



**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

*2019/20*

Contents:

Section		Page No
<b>1.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs' Foreword	3-4
<b>2.</b>	Comments from the Chief Executive	5
<b>3.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work and Achievements	6-16
<b>4.</b>	Scrutiny Outcomes and Impact on Service Delivery	17-18
<b>5.</b>	Scrutiny Developments During the Year	19-22
<b>6.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2020/21	23-24
<b>7.</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Memberships 2019/20	25

# **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 2019/20, 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.

The update on Private sector housing was enlightening and emphasised the challenges faced by the Council's Private Sector Housing team due to the growth in the private sector and increased enforcement duties. This resulted in the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee strongly recommending an increase to the resource in the team. In addition, the report on the commercial activity carried out by the Council's commercial services department had identified some areas where further investigation was needed and a task and finish group will be set up shortly to review this in more detail. Lastly, the development of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan during 2019/20 was very important for the future of the borough, and the Scrutiny Forum took an active role in monitoring its progress.

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 Councillor Peter Innes was voted in as Chair of the Network earlier this year. 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 account of guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, the national centre of expertise on governance and scrutiny.

Planning the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2020/21 was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Rather than physical workshop sessions, a survey of all members was carried out to gather ideas for topics and these were then prioritised by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs. At our first scrutiny meetings, we took an in depth look at how all the Council's services had been affected by Covid-19, this

was vital for helping us shape the work programme for the rest of the year so that scrutiny's contribution can be timely, supportive and proportionate.

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 Ray Catt**



**Councillor Peter Innes**

## 2 Comments from the Chief Executive

Constructive challenge is a critical component of councils' governance arrangements, and at Chesterfield Borough Council this is done particularly well. My congratulations to Councillors Peter Innes and Ray Catt and to all Scrutiny Committee members and supporting officers on another stellar year of overview and scrutiny activities.

It has been a pleasure to read the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2019/20 and whilst Covid-19 brought an abrupt end to scrutiny proceedings there is so much to commend and celebrate as one turns the pages of yet another excellent report. There was a time when our Scrutiny committees would simply set aside their annual work programme in favour of looking at the next hot topic, and then the next one. But that is clearly no longer the case. There is good structure, control and shape to how the Forum and Committees now operate. The annual work programme is adhered to, and suitable and sufficient time is allocated to the scrutiny project groups to enable them to add real value to matters of policy development, service design and service delivery.

I can't speak for the Cabinet portfolio holders but the officer feedback I receive is always really positive. They enjoy the challenge of answering Scrutiny members' questions and of supporting them with their reviews and enquiries.

It is also great to see our reach stretch to other regional scrutiny networks. I am sure East Midlands' councils will be gaining from our expertise and experience and that Peter will equally be bringing the learning that he is gaining in his chairing role back to Chesterfield Borough Council.

To conclude, I very much like the look of how the 2020/21 work programme is taking shape. Scrutiny committee members can be assured that the council's corporate management team will fully avail themselves and their officers to ensure that this ambitious and relevant work programme is delivered at pace and in full. I wish you well with it.



**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 the most part of 2019/20. The restrictions that were introduced in response to Covid-19 have impacted on the work of scrutiny during the latter part of the year; further details are provided in this report.

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 2019/20 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 2019/20 work programme include reviewing and monitoring the progress of the Climate Change Working Group and the development of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, and the building of new industrial units in response to the high demands on the Council's commercial property portfolio.

## **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.

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 2019/20 year no 'call-ins' were made.

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

Throughout 2019/20 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:**

- **Budget**

The Committee considered, in July and November, 2019, reports about the Chesterfield Borough Council's outturn of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at the end of 2018/19, and the forecast for 2019/20 onwards. Details of the favourable and adverse variables were provided to the Committee, along with the most significant risks and pressures to the medium-term financial forecast.

- **Scrutiny review**

The Committee considered a report on the Government's new Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities and advised members of the new processes which were being implemented to improve the Overview and Scrutiny function at Chesterfield Borough Council.

- **More environmentally friendly Council**

In September, November 2019 and January 2020 the Committee considered reports regarding the efforts which were being made to make Chesterfield Borough Council a more environmentally friendly council.

After a Climate Emergency was declared on 17 July, 2019 the Chesterfield Climate Change Working Group was established to respond to the challenge. The working group was tasked to develop a costed action plan and the Committee reviewed the development of the action plan which was presented to Full Council on 26 February, 2020.

- **ICT improvement programme**

The Committee considered an update in September 2019 regarding the current position of the outcomes of the ICT Improvement Programme. Future outcomes of the programme were also explained to the members.

The Members scrutinised the budget position and budget reporting of the programme.

- **Council Plan and corporate performance**

In November 2019, the Committee considered a progress report on Year 1, 2019/20, of the Council Plan 2019 – 2023 which had been agreed by Council in February 2019. The plan identified the key priorities, objectives and commitments of the Council over a four-year period.

- **HS2 monitoring**

The Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum monitored the implementation of the project group's recommendations and found these to be sufficient so far. Further monitoring would need to occur after the Hybrid Bill had been passed by Parliament.

## **Community, Customer and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel Update**  
*(see further details in 'Statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee' section below)*
- **Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership's action plan and performance for 2019/20**  
*(see further details in 'Statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee' section below)*
- **Falls Prevention Pilot and Health Intervention Programmes**

The Committee considered in July, 2019 the plans for the Falls Prevention pilot in Chesterfield which aimed to identify good practice through provision of information, awareness raising about falls risks and falls prevention, multi-factorial risk assessment and appropriate interventions. It considered the progress of the pilot in November, 2019, noting that further monitoring and evaluation was taking place in order to identify the success of the pilot and areas for improvement.

The Committee also considered reports on the exercise referral programme supporting long term physical activity behaviour change, particularly in respect of its impact on improving the health and wellbeing of residents in the Staveley area.

Further progress on both the falls prevention pilot and the exercise referral programme was scheduled to be reported to the Committee in early 2020, but has been delayed by the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Theatres Marketing and Pricing Strategies**

The Committee considered a report on the marketing and pricing strategies of Chesterfield Theatres in the context of the overall attendance and budget figures for the theatres, taking account of special promotions, concessions and activities to enable greater access.

Progress was scheduled to be reported to the Committee in early 2020, but has been delayed by the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Implementation of Universal Credit**

The Committee continued its overview from the previous year of the ongoing work by the benefits team with partners and stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for Universal Credit (UC) claimants and the Council. Members expressed their appreciation and support of the work of officers, whilst recognising concerns in respect of arrangements for assisted claiming and budgeting support, waiting periods leading to increased use of foodbanks and increased levels of child poverty, the application of sanctions, the potential impact of managed migration on the existing IT capacity and support and the impact on Council budgets arising from increased rent and Council Tax arrears.

- **Elected Members' Parental Leave Policy**

In January, 2020 the Committee considered the proposed policy on parental leave for elected members and supported the voluntary implementation of the policy ahead of its approval by Cabinet and Full Council.

- **Implementation of the Communications and Engagement Strategy**

In January, 2020 the Committee considered progress on the implementation of the Communications and Engagement Strategy following its approval by Council in July, 2018. Members welcomed the activity and progress achieved against the objectives of the strategy and supported its continued implementation.

### **Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee :**

- **Private sector housing**

Following the launch of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and the Fees and Charges Policy in March 2019, the committee considered the impact of the new policies and their implementation. An update was requested for February 2020 to allow a further six months data to be obtained.

In February 2020 the committee reflected on the successes of the Private Sector Housing Team and a frank discussion took place around capacity and increased enforcement duties. A series of recommendations were agreed, to be presented to Cabinet in early 2020, but these had been delayed by the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Trade Recycling Services**

The committee considered a report on the current waste recycling services offered by the Council. An initial high-level review of other local authorities' trade recycling services had been conducted and the research was expected to continue.

- **Industrial Units**

In July 2019 the committee considered a report on the Council's Industrial Unit Portfolio. It was acknowledged that demand existed for more units and therefore a proposal to acquire a building plot for new units would be presented to cabinet. The proposal was approved in October 2019.

- **Careline Funding Review**

In October 2019 the committee considered a report giving an update on Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) review of its eligibility criteria for funding people receiving a community alarm/telecare service. Their new policy was due to be implemented from 1 November 2019. A draft paper was expected from Derbyshire County Council in spring 2020 detailing a full review of its activities and funding for community alarms/telecare services but this had been delayed by the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **New Council Homes**

The committee considered a report which set out how the council identifies land to develop new council homes and also their sustainability. Members supported the Council's aspirations to reduce its carbon footprint and were invited to view the modular build properties under construction once they were nearing completion. The visit had not yet taken place due to the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Commercial Services**

In December 2019 the committee considered a report on "commercial jobs" carried out by the Commercial Services Department. The scheme had started as a trial in 2016 to explore further potential income streams. It was decided that further investigation into this topic would be required despite a reasonable assurance rating applied by internal audit in 2019. A task and finish group had been planned for April 2020 but the group had not yet convened due to the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- **Allocations policy**

A new Allocations Policy was implemented by the Housing Department in May 2019 followed by a new software system in November 2019. In December 2019 the committee heard a report on the impact of the new policy and the initial stages of the new software. Although the transition was reported as a success the committee agreed that a further update during 2020 would be recommended in order to have more data to back up the early feedback.

- **Homelessness**

The committee considered a report on Homelessness following receipt of the final exit report from Derby City Mission on the Night Shelter operation during 2018/2019. Members expressed their support of the scheme but acknowledged that funding beyond 2019/20 was not guaranteed. It was therefore decided to make recommendations to Cabinet that the Council continue to work with the Derby City Mission and support the night shelter in securing funding for the foreseeable future.

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:

Deputy Leader, Councillor Amanda Serjeant

Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers, Councillor Jean Innes

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jill Mannion-Brunt

Cabinet Member for Town Centres and Visitor Economy, Councillor Kate Sarvent

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.

### **Scrutiny Project Groups:**

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

Following on from its work in 2018/19 the project group, led by Councillor Gordon Simmons, continued to monitor the completion of the construction of the artificial sports pitches during the summer of 2019, prior to submitting its final report to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet.

The group's conclusions identified that the implementation of the planning conditions had ensured the landscaping and boundary was consistent with the heritage format, that the proposed marketing approach for the use of the sports pitches was designed to achieve a balanced schedule of use, including regular bookings, community groups, individual bookings and holiday activities across peak and off-peak periods and that operational arrangements to manage the sports pitches from the Queen's Park Sports Centre were practical and realistic. The project group was impressed by the effectiveness of the framework contract arrangement in delivering the design and construction of the sports pitches, particularly in the cost certainty which this had provided for the Council.

The project group's final report included recommendations relating to the use of the new sports pitches being monitored through the Council's normal management processes and the marketing approach and pricing structure for the sports pitches being reviewed as necessary as part of the Council's overall marketing and pricing of its sports and leisure services.

The project group's recommendations were supported by E&W Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet in October, 2019. Monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations will be scheduled during 2020/21.

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

Following the work of the scrutiny project group led by Councillor Kate Caulfield undertaken during 2018/19 with the aims and objectives to:

1. identify changes that were 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,



the review was revisited during 2019 to include a deeper review of the financial accounts and the latest proposals in respect of the facilities at Burns Close and Monkwood Road prior to the final report being submitted to the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

The project group's final report included a series of recommendations aimed to improve the usage and booking process for the community rooms and to support their ongoing sustainable use 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 group’s recommendations were supported by CCO Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet in October, 2019. Monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations will be scheduled during 2020/21.

### **Scrutiny Project Group on Community Safety and Providing for Young People**

A scrutiny project group on Community Safety and Providing for Young People was formed during the OSC Work Programming for 2019/20. Councillor Kate Caulfield was appointed as Lead Member of the project group.

The project was an opportunity for scrutiny to undertake a fact-finding exercise to identify the activity currently taking place in Chesterfield relating to improving community safety and providing for young people. The exercise seeks to challenge misconceptions by improving transparency and awareness regarding efforts being made.



The project group set the following aims:

1. The project aims to ensure Chesterfield will be a family safe town. This aim will be achieved by partners creating and maintaining an environment which offers a safe place to live and work without undue fear of harm.
2. The project group will work with agencies to complete a gap analysis of the current offer around community safety and providing for young people.
3. The project group will identify any under-provision and consider how improvements could be made, while taking into account the financial and resource limitations of Chesterfield Borough Council and agencies.

The group sought information from officers across the council, the Head of Service for Chesterfield at Derbyshire County Council Child Services and a representative of the local Neighbourhood Watch organisation.

Progress of the project group has been delayed by the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### ***Scrutiny Project Group on Air Quality***

Initial work on the Air Quality Working Group began in August 2019 led by Councillor Lisa Collins. The Chair and scrutiny officer met with senior Environmental Health Officers and considered the following factors that would potentially fall within the scope of the project;

- CBC current clean air strategy
- Air quality management zones
- Static monitoring stations throughout the Borough and the data they provide
- Derbyshire Sustainable Travel schemes particularly with regard to schools
- Asthma statistics in Chesterfield
- The impact of traffic on air quality

The first meeting of the committee as a whole took place in October 2019. There was discussion centred around the perceived problem of air quality and the reality of the statistical data available. A list of desirable data was compiled, along with a list of potential expert witnesses the focus was refined to three main areas;

1. Schools
2. Large scale employers within the Borough
3. Chesterfield Borough Council as an exemplar

In January 2020 the committee heard a presentation from an Environmental Health Officer. This explained the 2008 EU Air Quality Directive, the limits imposed by that legislation and Chesterfield's performance against those targets. An improving trend in air quality was noted in Chesterfield. An area for further discussion was identified as domestic wood burners due to their impact on air quality and their growth in popularity.

All members of the committee were asked to contribute to the Brimington Air Quality Action Plan consultation that was ongoing at the time. The next expert witness was agreed upon as a public health representative from Derbyshire County Council, however, a further meeting had not taken place due to the restrictions brought about in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Corporate Working Groups :**

*Member Development Working Group* – Scrutiny is represented on this group by the Joint Scrutiny Chairs, Councillor Peter Innes and Councillor Ray Catt. Scrutiny feeds into the working group by identifying member’s training needs and contributing to the rolling member training plan. Last year the working group had an important role in planning and reviewing the Member Induction Programme following the Borough Elections in 2019. All members, both new and returning, were invited to a comprehensive series of sessions which included an introduction to the Council, committee specific training, equality and diversity, communication and social media, health and safety, legal and data protection and staying safe online. Further briefings were arranged throughout the year which provided more information on all the services the Council delivered.

### **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.

The Council’s Community, Customer and Organisational Committee met as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee on 26 September, 2019 to consider the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership Action Plan for 2019/20 and its performance against the plan. The plan was based on partnership working and focused on four priority areas: anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and sexual violence, theft and organised crime groups and substance misuse. The recently appointed PCSO Supervisor outlined his role, with the aim for PCSOs to be more visible and engaged with local communities in addressing local issues.

At that meeting the Committee also received the minutes of the meeting of the Derbyshire Police and Crime Panel held in June, 2019, and updates from the Council’s appointed member representative, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing. It also approved the project start report of the Scrutiny Project Group on Community Safety and Providing for Young People (*see further details in ‘Scrutiny Project Groups’ section above*).

The Committee was scheduled to meet again in March, 2020, but due to the restrictions in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, this will be rescheduled for later in 2020.

### **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. Currently 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 2019/20, 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 six 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 2019/20 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.

- Friends of groups – the CCO Scrutiny Committee monitored the implementation of the project group's recommendations in September, 2019 and concluded these had been achieved (see further details in "Achievements and Highlights" section below);
- Implementation of Universal Credit – access for claimants to IT and support was monitored by the CCO Scrutiny Committee on an ongoing basis and found to be sufficient so far;
- HS2 – the HS2 Project Manager attended the OPSF in September, 2019 to provide an update on the implementation of the project group's recommendations.

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:**

#### **Friends' Groups**

As part of its monitoring of previous Scrutiny Committee recommendations, CCO Scrutiny Committee considered a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Project Group on Friends' Groups which had been accepted by Cabinet in November, 2017.

The Committee welcomed the progress which had been achieved and the work undertaken with friends' groups since that time to provide information, advice and signposting, noting how much this had been appreciated by the groups. An initial network meeting had been held with groups, including a survey of groups' needs,

and more were planned. Groups had developed masterplans for their sites and case studies had been produced to share good practice between groups.

It also welcomed the ongoing work to support friends' groups, concluding that the implementation of the project group's recommendations had been achieved.

### **Private Sector Housing**

The report presented to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Committee by the Private Sector Housing Manager threw a spotlight on the challenges being faced by the Council. Many of the Borough's residents are now tenants in privately owned properties and the council has a statutory duty to ensure that the standard of these properties is maintained at a level that safeguards the occupants. The Private Sector Housing team found itself a victim of its own success as the number of requests for advice and support and the number of complaints it receives has been steadily increasing over time.

The officers involved welcomed the scrutiny process and the opportunity to characterise the main difficulties pertaining to the service. The members acknowledged that a lack of resource was contributing to waiting times that were less than desirable and insufficient expertise to carry out investigations in such a way that they were likely to have a successful outcome.

The recommendations suggested to Cabinet were developed in order to achieve the following outcomes;

- More readily available advice to landlords to ensure legal compliance and an increase in best practice
- Reduced waiting time for complaints demonstrating the Council's commitment to its duty of care to its residents
- Less pressure and stress on the existing team who have provided an essential service to their maximum capacity

It is hoped that the recommendations will be supported and revisited in future work programmes.

## 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 2019/20.

### 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.

Legislation requires the combined authority to establish an overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) to increase transparency and accountability of the authority's decision making. OSC meetings are administered by the South Yorkshire Joint Authorities Unit and meeting details and webcasts of its work during 2019/20 can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

As a non-constituent member, representatives from Chesterfield Borough Council can attend the meetings of the committee however they attend as non-voting members. The Scrutiny Chairs reported in July, 2019 that discussions at the Sheffield City Region scrutiny meetings had moved to focus on the local authority areas that were full constituent members and the Chairs reconsidered the value of attending these meetings.

## **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. 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.

Plans were underway to continue with the same process however the work programming sessions had to be cancelled when the Covid-19 restrictions came into place.

To enable all members to have a say in deciding the work programme, it was decided to create an online survey that members could complete from home. This was carried out at the end of April to early May and in total 16 responses were received providing a total of 47 different topics for the work programme.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs met with the Democratic and Scrutiny Officers (DSO) in May to discuss the proposed topics and prepare a plan for the work programme. It became clear that planning the work programme for the full year at that point would be difficult as there were many uncertainties around Covid-19 and the impact the recovery will have on Council activities and services. It was agreed to choose one or two topics from those put forward in the work programming survey to consider at the first two meetings of each committee. The DSOs would then carry out background research on the remaining topics over the summer when it is hoped there would be a clearer picture on how the Council's recovery post-Covid-19 would impact on these. The work programme for the year will then be presented to the scrutiny meetings in September.

At the first meeting of each committee, officers and portfolio holders attended to provide details of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council and the Council's response in relation to the services which fall under the remit of each committee.

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs also chose one or two topics for each committee based on the number of members who had put them forward and prioritised depending on impact on the public and recovery post Covid-19. This provided the topics for the first two meetings of each committee until a more comprehensive work programme for the whole year had been prepared.

## **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. Both Scrutiny Chairs are members of the Member Development Working Group which oversees 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.



Two members of the Democratic and Scrutiny team attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny conference in December 2019 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.

## **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.



In June 2019, Councillor Peter Innes was voted in as chair of the Network and one or both of the Scrutiny Chairs have attended each meeting of the Network during 2019/20.

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:

- Scrutiny highlights from around the network
- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
- How to encourage attendance
- Training and development for scrutiny members
- Scrutiny of Community Safety Partnerships
- Developing work programmes

In October, 2019, East Midlands Councils hosted their first Scrutiny Conference. The all-day event consisted of presentations from industry professionals and scrutiny members from other local authorities along with engaging workshops including:

- Learning from Parliamentary Select Committee – Nicky Morgan MP
- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities – Ed Hammond, Centre for Public Scrutiny
- Culture and Scrutiny – John Cade, Institute of Local Government Studies
- Chairing Scrutiny – Ann Reeder
- Implementing the New Statutory Guidance: Practical Approaches – Stephanie Snape
- Questioning Skills – Ann Reeder
- What's Occurring? The Scrutiny Support Officer in 2019 and beyond – Stephanie Snape
- The added value of scrutiny – Lilian Greenwood MP
- Working with the Executive – Cllr Gordon Watson, Deputy Leader of Rotherham MBC and Councillor Brian Steele, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at Rotherham MBC

## 6 Overview and scrutiny committee work programme 2020/21

The three scrutiny committees review their work programme business at each of their meetings held every two months. Programmes of work and meeting agendas will 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>• The Council’s Covid-19 response</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Northern Gateway/Elder Way development</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrutiny Project Groups on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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>• The Council’s Covid-19 response             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heart of Chesterfield</li> <li>○ Market reconfigurations</li> <li>○ Tourism</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Scrutiny Project Groups on :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety – Providing for Young People</li> </ul>	<p><b>Items for Monitoring :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Rooms Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> <li>• Implementation of Universal Credit</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder</li> </ul>
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**Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

<p><b>Business items :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council’s Covid-19 response</li> <li>• Parks and Open Spaces Strategy</li> <li>• 5 year housing supply</li> </ul>	<p><b>Items for Monitoring :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> <li>• Future Use of the Former Queens Park Sports Centre site Scrutiny Project recommendations</li> </ul>
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## 7 Scrutiny Committee membership 2019/20

<p><b>Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum:</b></p> <p>Councillors:</p>	
<p><b>Peter Innes</b> - Co Chair  <b>Ray Catt</b> - Co Chair  <b>Mick Bagshaw</b> (May 2019 – February 2020)  <b>Lisa Blakemore</b>  <b>Howard Borrell</b>  <b>Stuart Brittain</b> (February – May 2020)  <b>Kate Caulfield</b>  <b>Emily Coy</b>  <b>Dean Collins</b> (May 2019 – February 2020)</p>	<p><b>Lisa Collins</b>  <b>Barry Dyke</b>  <b>Jenny Flood</b>  <b>Ed Fordham</b>  <b>Katherine Hollingworth</b>  <b>Maggie Kellman</b>  <b>Dan Kelly</b>  <b>Paul Mann</b> (February – May 2020)  <b>Tom Snowdon</b></p>
<p><b>Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <p>Councillors:</p>	
<p><b>Peter Innes</b> – Chair  <b>Howard Borrell</b> – Vice Chair  <b>Mick Bagshaw</b> (May 2019 – February 2020)  <b>Lisa Blakemore</b>  <b>Lisa Collins</b></p>	<p><b>Barry Dyke</b>  <b>Ed Fordham</b>  <b>Maggie Kellmann</b>  <b>Paul Mann</b> (February – May 2020)</p>
<p><b>Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <p>Councillors:</p>	
<p><b>Ray Catt</b> – Chair  <b>Dean Collins</b> – Vice Chair (May 2019 – February 2020)  <b>Stuart Brittain</b> – Vice Chair (February – May 2020)  <b>Mick Bagshaw</b> (May 2019 – February</p>	<p><b>Kate Caulfield</b>  <b>Emily Coy</b>  <b>Barry Dyke</b>  <b>Katherine Hollingworth</b>  <b>Paul Mann</b> (February – May 2020)  <b>Tom Snowdon</b></p>

2020)	
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