rates and provide targeted communications to residents and lead education campaigns to increase awareness of the need to recycle. This working group included members of the Gedling Climate Change Group who were very knowledgeable and made a valuable and much appreciated contribution to the findings of the review. This report was included in the August Cabinet agenda and has been referred to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, the Committee will expect a response to the recommendations to be available at the September Committee.

The **Wellbeing of Young People Scrutiny Working Group** was set up in response to Members' concern that the lack of appropriate services for young people in the Borough was leading to an increase in poor mental and emotional health and contributing to a rise in anti-social behaviour. The aim of the working group was to assess how effectively Gedling Borough Council, and partner agencies work together to support young people. Although Gedling Borough has no specific remit to provide statutory services for children and young people we do provide a range of physical activities via our leisure centres and we were keen to learn how effective our reach was in meeting the needs of some of vulnerable young people. The working group looked at what support was provided by other organisations, discussing this issue with officers from the County Council Youth Services, the Children's Commissioning Hub and Public Health, in addition visiting Carlton-le-Willows School. Members of the Youth Council were included in the membership of the working group and were able to provide insight about their experience of some of the services they had accessed; it was very helpful for the working group to learn about this issue from a young person's perspective. Initial conclusions from the group identified that improved coordination between different organisations is essential to provide effective services and to make the best use of resources. It was felt that the mapping of services and activities currently available



would help identify gaps and target where support is needed. This piece of work was curtailed because of the Borough elections, but may be resumed at a later date,

Crime and Disorder

Guidelines under the Police and Justice Act 2006 give the Overview & Scrutiny Committee a statutory duty to consider crime and disorder issues in the Borough and in particular, to scrutinise the performance of the Community Safety Partnership. The Council and are members of this partnership and this meeting allows the Committee to discuss its work In attendance were the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection, the Council's Director of Health, Community and Wellbeing and the Community Safety



and Safeguarding Manager. The Committee explored the work of the Community Safety Partnership and its approach to tackling crime and disorder in the District. Members were informed that the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2017-18 (published in July)

indicated overall crime levels remained constant although there had been a real increase in digital, acquisitive (burglary, shop theft, vehicle crime) and violent crime. There was a discussion about the need for a visible presence by the different agencies in the community. The Committee made it clear that although it recognised the need to target resources more effectively, they felt that local people felt reassured by a uniform presence and this reassurance should be seen as an effective use of resources.

Scrutiny at Committee

The Committee discussed a range of concerns with representatives from Gedling Homes. They learnt that Gedling Homes is part of the pilot for 'right to buy' and some properties will be disposed of through this scheme and that replacements would be sought and properties could be bought on new developments. The Committee were concerned about the current lack of available social housing in the borough and the effect this would have on the reduction in housing stock.

Updates from earlier reviews.

In 2016 the Committee undertook a review which focused on obesity in Gedling. Members of the Committee believed that this was still a major issue affecting the health of people living in the Borough and invited representatives of the service, commissioned by Public Health Nottinghamshire, that provide weight management services to address Members concerns. The Committee wanted to find out how successful the service in reaching those people who need support and how outcomes are measured. Representatives discussed what is on offer for residents in terms of healthy lifestyle promotions and how effective the service was explaining that targeted work is available in the most deprived areas of the Borough and that work to engage with different groups is underway in the community.

Work planned for 2019/2020

There have been a number of areas identified for improvement in 2019/20

- Raising the profile and improved engagement with the public– more public engagement in meetings and greater public awareness of the outcomes of overview and scrutiny work
- Outcomes – a greater focus on outcomes of reviews and reports and ensuring these are followed up
- Training for Members –training will be offered to all Councillors
- Review the outcomes of the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government ‘Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities.

In 2017/18 the Committee undertook a review of its effectiveness and as a result, a number of recommendations were been made as part of the council’s commitment to continuous improvement for the year ahead. Included were recommendations that the Committee, when agreeing its work programme, should have clear priorities of what it wants to achieve, how it will benefit the residents of Gedling Borough and that mechanisms to encourage greater public participation should be developed.

In 2019/20 there will be significant changes to the Committee’s membership following the Borough elections, with many new Members being elected. It will therefore be an exciting and challenging year for Overview and Scrutiny.

