



**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

*2018/19*

Contents:

Section		Page No
<b>1.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs' Foreword	3
<b>2.</b>	Comments from the Chief Executive	5
<b>3.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee work and achievements	6
<b>4.</b>	Scrutiny outcomes and impact on service delivery	15
<b>5.</b>	Scrutiny developments during the year	17
<b>6.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2018/19	22
<b>7.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Memberships 2018/19	24

## **1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs' Foreword**

At Chesterfield Borough Council, our Overview and Scrutiny function continues to be an active and integral part of the council's governance arrangements. During 2018/19, our scrutiny members have acted as a critical friend to the development and implementation of key council policies and provided robust challenge. This work has supported the council's vision of always putting our residents and customers first when we make decisions and deliver services.

Every year, changes to Government policy affect the council in new ways and over the past year this has influenced the work undertaken by scrutiny members. The roll out of Universal Credit has been closely monitored by the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee and will continue to be an important topic during 2019/20, helping to ensure that the transition is handled as smoothly as possible for those affected. The national increase in homelessness and rough sleepers has been a topic scrutinised by the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee who reviewed the outcomes of the Night Shelter, an important initiative that gave over 100 people a safe place to sleep during the winter.

As a pre-decision scrutiny function, we are able to look into the near future at issues that will affect the next generation of Chesterfield Borough residents and workers. Two scrutiny projects were completed during 2018/19 that focussed on how we can maximise the potential that HS2 will bring and recommending ways to ensure that we are not just hitting the objectives in our Skills Action Plan, but exceeding them.

Scrutiny has an important role in monitoring how the Council uses its finances and a key area of inquiry for many topics has been exploring ways we can generate income and rationalise our assets. The reduction in funding from central Government means that local authorities need to be more innovative in identifying new income streams as well as reducing costs; scrutiny's role as a critical friend is vital to ensuring the needs of residents are represented and decision making is in line with council policy.

We continue to play an active role in the East Midlands Scrutiny Network and, earlier this year, welcomed the Network to our Town Hall where we made use of the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms to hold the meeting and group

workshops. The Network is a supportive group of officers and members involved in scrutiny across the East Midlands, and has provided the opportunity to share good practice and challenge performance, ensuring our scrutiny processes are robust and effective. Continuously improving our scrutiny function has also involved taking on board advice from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and, more recently, the new Government guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities following a review to which Chesterfield contributed evidence.

Our new Overview and Scrutiny work programme was launched in July, 2019 and has incorporated topics that are high in the public agenda both locally and nationally. These include how we can contribute to the national climate change agenda by being a more environmentally friendly council, seeking new ways to tackle health and wellbeing issues across the borough and monitoring the introduction of a new housing Allocations Policy and ICT systems.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the officers and members who have been involved in supporting and assisting in the overview and scrutiny process over the past year.



**Councillor Kate Sarvent**



**Councillor Peter Innes**

## 2 Comments from the Chief Executive

Needs completing



**Huw Bowen**  
**Chief Executive**

### **3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee work and achievements**

The council's three overview and scrutiny committees, which are the **Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum**, the **Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee** and the **Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee**, have had yet another busy year during 2018/19.

The council's overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) have undertaken scrutiny work as individual committees and have appointed scrutiny project groups (SPGs) which are informal working groups that undertake specific task and finish project work for scrutiny committee consideration.

Work undertaken by our council's OSCs during the municipal year 2018/19 is detailed throughout this report.

#### **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

The council's approach is to support and enable good pre-decision scrutiny. Pre-decision scrutiny provides opportunity for scrutiny members to fully challenge and inform important decisions before they are made. It has a number of benefits for the council and communities in that;

- i. early, proactive involvement is likely to produce a better informed, better quality, more robust decision;
- ii. there is a lesser need to suspend decisions already made (ie, through the 'call-in' mechanism) when it can be too late and high risk to change anything;
- iii. it provides opportunity for wider member involvement in decision making followed by greater ownership and support for a decision;
- iv. it helps mitigate against, and minimises the chances of, things going wrong.

Pre-decision scrutiny usually needs time and opportunity for OSCs to get involved early. With good planning and access to information, OSCs will often appoint project groups to inform policy and service developments at the very early stages of planned work. This happens a long time before decision items are entered into the council's published Forward Plan of key decisions. Some examples of this from our 2018/19 work programme include our scrutiny project group work on the development of the former Queen's Park Sports Centre land and Skills which is detailed in this report.

#### **The Forward Plan**

A standing item on each scrutiny committee agenda is the council's Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is a document that contains details of the key, private and,

where possible, non-key decisions the Cabinet, cabinet members or officers are likely to make over a four month period. It is a legal requirement to make details of key or private decisions public.

This council supports its pre-decision scrutiny policy by going beyond the legal requirements for publishing notice of key decisions by providing the details of decisions up to four months in advance.

As well as being an important document for the public, the Forward Plan helps to provide our OSCs with the opportunity to monitor the executive decision making programme and undertake pre-decision scrutiny.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Power of 'Call-in'**

Scrutiny law allows for an OSC to investigate, make reports and recommendations on Cabinet decisions that have been agreed but not yet put into action. Legislation allows for action on these decisions to be suspended pending a scrutiny inquiry.

This process is referred to as scrutiny 'Call-in'. Following any scrutiny call-in inquiry, the scrutiny committee (ie the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum) may request Cabinet reconsider its decision on the basis of the further evidence gathered.

During the 2018/19 year no 'call-ins' were made.

### **OSCs' Work and Achievements Summary**

Throughout 2018/19 OSCs undertook both pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny, receiving reports and influencing decisions on the following policies, strategies, plans and services :

Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum :

- Council Plan and Performance
- Council Budget Monitoring and Medium Term Financial Forecast
- Chesterfield Borough Council's Gender Pay Gap reporting
- Derbyshire Building Control Partnership
- Town Hall Refurbishment project
- Arvato Staff Transition
- ICT Improvement Programme and Digital Strategy
- Overview of Select Committee Inquiry into Scrutiny
- Voluntary Sector: Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre

## Community, Customer and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee :

- Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel Update
- Progress on the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership's performance and action plan for 2018/19
- Effectiveness of the town centre Public Spaces Protection Orders
- Face to face customer service delivery
- Health and wellbeing development
- Implementation of Universal Credit
- Progress on delivery of the Communications and Engagement Strategy

## Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee :

- Private sector housing
- Healthy Living Centre performance
- New housing supply and the impact of new housing
- Recycling and climate change
- Allocations policy
- Careline response service
- Homelessness
- Recycling and climate change

During the year the following Cabinet Members and Assistant Cabinet Members have attended scrutiny committees to present pre-cabinet and other reports, policies, strategies and plans in relation to the business items above, and to answer scrutiny members' questions :

Leader of the Council, Councillor Tricia Gilby

Deputy Leader, Councillor Amanda Serjeant

Cabinet Member for Business Transformation, Councillor Ken Huckle

Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Councillor Terry Gilby

Cabinet Member for Governance, Councillor Sharon Blank

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Chris Ludlow

Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers, Councillor Helen Bagley

Cabinet Member for Town Centres and Visitor Economy, Councillor Steve Brunt

Assistant Cabinet Member, Councillor John Dickinson

The work of the scrutiny committees has also been supported by the attendance of Council officers, Arvato revenues and benefits officers and officers from other external organisations, including;

Derbyshire Police

Derbyshire County Council Public Health

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre



## Scrutiny Project Groups :

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on HS2***

A scrutiny project group on HS2 was formed during the OSC Work Programming for 2018/19. Councillor Jenny Flood was appointed as Lead Member of the project group.



HS2 presents a once in lifetime opportunity for the borough to significantly increase economic growth in a wide range of areas including jobs, housing, the visitor economy and inward investment for North Derbyshire and the wider region. Significant work needed to be carried

out to help to deliver the growth and improved connectivity opportunities presented by HS2. The HS2 project was set to deliver two major developments for Chesterfield, the Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley and HS2 trains stopping at the redeveloped Chesterfield Station. These developments had the potential to drive regeneration in these areas and the wider borough.

The project group set two aims:

1. To ensure each area of responsibility within the Council worked in partnership with others to ensure a joined-up cohesive approach to future changes.
2. To contribute towards a shared vision for the opportunities that the development of the Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley and of HS2 trains services would bring to the borough as well as the wider area.

The group sought information from officers across the council and Cabinet Members during the review to consider the wide variety of areas impacted by the HS2 project. The group also visited the National College of High Speed Rail to experience the efforts being made outside of the council and consider how the benefits of these efforts could be maximised for Chesterfield.



To conclude the project, the group proposed a series of recommendations to Cabinet with the aim to support existing work of the council and provide suggestions of future work to help to ensure the benefits of HS2 would be

maximised for Chesterfield. These recommendations received support from Cabinet and have now been formulated into an action plan that will be monitored through the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. The full report can be found by clicking [here](#).

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on Skills***

A scrutiny project group on Skills was created as part of the OSC Work Programming for 2018/19 with Councillor Gordon Simmons as Lead Member. The initial aims of the project were to review the objectives of the Council's Skills Action Plan at its halfway point, assess if actions within the plan were on target and identify new areas where work was needed. The project group also recognised that there was an exciting future ahead for the employment and skills agenda in Chesterfield, with major developments bringing new opportunities including the projects at Waterside and Northern Gateway, and preparations for HS2.

To focus the work, the group decided to look at four areas in detail, these were:

1. how Local Labour agreements have been used to improve skills development;
2. how the Skills Action Plan has helped to encourage and support businesses to take on more apprentices;
3. what work has been carried out to engage with and support 18-24 year olds not in work, employment or education;
4. what plans are there for skills development programmes in schools that are tailored to future jobs associated with HS2.



The project group sought advice from senior officers across the council, attended a meeting with external organisations to learn about the Construction Skills Village model and visited Parkside Community School to hear about their full and varied programme for their students, supporting them to be in a good position to secure apprenticeships or work.



To conclude the project, the group proposed a series of recommendations to Cabinet with the aim to support the excellent work that is being carried out by the Council in partnership with stakeholders, and provide suggestions for how to increase the value of current activities so that the Council continued to address the objectives

identified in the Skills Action Plan and Growth Strategy.

These recommendations received support from Cabinet and have now been formulated into an action plan that will be monitored through the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. The full report can be found by clicking [here](#).

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on the development of the old Queen's Park Sports Centre site***

Following on from its work in 2017/18 during the development of the business case for the artificial sports pitches, this project group, led again by Councillor Gordon Simmons, acted as a 'sounding board', monitoring progress during the design and building stage in 2018/19.

The group monitored the progress of the planning application and the implementation of the conditions, ensuring the landscaping and boundary was consistent with the heritage format. It monitored the procurement process to ensure the project could be delivered within budget. It considered the proposed marketing approach for the use of the sports pitches, recognising the aim to achieve a balanced schedule of use, including regular bookings, community groups, individual bookings and holiday activities across peak and off-peak periods.

The project group will continue to monitor the completion of the construction of the sports pitches during the summer of 2019.

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on Community Rooms***

As part of the OSC Work Programming for 2018/19, a scrutiny project group was created, with Councillor Kate Caulfield as lead member, to review the Council's Community Rooms provided by the Housing Service. In 2009/10, the Council decided to close its community rooms however this was met with concerns from residents, as a result 6 rooms remained open. However, the usage of the rooms has remained low with income levels not meeting the costs of maintaining the rooms. The Careline Service administers the rooms and began an appraisal and refurbishment programme in July 2017 to improve the standard and attractiveness to potential hirers.



The group set three aims and objectives to provide focus for the review:

1. identify changes that are required to enhance the offer and accessibility of the community rooms, improving the quality of the space for users;
2. identify ways to make the rooms financially self-sufficient including better promotion to increase usage and bring in more income;

3. provide solutions to improve the booking process by identifying the main contacts, how to access the rooms, application process and facility procedures.



Key officers provided information during the review including the Careline and Support Service Manager and the Social Inclusion Officer. In addition, one of the rooms had *Friends of* group to promote usage which the project group engaged with during the review.

The project group produced a preliminary report in January, 2019 that was submitted to the Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee and included a series of recommendations that aimed to improve the usage and booking process for the community rooms including:

- updates to the website and creation of a central webpage for finding room hire information on all Council owned venues;
- installing a dedicated phone line for community room enquiries including a voicemail facility;
- noticeboards outside community rooms to be used to promote the rooms and include up to date “What’s on” calendars;
- a new leaflet that includes details on all the rooms;
- a new booklet that incorporates the terms and conditions for the room hire and how to use the facilities;
- a review of the most effective way to gain access to the rooms for hirers.

The project also considered the financial costs of the rooms including the income and expenditure. The project group decided that, though the recommendations relating to improving usage of the rooms were finalised, further investigation was needed before forming recommendations relating to the funding, charges and maintenance of the 6 community rooms. Therefore, the review will be revisited during 2019/20 with a deeper review of the financial accounts before a final report is submitted to Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee followed by Cabinet.

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on Play Strategy***

A scrutiny project group was appointed by the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016 to inform and provide oversight of the development of the council’s play strategy. The project group has challenged and informed the development of detailed audits of existing play areas across the borough, and the content and design of proposed community consultation which took place from 16 April to 1 June 2018. In April, 2018, the Committee reviewed the aims and objectives of the project group and resolved that the project group be closed

following successful achievement of its aims and that the continued involvement of members in decisions regarding the strategy be endorsed.

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on Leisure, Sport and Cultural Activities***

Detailed background to this review can be found in the scrutiny annual reports for 2013/14 and 2014/15. The Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee received updates during 2018/19 on outstanding issues relating to the new Queen's Park Sports Centre, and continued to monitor and review the progress on addressing the issues. In December, 2018, the Committee were advised that appropriate training programmes were in place for the sports centre staff which resolved the final outstanding matter. The Committee decided to close the Scrutiny Project Group following the achievement of its aims and objectives.

### **Corporate Working Groups :**

Last year the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum appointed individual members to attend the following corporate working group meetings to report back to the relevant OSC on the work of the corporate groups.

*Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan Steering Group* – Cllr Suzie Perkins is the scrutiny representative on this working group. The group has met infrequently during 2018/19, however a new Assistant Director – Housing has recently been appointed and it is expected that the group will start to meet regularly in the coming months. In the past, scrutiny representation on this group has meant that scrutiny councillors have been kept informed and able to act as a critical friend to many housing related issues including changes to the Tenancy Agreement, review of tenant repair obligations and improving the desirability of hard-to-let properties.

*Member Development Working Group* – Scrutiny is represented on this group by Joint Scrutiny Chair, Cllr Peter Innes. In 2017/18, the working group reviewed its terms of reference, purpose and procedures, and a new Member Development policy was approved by Cabinet in May 2018. Scrutiny feeds into the working group by identifying member's training needs and contributing to the rolling member training plan. Over the past year, new briefing sessions have provided members with information on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, using ICT, iPads and e-learning; GDPR, policing issues in Chesterfield, private sector housing and treasury management. All members are invited to these sessions and for scrutiny members they are excellent opportunities to deepen their understanding of specific issues so that they can scrutinise topics effectively.

### **Statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee**

Legislation requires that Councils appoint a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee (CDSC) which must meet at least once a year to provide overview and scrutiny of the council area's Community Safety Partnership's work and performance.

Meetings of the Committee were held on 2 October, 2018 and 26 March, 2019 to consider performance and progress against the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2018/19. The committee also considered priorities for the 2019/20 action plan, which was based on partnership working and would focus on four priority areas: anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and sexual violence, theft and organised crime groups and substance misuse.

The committee also received minutes of the meetings of the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel, and updates from the Council's appointed member representative, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

### **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bolsover Councils**

The Panel was originally appointed to scrutinise performance and monitor services delivered jointly between the three Councils of Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. The only shared service delivered jointly by the three authorities is the Internal Audit Consortium. In light of the reduced scope, the Panel meets as and when needed. During 2018/19, no meetings of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel have been called. The Panel remains in place pending any business coming forward.

## **4 Scrutiny outcomes and impact on service delivery**

### **Ensuring Implementation and Monitoring Impact of Scrutiny Work and Recommendations**

Our overview and scrutiny committees monitor progress in implementing scrutiny recommendations that are approved by decision makers, requesting regular 6 monthly or annual updates on progress. This follow up procedure ensures once recommendations are approved they are put into action, and that the work of scrutiny impacts on service delivery and benefits the people of Chesterfield.

During 2018/19 the council's scrutiny committees monitored and received progress reports on delivery of scrutiny recommendations made in relation to the scrutiny project reviews listed below.

- Leisure, Sport and Cultural Activities in relation to the development of the new Queen's Park Sports Centre
- Friends of groups
- Implementation of Universal Credit
- Town Centre
- HS2

Greater detail of these scrutiny project reports and recommendations can be found either in part 3 of this report or in previous annual scrutiny reports.

### **Achievements and highlights:**

Taking on a topic such as HS2 started off as a challenge for the scrutiny members, however after careful scoping and meetings focussed on specific objectives, the project group were able to contribute to the policy development and were recognised by Cabinet as supporting a broadened and deepened understanding of all members of the subject. The findings of the scrutiny project group on HS2 have been used in the development of the final stages of the production of the HS2 Station Masterplan. Policy SS7, Chesterfield Railway Station, is included in the new Local Plan and was scrutinised by the project group before being submitted to Full Council where it received cross party support. During the course of the project, members engaged with officers across the council as well as HS2 Ltd. staff and visited the National College of High Speed Rail.

During 2018/19, a scrutiny project group undertook a review of the Skills Action Plan at its halfway point. With the new developments planned for Chesterfield and the increasing skills gaps, particularly in the construction and engineering

industries, scrutiny viewed the action plan as an important set of objectives for putting Chesterfield's communities on the best trajectory for the future job markets. The scrutiny process involved speaking to local schools and other authorities to understand the gaps in preparing students for their future careers and learn about alternative models for training. The scrutiny project group carefully planned its recommendations to make the most of existing council resources and provided evidence-based reasoning for recommendations where further funding was needed. The group's report was welcomed by Cabinet Members and received recognition from the leadership over the quality of practice that was undertaken.

Both these projects were successful in presenting realistic recommendations to Cabinet that received full support and also engaged members of the local community in scrutiny work.



## 5 Overview and scrutiny developments during the year

Developments in overview and scrutiny are ongoing and this is a standing item on the agenda for each meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum (OPSF).

Developments fall into two main areas:

- i) Developments inside and outside of the Council having an impact on delivery of the overview and scrutiny function;
- ii) The development of people involved with delivering the function, and more specifically those elected members of our overview and scrutiny committees.

The information below provides details of the various developments that have taken place during 2018/19.

### Sheffield City Region Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee



The combined authority area covers 9 councils in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, of which Chesterfield Borough Council is a non-constituent member. This new body has strategic powers to make decisions on transport, economic development and regeneration matters within the combined authority area. On 4 May, 2018, Dan Jarvis was elected as Mayor of the Sheffield City Region and Chair of the Mayoral Combined Authority.

Legislation requires the combined authority to establish an overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) to increase transparency and accountability of the authority's decision making. The SCRCA OSC has been meeting during 2018/19 and Chesterfield Borough Council's scrutiny chairs are appointed to, and attend its meetings. The SCRCA and its OSC meetings are administered by the South Yorkshire Joint Authorities Unit and meeting details and webcasts of its work during 2018/19 can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### Developing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programming

Over the past three years, scrutiny has been using a format to plan its work programme that engages all scrutiny, backbench and cabinet members in the process. Every year, the Democratic and Scrutiny team and Scrutiny Chairs review

the sessions and make improvements to ensure that the work programme topics remain relevant, add value and have high public impact.

The work programming approach has helped to improve clarity and transparency around the work programming process, enable wider understanding and involvement in the work programming process, provide opportunities to further develop the scrutiny / cabinet working relationship and facilitate well informed discussions and selecting of items.

Two work programme action planning days took place as detailed below:

Action Day 1: At the first planning day, cabinet members were invited to present their priorities and plans for the year 2018/19. Scrutiny and other backbench members worked together informally, in mixed group workshops to discuss and agree potential business items for the scrutiny work programme. They were also asked to consider whether there was a public interest in the item, if scrutiny can have an impact and if there was evidence of poor performance.

Action Day 2: At the second planning day event, scrutiny and backbench members considered the long list of potential business items generated from action day 1. In groups they used a RAG (red/amber/green) scoring system to prioritise the importance and impact of items on the list, and whether scrutiny could have an impact. Having achieved a priority rating for each item, further group discussions took place to consider which items would be suitable for scrutiny project groups.

Following these sessions, the Scrutiny Chairs and Democratic and Scrutiny Officers met to finalise the items for the work programmes using the RAG scores, and drew up a draft work programme that underwent consultation with senior officers before being approved by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

Due to the election of borough councillors, this year scrutiny work programming will take place following the induction of new members to enable all scrutiny members for 2019/20 to be involved in setting the programme for the year. This will follow a similar, shortened format with cabinet members sharing upcoming key projects and priorities for 2019/20 accompanied by workshops involving all scrutiny and backbenchers members that attend the session. Following this, the Democratic and Scrutiny team and Scrutiny Chairs will finalise the work programme with advice from key officers from cross the Council.

### **Corporate Working Groups:**

Last year the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was invited to appoint individual members to certain corporate working groups. These corporate

working groups are detailed in section 3 of this report. OSC members are appointed to attend the working group meetings and report back to the relevant OSC on the work of the corporate groups. This approach is an efficient way to access more information and to provide a mechanism for more direct communication between the OSCs and working groups. Direct communication enables early scrutiny involvement and opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny. OSC member appointments are reviewed annually as part of the work programming process.

## **Scrutiny / Executive Communications**

To continue to strengthen communications and information sharing, the Scrutiny Chairs routinely attend informal development sessions for portfolio holders and the corporate management team this includes discussions, updates, presentations and networking opportunities.

## **Learning and Development for Overview and Scrutiny**

Scrutiny plays an important role in identifying and delivering learning and development for members. One of the Scrutiny Chairs continues to sit on the Member Development Working Group which, following a review of its terms of reference, now offers a full and diverse programme of learning and development opportunities for all members. Development needs that are identified through scrutiny committees or project groups are fed into the member development group so that they can form part of a rolling training programme covering all members. In addition, a programme of member briefing sessions has been established to provide topical advice and updates to help members carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The scrutiny work programming sessions provide an opportunity for all members to learn about the council's key priorities from cabinet members and take part in workshops to determine a list of items for the work programme. Scrutiny continues to look for ways to make work programming more effective and involves the scrutiny members in carrying out prioritisation tasks which encourages members to consider the various impacts of a particular topic.

Both the Scrutiny Chairs and officers from the Democratic and Scrutiny Team have attended each East Midlands Scrutiny Network meeting during 2018/19. The Scrutiny Chairs then provide reports back to the scrutiny committees including feedback from discussions on how different authorities carry out scrutiny project group work, impact of the review by the select committee into scrutiny in local government and the work of the East Midlands Clinical Senate.



A member of the Democratic and Scrutiny team attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny conference in December 2018 to keep up to date with the latest developments impacting on scrutiny.

These opportunities are useful to keep challenging our scrutiny practices to make sure they are relevant, adding value and considering reviews that are in the public interest.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Policy, Practice and Guidance**

In line with the overview and scrutiny arrangements which have been adopted, we continue to develop our local policy approach, processes, and shared learning, through the introduction and further development of guidance and information documents, as needed. We continue to promote and develop a presence on Aspire, the Council's intranet, and through the member development e-bulletins.

In December, 2017, the Select Committee on Housing, Communities and Local Government published their review findings on the effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees. Chesterfield Borough Council took part in the consultation which helped the formulation of recommendations in the report. The Government issued their response in March 2018 and advised that new guidance would be developed based the recommendations from the review. The new guidance is still in development, however many authorities, including ourselves, have already begun to look at how we might be impacted and how we can use the findings to further improve our overview and scrutiny functions.

A survey of all overview and scrutiny members was undertaken during 2018/19 to look at how effective our current practices are. Based on the findings, we have reviewed and introduced new guidance documents to strengthen the quality, impact and relevance of scrutiny work. In addition, we have designed a scrutiny induction programme that will develop an understanding of scrutiny as well as providing practical guidance on the skills needed to be an effective scrutiny councillor. Finally, a new scrutiny report template has been developed to support officers presenting information to scrutiny members. All scrutiny guidance documents and templates are available on Aspire.

## **East Midlands Councils' Regional Scrutiny Network**

The East Midlands Councils' Regional Scrutiny Network is a forum for learning, sharing, promoting, supporting and developing the scrutiny function across the region. The Council plays a proactive role in supporting and



contributing to the work of the network which meets on a quarterly basis.

One or both of the Scrutiny Chairs have attended each meeting of the Network during 2018/19 and in March 2019, Chesterfield hosted the network at the Town Hall. During the year, the network has continued to receive presentations on relevant scrutiny reviews and have taken part in workshops allowing members and officers from around the East Midlands the opportunity to discuss best practice for scrutiny and share their work. Topics covered by the network over the year include:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleepers in Northampton
- Task and finish group workshop
- Scrutiny guidance workshop by the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Scrutiny inductions
- New guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government
- Setting scrutiny work programmes
- East Midlands Clinical Senate

## 6 Overview and scrutiny committee work programme 2019/20

The three scrutiny committees review their work programme business at each of their meetings held every two months. Programmes of work and meeting agendas would include:

- Individual items of business agreed by the scrutiny committees for consideration (including ongoing priorities such as budget, performance and corporate priorities)
- Reports on scrutiny project group work
- Reports from scrutiny members appointed to corporate working groups
- Scrutiny of the council’s Forward Plan of key decisions
- Monitoring of the delivery of approved scrutiny recommendations
- Business items that committees will decide to deal with as and when they arise such as ‘call-in’ and petitions.

Detail of specific Work Programme business is below.

### Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum

<p><b>Business items :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a more environmentally friendly council</li> <li>• The Council’s budget</li> <li>• Council plan and corporate performance</li> <li>• ICT improvement programme</li> <li>• DCLG review of Scrutiny</li> <li>• Signposting to support and advice charities</li> <li>• Town Hall refurbishment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrutiny Project Groups on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change – air quality</li> </ul> <p><b>Items for monitoring :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HS2 Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> </ul>
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**Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee**

<p><b>Business items :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and engagement strategy</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing – falls prevention</li> <li>• Shaping healthy places – Staveley area</li> <li>• Theatres pricing structures</li> <li>• Implementation of Universal Credit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrutiny Project Groups on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Rooms</li> <li>• Community safety and providing for young people</li> </ul> <p><b>Items for Monitoring :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends of Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> <li>• Alcohol related health problems and hospital admissions</li> </ul>
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**Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

<p><b>Business items :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocations policy</li> <li>• Careline response service</li> <li>• Homelessness/Night Shelter</li> <li>• Commercial business units</li> <li>• New Council homes</li> <li>• Private Sector Housing</li> <li>• Repairs/Commercial services</li> <li>• Trade recycling/bin cleaning</li> </ul> <p><b>Scrutiny Project Groups on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the site of the old Queen’s Park Sports Centres</li> </ul>	<p><b>Items for Monitoring :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> </ul> <p><b>Corporate Working Group representation on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Steering Group</li> </ul>
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## 7 Scrutiny Committee membership 2018/19

<b>Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum :</b>  Councillors	
<b>Peter Innes - Co Chair</b> <b>Kate Sarvent - Co Chair</b> <b>Jeannie Barr</b> <b>Howard Borrell</b> <b>Ian Callan</b> <b>Kate Caulfield</b> <b>Dean Collins</b> (December 2018 – May 2019) <b>Lisa Collins</b>	<b>Lisa-Marie Derbyshire</b> <b>Vickey-Anne Diouf</b> <b>Barry Dyke</b> <b>Keith Falconer</b> <b>Jenny Flood</b> <b>Donald Parsons</b> (May 2018 – December 2018) <b>Suzie Perkins</b>
<b>Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee :</b>  Councillors	
<b>Peter Innes – Chair</b> <b>Howard Borrell – Vice Chair</b> <b>Lisa Collins</b> <b>Barry Dyke</b>	<b>Jenny Flood</b> <b>Shirley Niblock</b> <b>Donald Parsons</b> <b>Kate Sarvent</b>
<b>Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee :</b>  Councillors	
<b>Kate Sarvent – Chair</b> <b>Suzie Perkins – Vice Chair</b> <b>Kate Caulfield</b> <b>Dean Collins</b>	<b>Lisa-Marie Derbyshire</b> <b>Vickey-Anne Diouf</b> <b>Barry Dyke</b> <b>Keith Falconer</b>



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