

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

This Annual Report reviews Overview and Scrutiny activities in 2016/17.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a number of roles in its terms of reference:
- scrutiny of the decision making process;
 - monitoring the Council's performance;
 - operating as the "Audit Committee" of the Council;
 - operating as the "Crime and Disorder 'Scrutiny' Committee";
 - supporting the strategic development of policy proposed by the Executive;
 - reviewing issues of concern to local people through Councillor calls for Action;
 - "Call in" of Executive decisions;
 - participating in Joint Scrutiny arrangements in Surrey;
 - monitoring and scrutinising the activities of other organisations that impact on residents and businesses in the borough;
- 1.2. The Committee consists of 15 Members and establishes Review Panels, where required, to undertake detailed work on a 'task and finish' basis. These Panels mostly consist of five members. Panel recommendations are presented to the Committee, the Executive and/or Council.
- 1.3. In 2016/17 the advance questioning procedure was utilised for a number of the Committee's activities, to the benefit of both the Committee and those attending at its request. This procedure has worked well as it provides Members more time to research issues and prepare questions. It also enables Officers, Members and external guests to prepare more detailed responses.
- 1.4. The Committee continued the arrangement of holding Executive Members to account for their responsibility areas by inviting them to present their objectives, recent achievements, current challenges and future priorities to the Committee.
- 1.5. The eMembers Room (Members' extranet) continued to provide Members with access to information to support their role and includes:
- performance information including Internal Audit review reports;
 - responses to Member questions raised at its meetings;
 - presentations received at its meetings;
 - Scrutiny Panel reports.
- 1.6. The Membership, Terms of Reference of the Committee and attendance at the Committee and its Panels are given in Annex 1.

2. Holding the Executive to Account

- 2.1. The Executive Members and/or Management Team representatives supported our scrutiny activities and attended meetings of the Committee and Scrutiny Panels throughout the year.
- 2.2. The Committee held the Leader and Executive Members to account through:
 - the attendance of the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Executive Members at the Committee or its Panels to explain how the Executive proposed to deliver its plans and strategies; and
 - Executive Members presenting their objectives to the Committee.
- 2.3. Councillor T. Schofield, Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance attended the Local Development Framework Panel to support the Panel's scrutiny. Councillor M. Brunt, now Executive Member for Member Development, attended the Committee meeting, in his role as Chairman of the Planning Committee, at which the report of the Local Development Framework Panel was received and considered, to further support this process.
- 2.4. Councillor T. Schofield, Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance attended the Budget Scrutiny Panel, together with other Executive Members, to support the Panel's scrutiny. Councillor T. Schofield also attended the Committee meeting at which the report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel was received and considered, to further support this process.
- 2.5. Councillor J. Durrant, Executive Member for Enforcement, attended the Committee's annual 'Crime and Disorder' meeting to support the scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership.
- 2.6. The Committee requested a Pathway update report at the February 2017 Committee meeting to which the Executive agreed and this report will be scrutinised by the Committee at the April 2017 Committee meeting.

3. Executive Member Objectives

- 3.1. The following Executive Members presented their objectives to the Committee (in chronological order):
 - Councillor Mrs N. Bramhall, Executive Member for Property, who provided a briefing on recent regeneration projects and possible regeneration and development projects for the future;
 - Councillor Mrs R. Mill, Executive Member for Leisure & Wellbeing, who gave a presentation which included the success of the Council's three Leisure Centres; the activities undertaken by the three Community Centres managed by Staywell; the increased success of the Harlequin Theatre; and the feedback received from the 2015 LGA Peer Review for the Council's Leisure and Wellbeing services;
 - Councillor Mrs R. Turner, Executive Member for Health, who gave a presentation on the work being undertaken to improve the health of residents including Health and Ageing Well Action Plans, the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Health Partnership Delivery Group;
 - Councillor Mrs R. Renton, Executive Member for Housing & Welfare, who gave an update on the Council's Homelessness Strategy for 2017-2021 as well as addressing the other workstreams, such as Revenue, Benefits & Fraud Service, within her portfolio; and

- Councillor J. Durrant, Executive Member for Enforcement, who provided a comprehensive overview of his portfolio, which included the JET team.

3.2. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to examine in detail the work of portfolio holders, to test the relationship of this work to the Council's corporate objectives and to scrutinise the performance of the Council's services.

4. "Crime and Disorder 'Scrutiny' Committee"

4.1. The Committee again held an annual meeting as part of its 'Crime and Disorder' responsibility. The Committee scrutinised the activities of the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership (ESCSP) in 2016/17.

4.2. Representatives from Surrey Police and Surrey County Council, as key community safety partners, were invited to attend the meeting and supported the Committee in its scrutiny activity.

4.3. The Committee investigated in questioning a wide range of community safety issues, and explored the working arrangements, successes and future plans and priority setting processes of the ESCSP. The Committee proposed to align the future timing of scrutiny of the ESCSP with the other local authority partners in order to improve the performance data available in the report.

5. Work with Housing Partners: Housing Associations

5.1. The Committee adjusted its work programme, which had originally envisaged a presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Community Support and a performance update from Raven Housing Trust.

5.2. The Chairman of the Committee agreed to the removal of the Raven Housing Trust item. This was arranged because in December 2016 the Council entered into a new Strategic Partnership Agreement with Raven Housing Trust and, in anticipation of forthcoming legislative requirements, the Council agreed that its Member representatives on the Raven Housing Trust board of trustees would be removed. As part of this new arrangement it was agreed that in place of separate formal performance update reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing would include an update on the performance of the new partnership in their portfolio holder briefing. This new approach was agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Chairman.

5.3. The Partnership Agreement with Raven Housing Trust was explained by the Portfolio Holder for Community Support in the Portfolio Holder Briefing in January 2017. The next Community Support Portfolio Holder Briefing is scheduled for December 2017.

6. Performance Monitoring

6.1. The Committee continued to monitor the Council's performance. This included reviewing the following information:

- Revenue, Capital and Service Performance Management (quarterly);
- Risk Performance Management (six monthly);
- wider economic indicators and issues that affect public services (quarterly); and
- performance against the 5 Year Plan 2015-20 (six monthly).

- 6.2. The detailed information on performance variances and responses to Member questions was provided in the eMembers Room in support of this activity. More detailed information on service performance was also available from the eMembers Room.
- 6.3. The advance questioning procedure was utilised to support each quarterly performance report, and the Chief Executive, in regularly supporting meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, was able to answer additional questions on performance. Where the Chief Executive was unable to attend, the appropriate Management Team representative attended to provide continuity of support to the Committee.
- 6.4. The quarterly reports showed that the Council continued to perform well. Any comments from the Committee on performance were reported to the Executive for their consideration.

7. Audit

A Internal Audit

- 7.1. There were 16 Internal Audit reviews undertaken by RSM (the Council's Internal Audit contractor) in the 2016/17 period up to the end of March, of which 11 had final reports available. The remainder are underway and will be reported in 2017/18. Each final report was provided in full on the eMembers Room and Members were encouraged to submit advance questions to Committee meetings on a quarterly basis. Exception reports are provided to the Committee where an audit identifies significant concerns. There were no exception reports required in 2016/17 as the audits were all positive.
- 7.2. In May 2016 the Committee considered RSM's Annual Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2016, which provided a positive opinion on the overall adequacy of and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes.
- 7.3. As delegated in the Council's Constitution, the Committee considered RSM's Updated Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan for 2016/17 at the end of 2015/16. The Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan for 2017/18 are on the Agenda for consideration by the Committee at the April meeting. The Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan identify key risks facing the Authority, and the risks identified for 2016/17 were monitored throughout the year via the Internal Audit reviews.
- 7.4. In March 2016, the Committee considered the strategic risk register for 2017/18 and had the opportunity to make any comments to the Executive.

B External Audit

- 7.5. The Committee received the annual report for the 2015/16 financial year from the External Auditors (KPMG) in October 2016.
- 7.6. The Committee were pleased to note that KPMG had been extremely positive and the Auditors had issued an unqualified Value for Money conclusion. This confirmed that the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

8. Joint Scrutiny Arrangements in Surrey

- 8.1. Though the Committee has the facility to undertake joint scrutiny, no such reviews took place in 2016/17. The facility will be utilised in the future should a topic be identified that meets the criteria for collaborative scrutiny.

9. Strategy and Policy Development

- 9.1. The Committee commented on the following draft strategies and policies:
- Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18;
 - Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18-21/22 (through the budget scrutiny process).
- 9.2. In December 2016, the Committee received and considered the summary of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge follow up visit of September 2016. The Committee had the opportunity to comment on the feedback from and recommendations of the Peer Team.
- 9.3. The Committee also received and contributed observations to the Executive on the Schedule of Meetings for 2017/18.

10. Operational arrangements

- 10.1. As the Chairman of the Committee I had regular meetings with the Chief Executive which focussed on delivering the Committee's work programme. I am particularly appreciative of this involvement and for the support of the Chief Executive at our meetings.
- 10.2. I am equally grateful for the support provided by the Leader of the Council, with whom I met to discuss the work of the Executive and the work of the Committee, and how these could continue to support and complement each other. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Procedure Rules, the Committee's work programme for 2017/18 was discussed with the Leader.

11. Review Panels

- 11.1. The Committee had two Review Panels this year, as detailed below.

A Budget Scrutiny Review Panel (Chairman: Cllr. N.D. Harrison)

- 11.2. The Budget Scrutiny Review Panel reviewed the Service & Financial Planning (Provisional Budget) 2017/18 report.
- 11.3. The Panel undertook a very robust review and considered over 100 advance questions along with further questions and comments that were raised within the meeting.
- 11.4. The Panel recognised and appreciated the significant amount of work that had gone into preparing the service and financial plans for 2017/18 and concluded that the budget proposals were sound, balanced and achievable. This also applied to the updated Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 11.5. The Committee highlighted two potential external key risks, the withdrawal of recycling credits and NNDR (Business Rates), to be monitored throughout the year but considered that these risks were being closely and well managed.

B Local Development Framework Scrutiny Review Panel (Chairman: Cllr M.A. Brunt, in his role as Planning Committee Chairman)

- 11.6. The Local Development Framework Scrutiny Review Panel was constituted in October 2014 on an ongoing basis, with a remit to consider emerging planning

policy documents, in particular the Development Management Plan (DMP) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Panel met in September 2016 to consider the results of the Regulation 18 public consultation of the summer of 2016.

12. 'Call-in' of Executive Decisions

12.1. No Call-in's were received during 2016/17.

13. Community Call for Action

13.1 No Community Calls for Action were recorded during 2016/17.

14. Conclusion

14.1. The Committee recognises that the Council continues to focus on outcomes for residents and businesses and is responding well to financial pressures and managing its processes in an efficient manner. The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has maintained a streamlined approach in 2016/17 and in developing its work programme for 2017/18 has sought to continue this.

14.2. Nevertheless, the Committee has worked hard on behalf of the Council and community in scrutinising the Council's decision making process, holding Executive Members to account, and monitoring the Council's performance, as well as contributing to strategic policy development. All of this activity adds great value to the Council's processes and assists the Council to uphold a consistently high level of service.

14.3. The Committee has in 2016/17 continued to focus its approach to external scrutiny as a means of adding additional value to the work of the Council, and through taking a positive approach to engagement with partner bodies has conducted a thorough and productive investigation of local health services.

14.4. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, the Council is requested to note this Annual Report.

**COUNCILLOR B.A. STEAD
CHAIRMAN,
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP 2016/17

All Councillors, except Members of the Executive, may be Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels appointed by it. However, no Member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved.

For information, the Membership of the Committee during 2016/17 was as follows:-

Councillor B.A. Stead (Chairman)

Councillors	D. Absalom	Councillors	N.D. Harrison
	M. Blacker		R.S. Mantle
	J. Clarke		S. Parnall
	R.Coad		Mrs D.A. Ross-Tomlin
	J.C.S. Essex		Mrs J. Spiers
	J.S. Godden		J.M. Stephenson
	Dr Z. Grant-Duff		C. Stevens

Councillor J. Spiers sadly passed away in August 2016. Councillor R. Ashford was elected in a by-election in November and at the Council meeting on 15 December Councillor Ashford was appointed to the vacancy on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are set out below:-

(a) Scrutiny

- Review and scrutinise decisions made by, and the performance of the Leader / Executive decision maker, Committees and Council Officers excluding decisions on individual applications/cases;
- Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets or particular service areas;
- Make recommendations to the Leader / Executive decision maker, Committees or the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies.

(b) Policy Review and Development

- Assist the Council [and the Executive] in the development of its budget and policy framework;
- Conduct research, community and other consultation on policy issues and possible options.

In relation to (a) and (b) above:

- Question the Leader / Executive decision maker, Committees, Directors, Chief Officers or Heads of Service;
- Liaise as necessary with external organisations;

- Question and obtain confirmation/advice from any other person/organisation.

(c) Budget/Resources

- To exercise responsibility for resources allocated to support the work of the Committee.

(d) Audit Responsibilities

- To consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements;
- Approve the Council's internal audit strategy and monitor performance;
- Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that appropriate action has been taken where necessary;
- Receive the annual report of the Chief Internal Auditor;
- Be consulted upon reports received from External Audit and other inspection agencies.

(e) Crime and Disorder

- That for the purposes of the Police and Justice Act 2006 that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be designated as the Crime and Disorder Committee with the following remit:
 - (a) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
 - (b) To make reports or recommendations to the responsible authority(s) with respect to the discharge of those functions.

(f) Joint Scrutiny

- The scrutiny and reporting functions set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Local Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees) (England) Regulations 2009 and any amendments made thereto, and in particular:
 - (a) The scrutiny of the improvement targets contained in the Surrey Local Area Agreement; and
 - (b) To make reports or recommendations to the LAA partners with respect to the matters that relate to a relevant LAA target.

(g) Generally

- To report annually to the Council on the Committee's work and (following consultation with the Executive) upon the future Work Programme for the Committee;
- To appoint panels as necessary to carry out and report upon the work of the Committee;

- To consider any valid Councillor Call for Action;
- To ensure effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and procedures.

ATTENDANCE 2016/17

Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
No. of Meetings Held	Members	No. of Meetings Attended Not including 26 April
7 From February 2017* Up to end of February 2017** Up to August 2016***	Councillors B. Stead (Chairman)	6
	S. Parnall (Vice Chairman)	6
	Mrs R.H. Absalom	7
	R. Ashford*	2
	M. Blacker	6
	J. Clarke**	1
	R. Coad	7
	J.C.S. Essex	7
	J.S. Godden	6
	Z. Grant-Duff	6
	N.D. Harrison	7
	R. Mantle	6
	Mrs D.A. Ross-Tomlin	6
	Mrs J. Spiers***	1
J. Stephenson	6	
C. Stevens	6	

REVIEW PANELS 2015/16: ATTENDANCE

Panel	No. of Meetings Held	Members	No. of Meetings Attended
Budget Scrutiny Review	1	Councillors N.D. Harrison (Chairman) M.S. Blacker R.W. Coad J.C.S. Essex J.P. King J.P. Godden B.A. Stead J. Stephenson	1 1 1 1 1 - 1 1
	Note:	Councillors T. Schofield, Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance, R.H. Absalom, R.S. Mantle and R.C. Newstead also attended	

Panel	No. of Meetings Held	Members	No. of Meetings Attended
Local Development Framework Panel	1	Councillors M.A. Brunt (Chairman) M. Blacker K. Foreman S. McKenna M.J. Selby	1 - 1 1 1
	Note:	Councillors T. Schofield, Executive Member for Planning Policy and Finance, J.C.S. Essex and J. King also attended	