

Date of issue: Tuesday, 14 March 2023

MEETING:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice Chair), Akbar, Bal, Basra, P. Bedi, Kaur, M. Malik and S. Malik)
DATE AND TIME:	WEDNESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2023 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NICHOLAS PONTONE 07749 709868

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



STEPHEN BROWN
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

1. Declarations of Interest

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All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 9 and Appendix B of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.



<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
2.	Minutes of the Meetings held on 15th February 2023 and 23rd February 2023	1 - 16	-

SCRUTINY ISSUES

3.	Member Questions <i>(An opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).</i>	-	-
4.	Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23	17 - 40	All
5.	Best Value Intervention - Commissioners' Second Report and Government Response <i>Correspondence between the Best Value Commissioners appointed to Slough Borough Council and Lee Rowley MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), is expected to be published by DLUHC on 22 March. It will be tabled as and when available.</i>	-	All

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

6.	Members Attendance Record 2022/23	41 - 42	All
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Press and Public

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 15th February, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice-Chair), Akbar, Basra, P. Bedi, Kaur and M. Malik

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Ajaib, Hulme, Muvvala, Strutton and Swindlehurst

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Bal and S. Malik

PART I

37. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

38. Presentation from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable

The Committee welcomed to the meeting the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Barber; the Chief Constable John Campbell QPM of Thames Valley Police (TVP); and Superintendent Lee Barnham, the LPA Commander for Slough.

The PCC gave an overview of his priorities for the coming year. It was noted that the force was on course to over-achieve on its recruitment target with 80 additional officers joining, which would support the focus on community policing. A range of initiatives were in place to improve responsiveness, for example new technology being introduced to enhance the 101 service and better updates to the victims of crime. The PCC explained the significant progress that was being made on a Thames Valley wide CCTV network, including working closely with Slough Borough Council to be one of the first to make the transition from a local authority to police run service from the start of 2024. Tackling knife crime was a key issue for Slough and PCC highlighted that police enforcement was only one part of a much wider community and partner effort that was required to change attitudes and behaviours. It was welcome that the Knife Angel initiative had recently been to Slough and it had been a focal point for a significant amount of engagement with the local community.

The Chief Constable gave a comprehensive presentation on the work of Thames Valley Police over the past year and future priorities. The following issues were highlighted during the presentation:

- TVP was currently consulting on a new structure. The Chief Constable emphasised that retaining a 'local feel' to policing was an important priority and that TVP was committed to localism, scrutiny and joint working.

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- Mr Campbell would be retiring as Chief Constable at the end of March and Jason Hogg, who was currently deputy chief constable, had been promoted to the role.
- The force had 4,861 Police Officers in October 2022, plus 288 community support officers and 229 special constables. The aim was to recruit an extra 609 Police Officers. Good progress had been made on the recruitment of more female officers and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, although it was recognised that more still needed to be done to ensure the workforce reflected the communities TVP served.
- A summary of key trends was provided covering the first half of the year. A particular focus on improving outcomes regarding crimes such as domestic abuse, rape and sexual offences had resulted in significant increases in the number of such crimes resulting in formal action.
- The average response time for calls to 101 was approximately 4 minutes, which was a good level of performance compared to other forces but the Chief Constable stated that wait times still needed to be further reduced.
- The work of TVP on a range of other projects and activities was noted, particularly Operation London Bridge for which the Committee commended the force on the exemplary organisation that had been put in place.

Supt Barnham provided an update on local performance and other key issues. There had been no overall change in the levels of recorded crime in the past year, although there were variations in the figures relating to certain offences. For example, burglary had fallen 11% but reported cases of domestic abuse had increased, which was to be welcomed so that such offences could be properly addressed. The work the Police and partners was doing to tackle knife crime and drug offences was outlined, including Operation Concept which had resulted on 178 searches and a significant number of arrests. Six hot spots had been identified in the town and there had been 1,400 patrols since September 2022. The Knife Angel had resulted in 8,000 interactions and 50 educational sessions held during the period it was in Slough.

The Committee asked a range of questions of the PCC, Chief Constable and Supt Barnham. Councillors Hulme, Strutton and Muvvala also spoke under Rule 30. The discussion is summarised as follows:

- Members welcomed the Knife Angel initiative and agreed that working together to raise awareness and engagement was crucially important. It was asked whether there were plans for further such initiatives for Slough. The PCC concurred that the Knife Angel provided a talking point for the community to come together and that he would continue to work with local authorities on future initiatives. Home Office funding had been secured for work on homicide prevention for example. It was noted that Thames Valley had some of the lowest levels of violent crime in the country.

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- Several issues regarding police officer numbers and recruitment were raised. Members asked whether the new officers would fully replace those lost since 2010; how many of the new officers would be based in Slough; and what work was being undertaken to increase recruitment from ethnic minority backgrounds. The number of officers was higher than 3 years ago but remained lower than 2010. The Chief Constable commented that the force would ideally want more officers across the Thames Valley than it currently had resources to provide, but the increase in recent years was welcome. The force regularly made the case to the Home Office for more funding and it was noted that the police funding formula resulted in several other areas which had smaller populations had more officers than Thames Valley Police. There had been 147 recruits from BAME communities recently and this equated to 15% of recruits, which was broadly in line with the 16% BAME population of those economically active in the Thames Valley. The Chief Constable recognised that more needed to be done, but that progress was being made.
- Members asked about the impact on Slough of the TVP review of its structure. The Chief Constable assured Members that local accountability and community policing would still be central to the forces' priorities. Local engagement would remain key and councillors were encouraged to contribute to the consultation.
- The Committee asked about the difficulties in recruiting and retaining PCSOs. It was noted that the TVP budget for PCSOs was 430 and there were 288 in post. The Chief Constable stated that PCSOs had an important role to play and TVP would continue to try to recruit. The starting salary for PCSPs was circa £29,000 and it was a very rewarding role. There were a number of factors involved, including the impacts of the uplift programme for Police Officers on PCSO recruitment. TVP did face wider recruitment challenges given the fact that pay in the Metropolitan Police was higher.
- Members asked about the approach TVP was taking to address the wider public concerns about racism and sexism in the police following several high profile examples in other police forces. The PCC highlighted the importance of setting the right culture within TVP and encouraged officers and the public to report concerns. The Chief Constable commented that good recruitment processes and vetting were important for new officers joining the force.
- In relation to the responsiveness of the Police the Committee asked about the practical steps to improve the 101 wait time and to better communicate with victims of crime to keep them updated of the progress of their cases. It was reiterated that TVPs response times compared favourably with other forces and they were committed to further improving performance.

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- The Chair highlighted the relatively high proportion of violent offences, particularly in Slough, and expressed concerns about the impact of this on the reputation of the town. The Chief Constable commented on the issues contributing to perceptions of crime, but highlighted that crime levels were not as negative as often perceived and that the Community Safety Partnership would have extensive data and information available which the Committee may find helpful to provide context.
- The issues of joint working with neighbouring forces and partnership working to secure prosecutions was discussed. Supt Barnham explained the process that took place and provided assurance that forces did work together on cross-border cases. The PCC chaired the Local Criminal Justice Board which brought together the police, CPS, HM Courts and Tribunal Service, Probation, Youth Offending Service and others. He described the joint work they undertook including in relation to victim care.
- The role of the community safety partnership (Safer Slough Partnership) in engaging with councillors and the community was raised. This prompted a discussion about the most effective ways to engage residents and communities in Slough and it was agreed it was an issue Members may wish to pick up directly with the Safer Slough Partnership following the meeting.

Members asked a number of other specific questions about issues such as missing persons, Safer Streets Fund, traffic collision data, educational initiatives and mental health emergencies. Supt Barnham stated that he would provide some information to the committee on the percentage of call outs involving individuals in mental health distress. In response to a question about TVPs view on the Council's proposal for a streetlight dimming trial, Supt Barnham commented that the police would monitor crime data and input that information to the Council as part of their evaluation of the trial.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee thanked the PCC, Chief Constable and Supt Barnham for their attendance at the meeting and to them and Thames Valley Police more widely for the work they did in Slough. The Chair also proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Campbell for his service to the town given that this would be his final meeting with the Council prior to his retirement in March 2023. The Committee agreed a vote of thanks.

The report and presentation was then noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report and presentation on crime and policing issues in Slough be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Constable be thanked for his services to policing ahead of his retirement in March 2023.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 15.02.23

39. Members' Attendance Record 2022/23

Resolved – That the Members' attendance record be noted.

40. Date of Next Meeting - 23rd February 2023

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 23rd February 2023.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.03 pm)

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd February, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice-Chair), Akbar (until 8.47pm), Basra and Kaur

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Anderson, Kelly, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Bal, P. Bedi, M. Malik and S. Malik

PART I

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 2nd February 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3. Member Questions

No questions from Members had been submitted.

4. Recovery & Improvement Update

The Leader of the Council and the Executive Director of Strategy & Improvement introduced a quarterly update to scrutiny on the progress being made by the Council against the Secretary of State Directions issued in December 2021 and the overall recovery plan.

It was noted that the Commissioners' annual letter to the Minister on their assessment of progress, and the Minister's response, had not yet been published.

The appendices to the report included the two comprehensive reports that had been considered by the Improvement & Recovery Board (IRB) in December 2022 and January 2023 and a verbal update was provided on the discussions at the February IRB meeting which had been held earlier in the day. Lead Members and Directors had sought to provide surety to the Best Value Commissioners on the 2023/24 budget and savings proposals.

The Committee raised a number of issues during the course of the discussion including:

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- The Council leadership's overall assessment of the progress that had been made as the halfway point of the 3-year intervention approached. The Leader stated good progress had been made in a number of areas in the past year, including financial stability, which meant the concerns had moved away from the long-term viability of the authority towards accelerating the delivery of the recovery plan on the path to being a sustainable council. The success of the asset disposal programme meant that the expected level of the capitalisation in future years had significantly reduced and savings targets from 2024/25 and beyond were therefore becoming more manageable. A new management tier was now in place and progress was being made on specific Directions such as scrutiny. Culture change and HR remained key priorities.
- The risks were discussed and the Leader commented that a lack of resilience in certain services was an issue that needed to be addressed in the coming year. The potential for further financial shocks at a national and international level remained a risk as did any slippage in the 2023/24 savings programme. The Chair of the Committee asked about the risks posed to the Council from the continued overspends of Slough Children First. The Leader explained the process by which the SCF budget was set and the mechanism to seek more resources from the Council, where justified, to ensure appropriate services were provided to children in Slough. There was scope to make savings through combining back office functions with the Council. The new Director of Children's Services/Chief Executive of SCF, Sue Butcher, would be leading a further review of the SCF business plan and this would come back to Cabinet in the summer. The Chair highlighted that the company was likely to be important area for scrutiny in the next year.
- The Committee asked questions about the future of the intervention and it was responded that Directions were likely to be lifted gradually as the Council demonstrated that it had properly addressed them and had proved itself capable to delivering the function subject to the Direction. This would entirely depend on the progress the Council made in the next 12/18 months, but it was hoped some powers may be returned during the next year such as the recruitment of senior management tiers. It was also noted that most of the Commissioners powers were held in reserve rather than frequently exercised.

Members asked a range of other specific questions about the levels of staff and Member training in the future; support for the scrutiny function; and the monitoring of actions in the reporting framework. The Leader and Executive Director responded to these points and provided assurance that there was a clear focus on action tracking.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Kelly asked questions about culture change, accountability and training of the Council's leadership; the role of the Lead Members & Directors Group following the statutory recommendations from the external auditor in the recent review of the purchase of Observatory

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House; and the future income sources for the Council given the scale of the asset disposal programme. The Leader responded that a range of actions were in place for the training and development of the leadership team, both Officers and Members; that the external auditors findings had been fully accepted and changes already made to improve the quality of Cabinet reports to support decision-making; and that the success of the asset disposal programme meant that borrowing and MRP costs were already reducing.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted.

Resolved – That the Recovery and Improvement Update be noted.

5. Section 25 Report

The Committee reviewed each of the budget reports that would be considered by Cabinet on 27th February 2023 and then Council on 9th March 2023. Members were invited to ask questions and comment on the papers and consider whether any specific feedback or recommendations should be made to Cabinet.

The Executive Director, Finance & Commercial introduced a report that advised the Council of his assessment on the robustness of the estimates made for the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The report set out the assumptions that underpinned the budget and the key risks. The Executive Director highlighted the scale of the financial challenge that faced the Council and commented that the financial recovery was expected to take approximately five more years. However, the actions taken over the past 18 months and the financial strategy in place was starting to come to fruition. The expected total capitalisation direction had come down by approximately a half to £357m, financial management and processes had been strengthened and the reserves were deemed to be adequate for this coming financial year, assuming assets sales of £400m were delivered by 31st March 2024 and the £22.4m of revenue savings were delivered in full with no call on contingencies for these or any other budget issues. The Section 151 Officer therefore confirmed that the Council was able to set a budget based on the assumptions and risks set out, but it was emphasised that the budget, and particularly the savings, needed to be delivered in full and on time.

The Committee thanked the Executive Director and the Finance team for the significant amount of work that had gone into preparing the budget given the challenges. A question was asked about paragraph 9.2 of the report that full assurance could not be provided. The Executive Director highlighted that the report was an assessment of the position the Council was in at the present time and there were significant risks. The 2023/24 financial year was a key period in the 5-year recovery plan due to the scale of savings required. Asked about the key risk, the Executive Director stated the fundamental problem the Council faced was excessively high borrowing, therefore the asset disposal programme was critical to reduce this.

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In response to a question, the Lead Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets provided assurance that the budget was deliverable and had been developed with more rigour and scrutiny than any other budget the Council had set in the past. The Committee raised concerns about the potential disruption to the finance team as Mr Mair and several senior colleagues would be leaving the Council. It was recognised that the Council had appointed a high calibre successor as Executive Director and a thorough handover process was taking place.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Kelly asked about a £4.8m budget gap and areas of overspending. The Executive Director stated that the Council would balance its 2022/23 budget and the figures were set out in detail in the budget monitor to be considered by Cabinet on 27th February.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report and proposed Cabinet recommendations were noted.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

6. Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

The Executive Director Finance & Commercial summarised the Council's capital strategy from 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The programme for 2023/24 was fully funded through external grants or capital receipts and did not require any new borrowing, which the Committee strongly welcomed. A number of important capital projects were included in the programme including flood defence measures, A4 Safer Road, Destination Farnham Road, Britwell Hub, office accommodation and investment in school buildings.

A question was asked about the additional budget provision to cover rising costs of the Nova House fire safety works. The Executive Director stated that a full report on the project would be considered by the Cabinet in March 2023 and the figure in the capital programme made the necessary financial provisions for the works.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Kelly asked whether the office accommodation strategy included the retention of Observatory House. The Executive Director Housing & Property stated that work on the overall estates strategy was at an early stage and the six buildings potentially retained for operational use would all be subject to a full assessment and all options for Observatory House would be explored.

At the conclusion of the discussion the proposed Capital Strategy was noted and no specific comments or recommendations were made to Cabinet.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7. Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

The Executive Director Finance & Commercial introduced a report on the Treasury Management Strategy which included the borrowing and debt reduction strategy, prudential indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision policy; and the investment strategy.

Treasury management was a crucial part of the Council's financial strategy and assurance was provided through a mid-year update and outturn report during the financial year. The strategy proposed this year to Council was largely unchanged as it has been extensively revised prior to the 2022/23 financial year.

The Committee asked a number of questions including about the links to the asset disposal strategy and level of confidence that the target income of circa £200m in 2023/24 could be achieved. It was confirmed that a clear plan was in place for disposals in the coming year and the Council was confident this target would be met.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted and no specific additional comments or recommendations were to be made to Cabinet.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

8. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023/24 and 30-Year Housing Investment Plan

The Deputy Director, Financial Management, introduced a report on the Housing Revenue Account business plan and long term Housing Investment Plan.

A summary was provided of the overall strategy for the HRA, which overall was in a sound financial position. The rent increase for next year was 7%, in line with the Government's guidelines. The HRA capital programme was £53m over the next 5 years which was primarily on maintenance and repairs with no new housing developments planned during the period.

The issues and risks relating to damp and mould and fire safety were discussed. Members asked if there was sufficient budget provision to address damp and mould problems in Council properties. The Executive Director Housing & Property stated that sufficient provision was in place and detailed work was taking place to fully understand the extent of the issues. Every tenant would receive a letter and be able to self-report any issues. The Cabinet would receive a full report in March 2023 on the programme.

Members asked if the below inflation rent rise would provide enough funding to support repairs and maintenance. The Executive Director highlighted there were significant cost pressures in the system, but the rise should be adequate

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given the relatively good state of the Council's stock and the sound financial position of the HRA.

The Committee agreed to note the report and did not make any specific comments or recommendations to Cabinet.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

9. Update on Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan

The Executive Director Finance & Commercial introduced a report on the High Needs budget position and the progress of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27.

The background was noted including the fact that the historic failures to address the growing deficit in the DSG over several years led to a cumulative deficit of £41.5m. After a considerable amount of work over the past year this had been reduced to £27m and the Council had made a submission to the Department for Education to write off the historic deficit. It was emphasised that this would only be agreed if the Council was able to keep in year figures balanced in the future.

The Committee welcomed the excellent work that had been done, but asked what the implications would be if the Council could not keep the DSG in balance. It was responded, if the write off was agreed, that budget would be closely monitored by DfE and if it did not balance the Council would have to meet that debt. It was therefore a key financial priority to keep DSG in balance. The outcome of the submission was expected in the near future.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Kelly made a number of observations about the historic weaknesses in financial management that contributed to the build-up of the deficit. The Lead Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets responded to the points raised.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee noted the report.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

10. 2023/24 Budget

The Executive Director Finance & Commercial summarised the revenue budget papers for 2023/24.

The context, key risks and assumptions were as set out in the Section 25 report considered earlier in the meeting. The General Fund revenue budget proposed was £143.4m which included £12.2m of growth for pressures and proposed Directorate savings of £22.4m, all of which had been through scrutiny across a series of six meetings between December 2022 and February 2023. The fees and charges review had been approved by Cabinet in January. The budget proposed to raise Council Tax by 7.99% plus a

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further 2% for the Adult Social Care precept, leading to a total increase of 9.99%. It was noted that the Council had requested, and been given, permission by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, to raise Council Tax by 5% above the referendum threshold of 4.99%.

The Committee discussed a range of issues in scrutinising the budget including:

- **Savings delivery** – Members highlighted that the 2023/24 savings target was the largest in the Council’s history and there was a track record for not fully delivering savings, including some slippage in 2022/23. The Chair asked whether Lead Members and Directors were committed to delivering the proposed savings. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Cabinet was fully committed to implement the savings, or find alternatives. It was noted that if 2023/24 savings were all made, and none of the limited contingency was required, the Council would be in a much stronger position for future years with a reduced savings target. A follow up question about monitoring the savings was raised to ensure any slippage was identified early and could be addressed. The Leader highlighted that budget monitoring had been significantly strengthened in the past year and that scrutiny could play an important role in reviewing delivery of the savings programme and flagging up any issues to Cabinet.
- **Key risks** – the Chair asked about provision for key risks, such as a scenario where inflation stayed high throughout the year, and contingencies. The Executive Director stated that provision had been made for a pay settlement of 4.8% and contract inflation of 4.9%. There was some contingency for slippage in savings delivery, but that should only be used in genuinely exceptional circumstances such as pressures arising from external events. These assumptions were considered to be prudent and it was highlighted that if more provision had been made it would have required a higher savings target. Budgets would therefore need to be carefully managed.
- **Consultation** – the Chair asked what public consultation on the budget had been undertaken. The Executive Director stated that a consultation exercise had been carried out on the Council’s website. The response rate was low and had not generated any substantive comments that had led to changes in the budget. It was recognised that the scale of the Council’s financial challenges meant there was limited flexibility and options in setting next year’s budget. The Committee agreed that budget consultation should be strengthened in 2023/24 to seek to increase resident feedback and engagement.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Kelly asked about a number of specific savings to ‘switch off’ street lights; CCTV; and audit costs. The Leader responded that street lights would not be switched off, but there was a dimming trial. The level of dimming was small and it was said to be unlikely the difference would be noticed. The lighting would still be brighter than the

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old street lights before the investment had been made in LED lights. The trial results would be evaluated before any permanent solutions were implemented. The wording of the saving in the budget papers would be amended from 'switched off' to dimmed. In relation to the audit savings, the Executive Director commented that the high audit costs for 2018/19 reflected the amount of work required due to the deficiencies identified. The saving in this budget would relate to the audit costs for 2023/24 by which time the much improved financial records should lead to significantly lower audit costs.

At the conclusion of the discussion the revenue budget was noted, with no specific amendments proposed but that the Cabinet be requested to strengthen the public consultation process in future budgets.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Committee requests that budget consultation be strengthened in future years to seek to increase resident feedback and engagement.

(Councillor Akbar left the meeting)

11. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

The Interim Head of Transactions – Revenues, Benefits and Charges introduced a report that set out the proposed changes to Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24.

In view of the proposed 9.99% rise in Council Tax the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), had stated in correspondence that Ministers were conscious of the effects of a large increase in Council Tax on taxpayers in Slough, especially those on lower incomes. The Government's expectation was that the Council take steps to mitigate the impact on those least able to pay and the Council Tax Support Scheme had therefore been revised. This proposed scheme recommended allocating £1.2m of the additional £2.5m Council Tax generated to further reduce Council Tax to the poorest working age households.

Approximately 9,300 households in Slough currently received a Council Tax Reduction. There were 2,700 pension aged claimants and that part of the scheme was set out nationally and no changes were proposed. If the proposed scheme was agreed for 2023/24, 5,347 current working age claimants would pay less Council Tax than currently. Of these, the 3,552 most vulnerable working age households that currently paid 20% towards their Council Tax would not have to pay any in 2023/24. 1,249 working age claimants would pay more under the scheme and the Council would also allocate additional resources to the Council Tax Hardship Fund to provide discretionary support.

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The Committee welcomed the revisions to the scheme to support the most vulnerable households. There was a discussion about the Government support to Slough and the Chair asked whether the Council had, for example, asked to keep a higher proportion of business rates. The Executive Director explained that the Council had put forward a number of options to Government about how it could support the Council which had included business rates and additional grants. The Government had not agreed these other options and instead agreed the Capitalisation Direction.

The revised scheme was subject to consultation.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

12. Members' Attendance Record 2022/23

Resolved – That the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

13. Date of Next Meeting - 16th March 2023

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 16th March 2023.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.57 pm)

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Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	22 nd March 2023
Subject:	Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23
Chief Officer:	Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Alexander Polak, Head of Governance and Scrutiny and Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Appendix A - Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to comment on and endorse the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 (appended) which will be submitted to Council.

Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Endorse the draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 as final; and
- (b) Recommend to Council that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

Reason: It is a requirement of the constitution that a Scrutiny Annual Report be presented to Council. The Annual Report is important evidence for Members, the public and Commissioners of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function during 2022/23.

Commissioner Review

The Commissioners welcome this report which reflects on the work of the Scrutiny function over the past year and identifies some areas which worked well, and other areas for further development which should be taken forward to the new Council following the upcoming elections.

Scrutiny has an important part to play on the democratic running of the Council and it is pleasing to see the increased involvement of members in this.

1. Report

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny is an important part of the Council's governance arrangements. It is a requirement of the constitution that an annual report about scrutiny's business be presented to Council. The draft Annual Report 2022/23 is appended to this covering report. It is self-contained and self-explanatory.

- 1.2 As covered in more detail in section 2 of the appended draft Annual Report 2022/23, Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State are currently monitoring, as part of a suite of Directions made to the council, the Council's progress on achieving "improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny function". The Annual Report is important evidence for Members, the public and Commissioners of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function during 2022/23. The Annual Report can be expected to constitute part of the evidence considered by them in their planned April 2023 'deep dive' into what progress is being made towards improving scrutiny.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 None

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 None

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The risk of either not endorsing an annual report or of endorsing a substandard or incorrect annual report is primarily of reputational damage to the council.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 None

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 None

4. Background Papers

None

Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23

Scrutiny Chairs 2022/23

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Cllr Harjinder Gahir
Overview & Scrutiny
Committee



**Cllr Ruqayah
Begum**
Customer &
Community Scrutiny
Panel



**Cllr Naveeda
Qaseem**
People Scrutiny
Panel



**Cllr Maroof
Mohammad**
Place Scrutiny
Panel

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1. Chair's Introduction



Cllr Harjinder Gahir
Chair

Overview & Scrutiny
Committee 2022/23

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I am pleased to present the Annual Scrutiny Report for the 2022/23 municipal year which describes what we have done, and how the work of my committee and its panels has changed and improved over the past year.

It continues to be a very challenging time for the Council and I have worked hard to make sure Overview and Scrutiny is playing its part in the council's improvement and recovery. For scrutiny members this has been a year of reflection, learning, planning and change, ready for a new cohort of scrutiny members in May 2023. This report describes that journey, which I am proud to have led.

This year hinged around the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's recommendations for our future scrutiny arrangements, endorsed by my committee and the Council in November. While I do have some reservations about moving to a single scrutiny committee, our Task and Finish Groups pilot was a resounding success, showing how much scrutiny could achieve next year when this becomes a standard way of working. But it will be critical to ensure that the new scrutiny function is sufficiently and permanently resourced.

Our other main focus this year has been to improve, again, our approach to scrutiny of budget and savings proposals. Scrutiny members have been engaged early and often in scrutiny of every directorate savings proposal and the draft budget. Alongside this the O&S Committee began to monitor non-financial aspects of the Council's improvement and recovery, laying the ground for next year's Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee.

I would like to thank all the members of the Committee and scrutiny panels for their work. There is much still to do but I can also say that much progress has been made. I hope we have laid a strong platform during this year of change, on which the next four years of impactful overview and scrutiny will be built.

2. A transitional year – the context

In October 2021 an [external assurance review](#) of Slough Borough Council was published. This included a [governance review by Jim Taylor](#) for the Secretary of State, dated September 2021. This included the following statement:

“The scrutiny function is under resourced and there is no permanent statutory scrutiny officer. All seven meetings of Scrutiny Committees were cancelled in June and July of 2021. The interim Head of Democratic services left the organisation in July 2021. Elected Members indicate they require additional scrutiny resource to carry out their function effectively. Members state that scrutiny reports are complex and hard to interpret, and it is difficult for lay people to challenge. It is acknowledged that some reports have not been given enough scrutiny. Slough Children First refer to an inadequate focus on their activity within the scrutiny function. Members also state that there is has been an ‘erosion of trust’ with officer reports, considering ‘what has happened’. There is no scrutiny forward plan.”

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In December 2021 the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“the Secretary of State”) made [Directions to Slough Borough Council](#) under the Local Government Act 1999 which included the following [in section 3 of Annexe A](#):

“In the first three months prepare and agree an Improvement Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners (which may include or draw upon improvement or action plans prepared before the date of these Directions), with resource allocated accordingly, and as a minimum, the following components:

...

An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny function...”

At the time of the Jim Taylor report, Slough Borough Council also commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to do a review of its scrutiny function. This review was carried out after commissioners had then been appointed. The CfGS report was eventually published in November 2022. It included a number of recommendations which were considered advisable for the further improvement of SBC’s scrutiny function. The recommendations were not binding, but they were evidenced, authoritative and public.

2. A transitional year – the response

In response to the Secretary of State's Directions, a Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan and Democratic Governance Improvement Action Plan were created in-year, and both have been monitored by Commissioners via the Improvement and Recovery Board. The Scrutiny Action Plan was [received in full by the O&S Committee in November 2022](#) and again in [February 2023 \(see p.70 at link\)](#).

The Action Plans include various actions to improve the functioning of scrutiny, many of which were completed during this year, such as:

- Scrutiny training to councillors and officers, and report-writing training for officers.
- The Head of Service role for the function has been re-filled and made Statutory Scrutiny Officer.
- Scrutiny officer capacity was built back into the Democratic Services budget, recruitment of which has been attempted twice so far without success in the market.
- A Work programming exercise was completed with all scrutiny members.
- A pilot of three focused Task & Finish groups was completed, including one focused on Slough Children First.
- An improved budget scrutiny process was agreed and delivered.
- Shadow arrangements in place for a new structure focused on the council's improvement and recovery

In addition to this, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee [endorsed the CfGS's recommendations in November 2022](#) albeit with an additional recommendation that the option of two committees also be given consideration. They asked Full Council to set up a Members Working Group for the purpose of proposing a final scrutiny structure to the Council's AGM in May 2023. Full Council in turn endorsed the recommendations and set up the group, made up of scrutiny chairs, cabinet members and the leader of the opposition. This group has met twice in January and February to progress this work.

To maximise the success of next year's new arrangements, scrutiny transitioned to shadow arrangements anticipating the future structure. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee took a stronger lead role on Improvement and Recovery monitoring as well as budget scrutiny, while the Panels freed up resources for a Task and Finish Groups Pilot – see below. A single combined work programme for all four committees was in place.

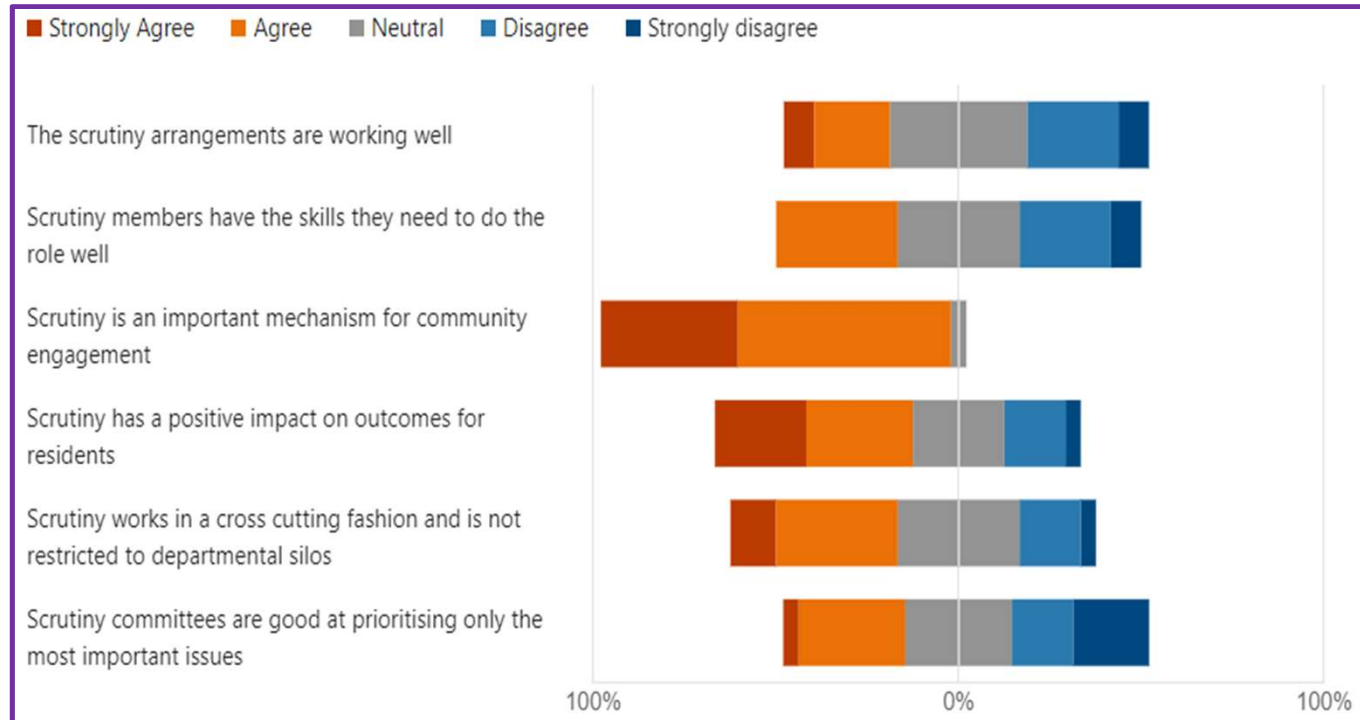
3. Measuring Scrutiny improvement (a)

All Members were surveyed in January – February 2023. The survey was extensive covering a range of topics. Almost 60% of members responded (24/42) providing a range of insights to support the council's improvement and recovery. The full results will be reported to the Standards Committee in April.

As well as sections about culture, member support and member wellbeing, there were sections about Democratic Governance and Scrutiny. It is to be hoped that these results show some improvement on where they would have been before the current intervention, but there is no data baseline against which to measure before now. Nevertheless this data does provide an insight into members' current views and a baseline for the future.

Of the 24 respondents, 10 were Scrutiny members.

While almost every member agreed that Scrutiny is important – which is itself an improvement on the position reported previously - only a minority of members could agree that the scrutiny arrangements are working well, or that scrutiny members have the skills they need to do the job well. There appears to be room to improve scrutiny's effectiveness at prioritising only the most important issues, which would presumably increase the overall impact of scrutiny.



3. Measuring Scrutiny improvement (b)

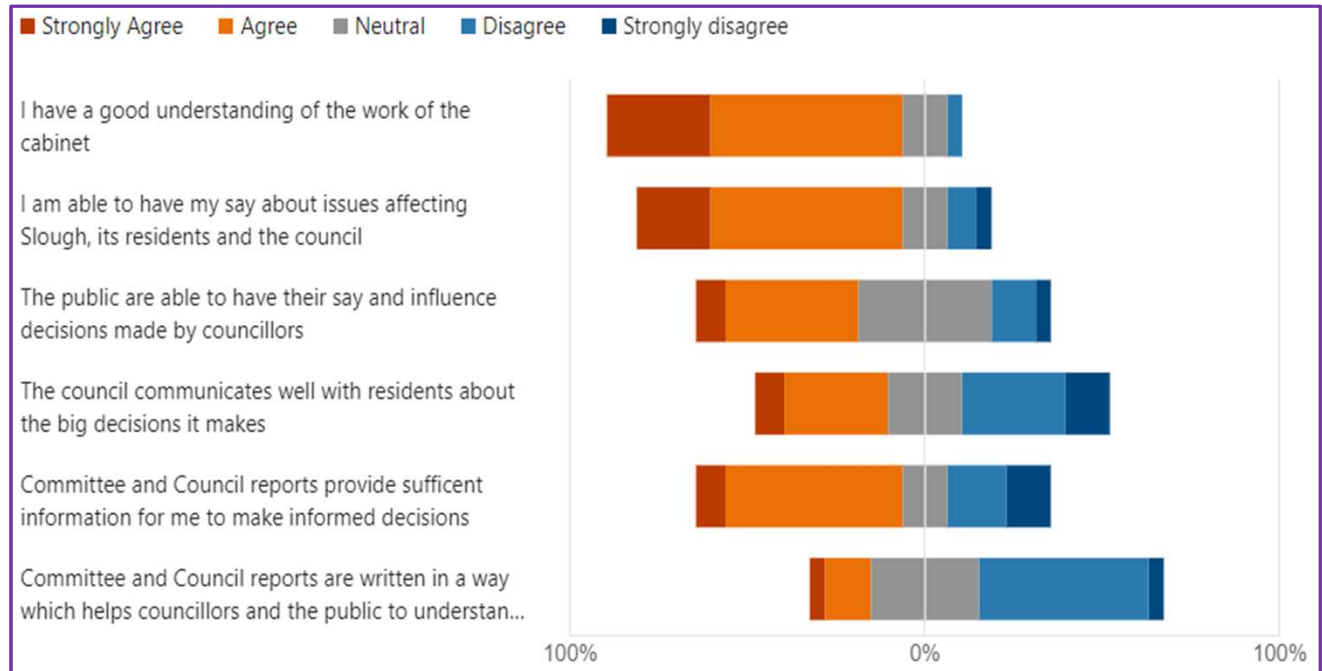
Other questions in the member survey asked about the wider democratic arena. This includes but is not limited to Overview and Scrutiny.

It is very positive that members generally feel they are able to have their say about issues affecting Slough, its residents and the Council.

But Members appear less confident about residents' ability to have their say, and especially the council's effectiveness at communicating with residents. It is not clear to what extent this latter point refers to councillors' own role in communicating with residents either directly or via scrutiny.

The issue of report quality and clarity has been raised consistently by external reviews over the past few years and, while it probably shows progress that the majority of members feel that they are given sufficient information to inform their decisions, there are still a significant number who do not, and the issue of clarity for members and the public was still strongly raised.

The survey will be conducted annually to allow tracking of improvement, and comparison between member cohorts.



4. Annual Review - Scrutiny members' workshop

A workshop was held on 2 March 2023 for the purposes of:

- 1) Reviewing the past year to inform the Scrutiny Annual Report
- 2) Collecting further qualitative information alongside the Member Survey, to inform the improvement of the Scrutiny function
- 3) Making recommendations to next year's Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee about areas which they may wish to prioritise.

Ten of the 24 scrutiny members attended. A summary of the outputs from parts 1) and 2) above are on the following slides. Part 3) is addressed in part 8



4. Annual Review – O&S Committee (a)

What went well?

- Reviewing detail of contract performance at the outset of the year was a good insight – helped us identify new issues
- Task & Finish Groups were really good
 - The work they did, and the support from officers - the whole thing was really good
- Budget process began much earlier – previously has always felt rushed
- Some report layouts were much better eg Richard West's and Stephen Mair's
- Much fewer acronyms and jargon in most reports now
- Leader & most of Cabinet attending O&S more often
- Chairing of O&S Cttee has been good this year, more info shared with committee.
- Pre-meetings and training has been good. Members are better trained now and must keep it up.
- Enjoyed meeting Ian from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to consider proposals for becoming more effective next year. Good to ask him direct questions.

- Support from Democratic Services is appreciated.
- More structured way of approaching questioning this year
- Chair and Vice Chair have good and productive working relationship
- Good that new members had the confidence to raise questions.

What didn't go so well?

- Some reports still not well laid out eg Children's reports
- Need Cabinet to attend and answer more questions
- Need to plan better for Police and Crime items
- Perhaps too many new councillors on the committee at once, it might be better to have a different balance of experience
- Need more training on how committees work for new councillors eg talking through the Chair
- Missed our dedicated scrutiny resource – could have been recruited faster.

4. Annual Review – O&S Committee (b)

Hopes for the future

- “I’d like to be on a T&F next year, I can see now I’d enjoy that”
- Recruitment of permanent dedicated Scrutiny Officer
- Must make sure we don’t lose sight of scrutinising front line services when the structure changes
- Cabinet to attend and front items – answer questions with occasional reference to officers rather than all the questions going directly to officers (not all cabinet members do this currently eg the O&S Cttee budget scrutiny sessions towards the end of the year were good)
- Need an action tracker showing progress of recommendations made to cabinet
- Scrutiny Chairs should present their committees’ recommendations at Cabinet/Council themselves.
- The Vice Chair hopes the Chair will continue next year.
- Better quality reports
- To see more improvement in the Council’s performance.



4. Annual Review – People Scrutiny Panel

What went well?

- The Task and Finish Group
 - Dedicated group
 - More informal setting
 - Split the workload between members
 - Made strong recommendations
 - Able to engage people outside of formal committees eg D&E Commissioner
- Good communication and working together as a panel
- Pre-meetings have been useful

What didn't go so well?

- The T&F time commitment was significant
- Lack of coverage of education issues
 - Should be more prominent in work programme
 - This issue has been picked up in audit reports
- Work programming
 - We did not deliver what we agreed at the June work programming session
 - Agendas need to be agreed further in advance

Hopes for the future

- Would like to see one education topic on every agenda
- How do we deal with 'less important' issues?
- Better report writing
 - Better use of executive summaries
 - Providing glossaries or using plain English in reports!
- Budget scrutiny
 - More explanation of reports
 - More use of appendices / explanatory notes eg for budget presentations
- Pre-meetings
 - Suggested questions to be prepared in advance and discussed at the pre-meeting

4. Annual Review – Place, Customer & Community Panels

These committees conducted joint budget scrutiny during 2022/23 and reviewed their year together:

What went well?

- Osborne
 - scrutinising will make the next contract better for residents and better value for money
- Green bins
 - lots of questions were dealt with
 - Members' feedback was taken on board
- Asset Disposal
 - Many of members' questions were resolved
- Houses of Multiple Occupation
 - Made some good recommendations to officers

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What didn't go so well?

- Bus Lane – residents wishes and needs were not accommodated
- 2-weekly waste collection – members not able to amend the recommendation
- Charges at recycling centre – has resulted in more fly tipping

Hopes for the future

- Concerned about the workload of the new Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee – hope it will be able to scrutinise in depth
- Recommendations from Task and Finish Groups should be agreed
- Report authors must attend and Cabinet Members should attend to respond to questions

5. Task and Finish Groups pilot (a)

Three Task and Finish Groups were commissioned this year in order to pilot the proposed future ways of working while making concrete recommendations for the improvement of Council services. The hypothesis was that T&F work, while often quite resource-intensive, tends to produce more concrete and better informed recommendations, while being more rewarding for the Members involved.

The Task and Finish Groups covered the following topics:

- Contract Management (O&S Committee)
- Complaint Handling (Customer and Community Scrutiny Panel)
- Slough Children First - Workforce Strategy Business Case (People Scrutiny Panel)

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A fourth Task and Finish Group was proposed on the topic of Waste Disposal and Recycling, but members of the Place Scrutiny Panel instead looked at this topic in-committee.

All recommendations from all three T&F groups were accepted in full by the Cabinet.

These recommendations will be included in a new Recommendations Tracker so that progress of implementation can be monitored by scrutiny members and the public.

Learning from the process of conducting the T&Fs has been fed into the Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan. The feedback (above) from Committee members all raised the T&Fs as a highlight of their year in scrutiny. Further feedback follows, from the council's government-appointed Commissioners and from the officers who supported the T&F groups.

5. Task and Finish Groups pilot (b)

Commissioner Feedback:

- Contract management
 - “The task and finish group has produced **a well-researched and useful report. All involved should be congratulated.** The recommendations are supported as their implementation will be a significant step in meeting the Direction.”
- Complaint Handling
 - “This is **a well-researched and documented report and those involved should be commended...**In due course Scrutiny may want to review how their recommendations were implemented. It may be useful as part of that review to look at the areas that generate the most complaints and how these are dealt with.”
- Review of Workforce Strategy Business Case for Slough Children First
 - “Commissioners would like to commend the task and finish group for the work they put in and the scope of their coverage. The approach they have followed and the learning they have obtained should flow through into future work and **members should be thanked for setting such a good standard.** DLUHC Commissioners look forward to reviewing the responses and implementation plans that follow the recommendations.”

5. Task and Finish Groups pilot (c)

Feedback from Officers who supported the Task and Finish Groups:

What went well?

- Has strengthened the relationship with members through productive informal contact with members.
- Especially a good way of junior staff to have exposure to political domain without being in a formal setting.
- Created a platform for frank and honest conversations in which councillors get to understand some of the detailed issues which one doesn't get to raise in a formal setting.
- Members have had the flexibility to decide what they want to know about these topic areas to improve their knowledge.
- It has been a great mythbuster.
- Has been a great way to get a qualitative discussion going amongst members rather than just looking at data etc.
- Has definitely helped councillors learn about the barriers faced by the council as well as the issues we need to fix.
- Has shown a joint commitment to trying to address some fundamental areas within the council that need to work well (eg contract management, complaints - fundamental prerequisites of being able to operate a good council).
- We saw progress at the three final meetings, with councillors presenting the reports in the formal meetings, and cabinet members receiving the issues, rather than officers presenting or receiving / answering questions.
- Has felt like a good way to demonstrate to members the skills and ability of SBC's officers.

“If there was another opportunity to do this, I would do it, because it has been so good. It has been time consuming, but I would even consider getting involved in doing this in other people's service areas because of how rewarding it has been.”

6. Scrutiny of Improvement and Recovery

A critical role for Overview and Scrutiny as a whole this year was to hold the Executive to account on progress against the Directions set by the Secretary of State while representing the voice of residents by giving strong consideration to the potential impacts of proposed savings and changes to service delivery.

All four scrutiny committees took part in a multi-step scrutiny of the emerging savings and associated impact assessments, which spanned multiple meetings over the full course of the year. The process was kicked off with briefings for all scrutiny members and several training sessions and briefings were delivered for scrutiny members in pre-meetings across the course of the year. In response to the changing shape of the organisation, the Place Scrutiny Panel conducted most of this process in joint meetings with the Customer and Community Scrutiny Panel.

Furthermore, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, mindful of its role in the transition to a future Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee, commenced a programme of regular items to focus on the full Improvement and Recovery Programme. In this way, members have received and scrutinised in the public domain detailed papers which the organisation now prepares for the purpose of reporting to the Secretary-of-State-appointed Commissioners at monthly Improvement and Recovery Board meetings.

The Member Working Group on Scrutiny has agreed to recommend to Council in May 2023 that the following be the core terms of reference for next year's Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee:

- Monitoring and driving Improvement against any Directions by the Secretary of State and other external or internal inspections/reviews/performance information.
- Monitoring and driving progress of major corporate improvement initiatives eg transformation programmes, major programmes of savings delivery, culture change, governance improvement
- Scrutinising and inputting into the council's budget-setting cycle and monitoring the council's financial recovery progress
- Scrutinising proposals for, and delivery of, major savings initiatives, including their impact on partners and residents.
- Commissioning Task and Finish Groups to investigate specific discrete questions or issues

7. 2022/23 Scrutiny items (a)

May – July 2022

- PEOPLE: [Re-Procurement of Community Equipment Service](#)
- PEOPLE: [Re-Procurement of Extra Care Contract](#)
- PLACE: [Bus Enhanced Partnership](#)
- CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Houses of Multiple Occupation](#)
- CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Call Centre Statistics](#)
- O&S: [Budget Process](#)
- O&S: [Contract Management/Procurement](#)

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August – October 2022

- CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Housing Regulation Enforcement, Licensing and Civil Financial Penalties Policies](#)
- PLACE: [Waste and Recycling](#)
- PEOPLE: [Home to School Travel Assistance and Post 16 Travel Assistance](#)
- O&S: [Financial Action Plan](#)
- O&S: [Financial Update - 2022/23](#)
- CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Task & Finish Group: Complaints Handling](#)
- PEOPLE: [Slough Children First \(SCF\) Business Planning - Task and Finish Group](#)

7. 2022/23 Scrutiny items (b)

November – December 2022

- O&S: [Improvement and Recovery update](#)
- O&S: [Scrutiny Improvement Review](#)
- O&S and all Panels: [Financial Overview](#)
- O&S: [Chief Operating Officer budget proposals and Finance & Commercial budget proposals](#)
- PLACE with CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Place & Communities and Housing & Property budget proposals](#)
- PEOPLE: [Adults Social Care Budget Proposals 2023/24](#)

January – March 2023

- Member Working Group on Scrutiny – meetings 1 and 2
- PLACE: [Asset Disposal Programme Update](#)
- PEOPLE: [Budget Proposals 2023/24](#)
- PEOPLE: [Task & Finish Group Report - Review of Workforce Strategy Business Case for Slough Children First](#)
- PLACE with CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Budget Proposals 2023-24](#)
- PLACE with CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY: [Task & Finish Group Report on Complaints Handling](#)
- O&S: [Budget Proposals 2023/24](#)
- O&S: [Task & Finish Group Report - Review of Contract Management](#)
- O&S: [Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable](#)
- O&S: [Recovery & Improvement Update](#)
- O&S: [Full suite of budget documents](#)
- O&S: [Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24](#)
- Annual Review and Work Programming Workshop

8. Scrutiny members' workshop - Ideas for 2023/24

At the Scrutiny Review Workshop members were encouraged to consider what issues might lend themselves to whole-committee or Task & Finish work next year, bearing in mind the changing focus of the main committee (as above). It will of course be a matter for next year's scrutiny members what to prioritise for their work programme, but these are the 2022/23 scrutiny members' views:

O&S Committee

- Budget monitoring
- Procurement
- Contract Management / value for money
- IT
- Transformation
- Capital Programme Monitoring

People Panel

- Education item at every meeting
- SEND
- School attainment gap
- School places
- Social Care performance
- Libraries

Place, Customer and Communities Panels

- Temporary accommodation
- Housing repairs reprocurement (governance – who is responsible?)
- Policies and procedures at Chalvey Hub
- Refuse and recycling
 - Recycling rates
 - community engagement
 - Best practice
- Meet with other local authorities

9. Priorities for Scrutiny Improvement in 2023/24

The Council's plans for Scrutiny Improvement are formally set out in the Council's Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan. As set out above, a then-current version of the plan was received by the O&S Committee on [17 November 2022](#) and then again as part of an [Improvement and Recovery monitoring item on 23 February 2023 \(see page 70\)](#). The action plan, which is updated monthly, is monitored by the Secretary of State's Commissioners as part of the papers for the Improvement and Recovery Board. The Commissioners plan to conduct a 'deep dive' into progress against those plans in April 2023.

The plan recognises the importance of developing an effective scrutiny function. It incorporates in full the recommendations of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, although recognises that the Member Working Group on Scrutiny will make an informed decision about what to recommend to Full Council where constitutional changes are required. Full Council will decide the final structure.

Key areas of the Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan include:

- Agree new scrutiny structure and ways of working in May 2023, to optimise the function for the council's unique situation. This includes:
 - a reframing of the main committee's focus (as above)
 - a move to more T&F work
 - Continuing and improving the council's whole-year focus on financial management in scrutiny
- Deliver enhanced training and induction for new members in 2023 including training for Chairs.
- Deliver enhanced training for officers working with scrutiny.
- Continue to develop a cohesive work programme for scrutiny, tightly focused on scrutiny of the council's plans for financial and organisational recovery
- Improve the effectiveness of pre-meetings
- Restore dedicated, permanent officer support for the scrutiny function.
- Empower scrutiny members to self-evaluate their performance in committee and plan steps towards further improvement.

10. Petitions Report for 2022/23

For the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023 a total of 9 petitions were received: six paper petitions and three e-petitions. None met the threshold for O&S or Council debate.

Paper Petition Title	Signatures
22-01 - Petition Against Yellow Lines on Faraday Road	114
22-02 - Petition - Oppose the Introduction of Closure of Streets around Holy Family School	27
22-03 - Petition - Chicken Ranch – Music License Review	51
22-04 - Petition - Residents Parking Bays in Cecil Way	16
22-05 - Petition Against Plan of New Bus Lane on Farnham Road	39
22-06 - Request for Double Yellow Lines on Hawthorne Crescent	10
ePetition Title	Signatures
Parking restrictions on St Mary's Road by LHPA	0
Objection to Building Height in the Proposed Mackenzie Homes Development	189
That All Labour Councillors Resign	40

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2022/23
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR	16/06/22 (Note: Scrutiny Training & Work Programming held, not a formal meeting)	14/07/22	15/09/22 Cancelled	13/10/22	17/11/22	01/12/22 (Extraordinary)	02/02/23 (Moved from 12 th January 2023)	15/02/23 (Extraordinary)	23/02/23	22/03/23
Gahir (Chair)	-	P		P	P	P	P	P	P	
Matloob (Vice-Chair)	-	P		P	P	P	P	P	P	
Akbar	-	P		P	P	P	Ap	P	P	
Bal	-	P		P	P	P	Ap	Ap	Ap	
Basra	-	P		P	P	P	P*	P	P	
P Bedi **					P	P	P	P	Ap	
Kaur	-	P		P	P	P	P	P	P	
M Malik	-	P		P	P	P	P	P	Ap	
S Malik	-	P		P	P	P	Ap	Ap	Ap	
Strutton **	-	P		Ab						

P = Present for whole meeting P* = Present for part of meeting Ap = Apologies given Ab = Absent, no apologies given

* The formal Committee meeting scheduled on 16th June 2022 was not required as all Panel appointments had been made at Annual Council in May 2022. The session was used as an all scrutiny training and work programming event.

** Councillor Strutton resigned from the Committee on 28th October 2022. On the nomination of the Conservative Group, Councillor P Bedi was appointed to the vacancy on 7th November 2022 under delegated authority to fill casual vacancies.

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