

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



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:

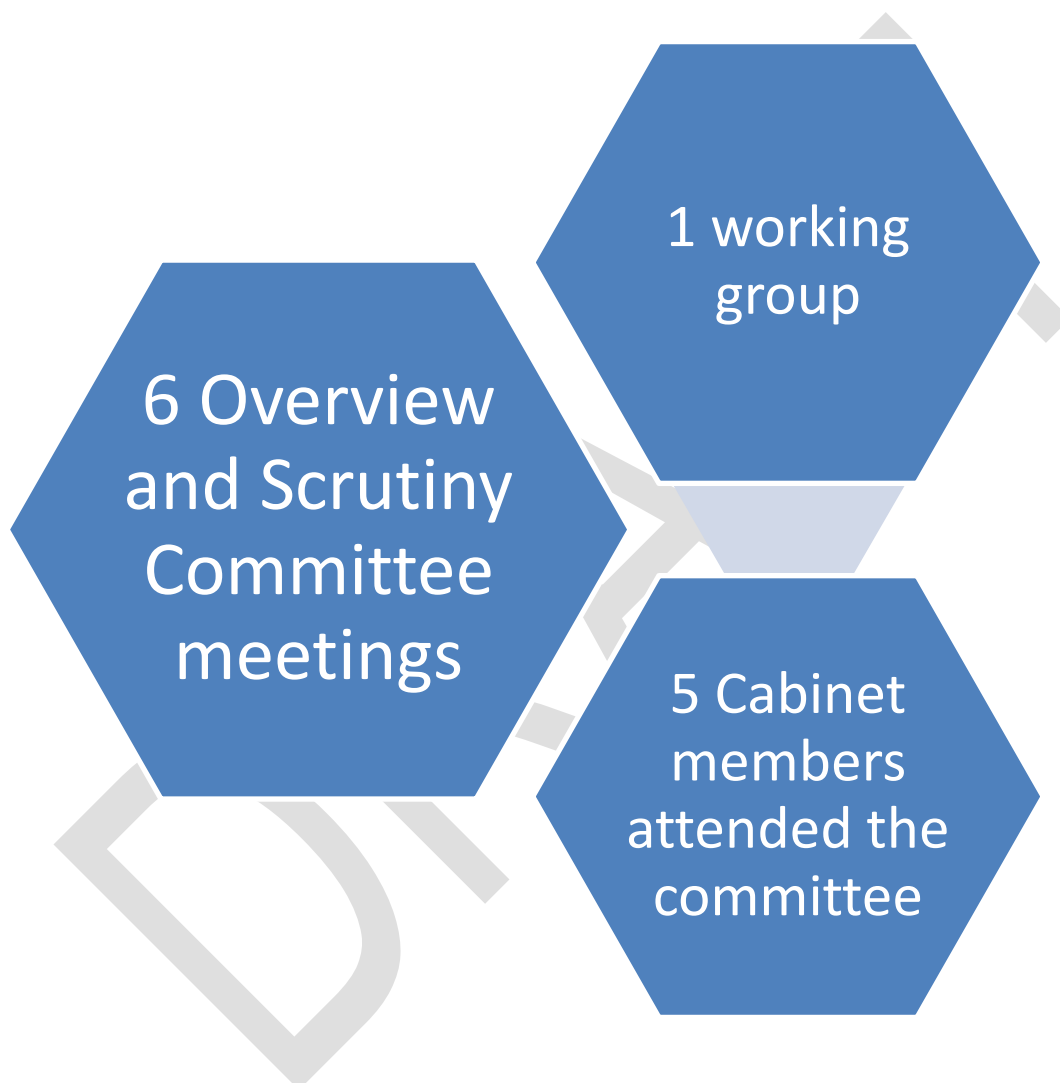
- Performance reports
- The Corporate Risk Scorecard
- Compliments and Complaints data
- Matters of local interest raised by members of the committee
- Issues raised by the wider Council membership
- Public and community engagement

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 can also consider 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 2023/24



## 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.

## **Funding review working group**

This working group was established in September 2023 to examine the funding bid opportunities available to the council and the applications process of these bids in an effort to make recommendations to aid in future successful bids.

The group has met three times so far and will be meeting again in the coming weeks. The recent unscheduled elections have meant that the working group have not been able to meet as often as planned but the programme of activity is due to resume shortly.

The focus of the review, as agreed by working group members contains the specific elements below:

- Making enquiries of GBC officers to ensure work is not duplicated.
- Considering recent larger bids and the learnings gained following unsuccessful bids before consulting with similar departments of other authorities who were successful.
- Reviewing both successful and unsuccessful bids from neighbouring authorities, particularly where their first bid was unsuccessful and how their subsequent bid improved when successful.
- Reviewing current research on funding bids.
- MP input and how they support bids.
- Studying the success rate between political majorities.

The group plan to carry out the review by getting information and advice from several stakeholders including borough council officers, portfolio holders, neighbouring councils, county council colleagues and using government publications and information.

The review hopes to achieve the following outcomes:

- Practical recommendations to improve chances of being successful on future bids
- Identification of additional funding streams for council to bid on.
- Formulation of suitable recommendations based on the learnings of the group to improve the success of future bids.
- Practical support to staff to ensure they have tools to better succeed in receiving funding.

A update on the progress, conclusion and final recommendations of this group will be available in the 2024/25 annual report.

## **Future Work Programme 2024/25**

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.

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