

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



The Overview & Scrutiny annual report highlights activity and the work of the committee and its working groups during the preceding year.

What does the Overview & Scrutiny Committee do?

All local authorities operating a cabinet system will have at least one Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The overview and scrutiny role is carried out by non-cabinet members, Gedling has one politically balanced committee of thirteen. The committee meets roughly every eight weeks and like most council meetings it is open to the public.

The committee is not a decision making body but one which monitors and influences those that do it, is a mechanism for achieving open and democratic accountability.

The role of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is to ask questions, to assure themselves that issues are being addressed and emerging risks are recognised and acted upon. Effective scrutiny utilises information and ideas from a wide range of sources and involves holding the Council and other organisations to account, providing 'critical friend' challenge to the councils' executive and other service providers. In doing this members seek to reflect the aspirations and concerns of local residents and communities.

Scrutiny is a flexible process and can be carried out in a variety of ways. Areas of enquiry can be drawn from:

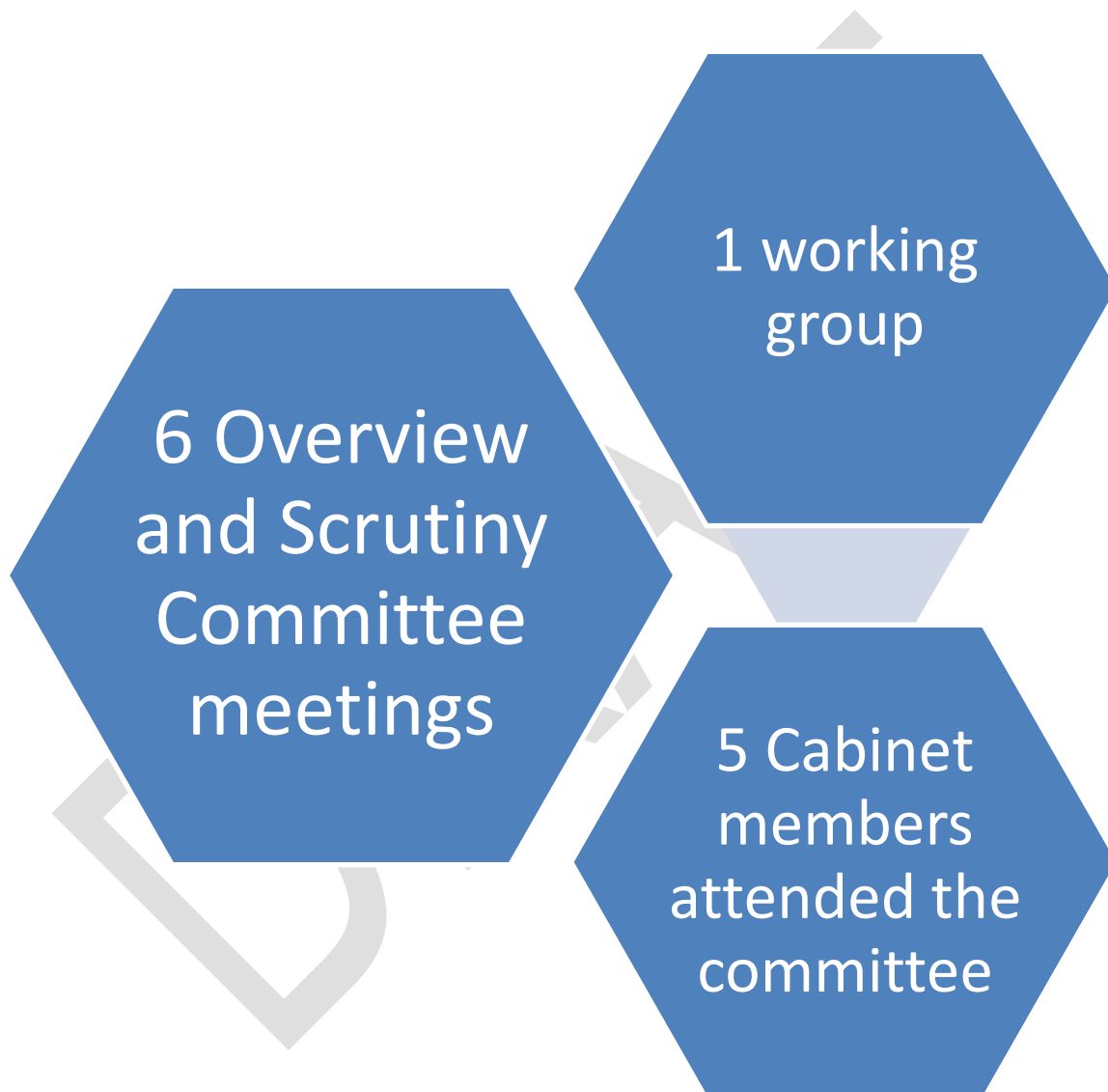
- Performance reports
- The Corporate Risk Scorecard
- Compliments and Complaints data
- The results of the Gedling Conversation
- Matters of local interest raised by members of the committee
- Issues raised by the wider Council membership
- Public and community engagement

At Gedling, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's role in performance monitoring enables members to scrutinise detailed performance information on a quarterly basis to help identify areas of performance that require improvement. The committee also considers the Council's Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is a document that contains details of key executive decisions the Cabinet, cabinet members and officers are likely to take over a six month period, this enables the committee to monitor the executive decision making programme and undertake pre decision scrutiny if they consider there is an issue of concern.

What Overview & Scrutiny does not do?

The committee is not a mechanism for the investigation of individual complaints, the Council has a separate process for this. It is also not able to look at individual planning or licensing decisions.

Work carried out during 2022/23



Scrutiny Working Groups

Working groups do much of the work of the committee by providing members' with the opportunity to investigate issues in depth and recommend improvements through the gathering, and consideration, of evidence from a broad range of sources. This enables robust and effective challenge, as well as an increased likelihood of

delivering outcomes. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports its recommendations to the Cabinet which then decides whether the recommendations will be accepted and acted upon, and if not, why not.

Sewerage review working group

This working group was established to examine the impact of sewerage discharge into the rivers and waterways in the area and to review options and make recommendations to better the situation.

The group met five times and heard from the following stakeholders:

- Mike Avery, Head of Development and Place at Gedling Borough Council
- Kevin Nealon, Community Protection Manager at Gedling Borough Council
- Trent River Trust
- Environment Agency
- Severn Trent
- Wildlife Trust
- Sim Duhra, Climate Change Officer at Gedling Borough Council
- County Council officers

At each meeting, members heard how the sewerage issues affected each stakeholder differently, what measures they currently had in place to combat the issues and what they would recommend to be done to further aid these issues in the future.

Most of the information gathered during the review concluded that the most effective things the council could do were:

- help reduce the amount of water going into the sewerage system; and
- educate residents to reduce the disposal of damaging products into the sewerage system

Members were pleased to have had the opportunity to review the sewerage process and made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1) Raises general awareness of pollution issues;
- 2) Promotes permeable driveways and surfaces;
- 3) Raises awareness on what the public can flush, endorsing existing relevant campaigns;
- 4) Ensuring that, where feasible, new developments utilise sustained urban drainage systems;
- 5) Consults Severn Trent on all major developments in the borough, to ensure they can give information on best placed drainage sites based on current systems in place;

- 6) Actively engages with Severn Tent through the established Gedling developers forum; and
- 7) Educates residents on money saving ideas regarding the installation of water flow and drainage devices

All recommendations were received and discussed at Cabinet on 6 July 2023 and a response will be given at the next Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting.

Future Work Programme 2023/24

The committee has recently agreed a new work programme for the forthcoming municipal year. 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 remain central to the work of the committee and working with external organisations will play an important part of the committees work as it looks to find improvements to important local issues.

The work programme will be considered at each committee to enable it to remain flexible and to respond to current issues. The committee will strive to continue to deliver an interesting, varied and challenging work programme.