

## **For publication**

### **Scrutiny annual report**

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Meeting:	Scrutiny Select Committee – Resilient Council Scrutiny Select Committee – Economic Growth and Communities
Date:	6 July 2023 13 July 2023
Cabinet portfolio:	Deputy Leader
Report by:	Service Director Corporate

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<b>Purpose of reviewing the topic</b>	To present to council the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which details the work of the council's overview and scrutiny committees, and development of the overview and scrutiny function during 2022/23.
<b>What are the objectives of the review?</b>	To enable recommendation of the report to Full Council.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report is produced and presented to the Council each year. This is the council's 18th scrutiny annual report for submission to Council, following approval by the two Scrutiny Select Committees.
- 1.2 The provision of a scrutiny annual report is considered to be good practice and is a requirement of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance which is adopted to ensure effective operation of the council's functions.

## **2.0 Scrutiny Annual Report**

- 2.1 The annual report, attached at Appendix 1, sets out the work, achievements and impact of the council's overview and scrutiny function during 2022/23. This includes:
  - An overview of the overview and scrutiny function

- Information on the working of overview and scrutiny during the year
- Promoting the role and raising the profile of overview and scrutiny
- Providing an outline of the changes being made for 2023/24.

### **3.0 Barriers/obstacles**

- 3.1 The range of issues of interest to Scrutiny continues to grow and matches the ambitions of the Council's Council Plan and Delivery Plans but also day to day service provision. Selecting the areas to focus scrutiny activity can be a challenge.
- 3.2 During the year different approaches to scrutiny engagement have been utilised including reports, presentations with question and answer sessions, focus groups and working groups. This has enabled scrutiny to take an in depth look at a specific policy areas, plans and data sets and provided a variety of opportunities for all scrutiny members to contribute to the discussions and add value and challenge to key activity. This approach will be valuable for future scrutiny activity.
- 3.3 Since the development of the three committee scrutiny model in 2015 there have been significant changes around council responsibilities, structures and partnerships. With the reduction in Council size due to the Local Government Boundary Review, 32 scrutiny places is considered to be unsustainable, however overview and scrutiny is an important check and challenge point within the Council. Overview and Scrutiny meetings have traditionally taken place in the evening (unlike other committees) so provide an opportunity for elected members who have caring commitments or work commitments during the day to still engage effectively in committee responsibilities. It is therefore important that there are a significant number of committee places allocated to this work.
- 3.4 From May 2023, the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been reduced from three to two. The overall number of overview and scrutiny places has decreased from 32, but the actual number of members engaged has increased, helping to increase overview and scrutiny oversight and provide much needed evening committee places.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The new Scrutiny Select Committee model will help to take forward the engagement and pre-decision scrutiny approach and build upon the successes of 2022/23.

### **5.0 Suggested scrutiny activity**

- 5.1 Scrutiny Select Committees to consider the reports and make recommendations to Council.

## **Document information**

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<b>Background documents</b> These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>None</i>	
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix 1	Annual Scrutiny Report.