

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Report Title:** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

**Name of Committee:** Council

**Date of Meeting:** 20 July 2021

**Report Director:** Chief Officer - Legal and Governance

**Portfolio:** Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance

**Ward Relevance:** N/A

**Prior Consultation:** Scrutiny Committee

**Contact Officer:** Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer 01788 533522 or linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk

**Public or Private:** Public

**Report Subject to Call-In:** No

**Report En-Bloc:** No

**Forward Plan:** Yes

**Corporate Priorities:** This report relates to the following priority(ies):  
 Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C)  
 Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E)  
 Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC)  
 Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O)  
[Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)  
 This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

**Summary:** An annual report on the work of overview and scrutiny during 2020/21 is submitted in accordance with the Constitution.

**Financial Implications:** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

<b>Risk Management Implications:</b>	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
<b>Environmental Implications:</b>	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
<b>Options:</b>	N/A
<b>Recommendation:</b>	The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 be approved for publication.
<b>Reasons for Recommendation:</b>	The Council's Constitution requires the Scrutiny Committee to report annually to full Council.

**Council - 20 July 2021**

**Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21**

**Public Report of the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance**

**Recommendation**

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 be approved for publication.

**1. BACKGROUND**

Overview and Scrutiny is governed by the Local Government Act 2000. A requirement of the Act is for a local authority with executive arrangements to have one or more overview and scrutiny committees. These committees have the power to scrutinise the decisions or actions taken by the Council or consider any matter that affects people living in the borough.

Good overview and scrutiny is important to Council decision-making. The Scrutiny Committee has a key role in ensuring that the Executive is held to account, residents' voices are heard and, ultimately, that effective decisions are taken.

In-depth reviews are an important aspect of scrutiny to investigate topics and make improvements that benefit and enable more robust and effective challenge as well as delivering outcomes.

**2. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

In response to the unprecedented times faced during the pandemic, in September 2020 Council approved a change to the structure to enable scrutiny to be more fluid and able to reflect the upcoming challenges within an effective scrutiny culture embedded across the Council. One single Scrutiny Committee was created that met four times during the 2020/21 municipal year, commencing work in November 2020.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT**

The report attached at Appendix 1 details the work carried out during the 2020/21 municipal year.

**Name of Meeting:** Council

**Date of Meeting:** 20 July 2021

**Subject Matter:** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

**Originating Department:** Legal and Governance

**DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY**       YES       NO

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

<b>Doc No</b>	<b>Title of Document and Hyperlink</b>

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

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Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

<b>Doc No</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A</b>

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

## CHAIRS FOREWORD

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Since March 2020 the Council has been through a period of unprecedented times. Members have been responding to the effects of the pandemic and the increased demands on resources across the council.

This resulted in a review of the overview and scrutiny arrangements as it was recognised that the council needed to respond and enable a more fluid structure that was not dictated by portfolios to allow for more effective scrutiny.

The current structure of one Scrutiny Committee was introduced in September 2020 with the first meeting scheduled for November 2020. Since then, the Committee has focused on a more streamlined approach where scrutiny can add value through the forward work programme being decided by Committee members, ensuring that resources are targeted onto the right topics.

I have been honoured to serve as Chair during this period of change and would like to thank all members of the Committee for their support and dedication, as we have worked together to begin following a new path for scrutiny. Special thanks go to the Vice-Chair Councillor Tony Gillias.

I am also grateful to senior officers for their support and input of suggestions on the most appropriate topics for scrutiny.

**Cllr Tom Mahoney**  
**Chair 2020/21**

### **Members of the Committee 2020/21**

Councillors:  
Tom Mahoney (Chair)  
Tony Gillias (Vice-Chair)  
Mrs Julie A'Barrow  
Chris Cade  
Peter Eccleson  
Mrs Noreen New  
Mrs Maggie O'Rourke  
Ian Picker  
Jerry Roodhouse

## WORK PROGRAMME

MEETING DATE	TOPICS
2 November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme based on the four key strands in the Covid-19 recovery process</li> </ul>
14 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of items carried over from 2019/20</li> <li>• Future work programme – suggestions from the Senior Management Team</li> </ul>
25 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-page strategy for the Review of Managing Council Tax Arrears</li> <li>• Waste and Resources – presentation from the Deputy Executive Director on the Government Waste and Resources Strategy</li> <li>• Training and Development for Members</li> <li>• Progress of Motions</li> </ul>
8 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance and Performance Monitoring 2020/21 Quarter 3</li> <li>• One page strategy for the Review of Waste and Resources</li> <li>• Motion from Council on the topic of Flooding</li> </ul>

## HIGHLIGHTS

Topic	Outcome
Work programme	A longer-term flexible rolling work programme was introduced to enable scrutiny to be able to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.
Review work	Topics were selected for reviews where scrutiny could add value.
The relationship with the Executive was strengthened.	Monthly meetings took place with the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Leader and Deputy Leader.
Engagement with the Executive Director was improved.	Meetings were held between the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Executive Director. The senior management team were consulted on review suggestions.
Motions from Council	A standing item to consider Motions from Council was introduced. The Committee received a report on past Motions and the outcomes.
Finance and performance	It was agreed the way finance and performance was scrutinised would be reviewed.
Member Training and Development	A refreshed approach was agreed based on regular meetings with group training co-ordinators, skills assessments, promotion of the LGA training tools and an annual item on the work programme on training and development.

## MOTIONS FROM COUNCIL

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**FLOODING** – following a motion put to Council in February 2021, the Committee considered the report of a Review of Drainage carried out in 2009 and concluded that this was a substantial piece of work resulting in a detailed report. The report was referred to the Planning Services Working Party with a request that it consider the report and the recommendations. A report on the outcome was scheduled into the future work programme.

## TASK GROUPS

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**MANAGING COUNCIL TAX ARREARS** – the Task Group commenced work at the beginning of April with the following aims:

- Understand the current situation and practices that are in place, including for potentially vulnerable customers.
- What financial support and advice is currently available.
- The level of capacity that is available to deal with a potential increase in demand for assistance due to the impact of Covid-19.
- Whether a formal protocol or policy should be introduced.

It was anticipated that a draft report would be produced in September 2021.

**WASTE AND RESOURCES – RECYCLING CAMPAIGN** – the first phase of a piece of work on waste and resources was a review of a targeted campaign to increase levels of recycling and reduce the amount of contamination in collected recycling. This was intended to be a short-term review.

NOTE: following the appointments made by Cabinet to the Waste Management and Fly Tipping Working Party, to avoid duplication of work it was agreed that this work would be passed to the Working Party and the review would be removed from the work programme.

## LOOKING AHEAD

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As a country we are continuing to go through a very difficult time, and everyone has been affected by the pandemic in some way. The Council has been doing all it can to support the most vulnerable in our society and the local economy. Council staff have adapted their working practices and worked to support and protect residents. The Scrutiny Committee wishes to thank all staff involved in the delivery of direct services, and those behind the scenes providing support, for all their hard work. The Council adapted to the government temporarily removing the legal requirement to hold public meetings in person and made use of the technology available to hold public meetings virtually, therefore continuing to make critical decisions on the delivery of its services for residents in a way that is both transparent and accessible to the public. Where appropriate, scrutiny will continue to play a key role in that process, ensuring local democracy continues to thrive in this difficult time.

Looking back over the last 12 months environmental concerns have been at the top of the agenda and the Council's new Corporate Strategy reflects the climate emergency in its commitments. Environmental concerns will continue to play a large part of scrutiny work during 2021/22.

A key area of focus for the future will inevitably be the impact of the Coronavirus including its impact on services and the Council's finances. Scrutiny will also need to look at what lessons can be learnt from the Council's response to the crisis and plans for recovery both in the short, medium and longer term and will look carefully at the new ways of working implemented as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and assess whether there should be changes to any of our practices in the long term.

Other future items included:

- Health and Wellbeing of the community
- To monitor achievements against the priorities and targets that have been set in the Corporate Strategy.
- Increased media on scrutiny – work will continue to increase the profile of scrutiny and raise awareness of the outcomes of the work of the Scrutiny Committee, especially in relation to reviews and high-profile issues. A more developed communications plan is proposed for 2021/22.
- Improvements to the way finance and performance is scrutinised.

The Committee will continue to build upon its new approach to a more pro-active flexible long-term approach to work programming allowing scrutiny to be able to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. It will also continue to strengthen the relationship between the Executive and Chief Officers, imbedding the working partnership that will be needed over the coming months.

Future review topics identified included:

**WASTE AND RESOURCES – MODEL FOR FOOD WASTE COLLECTION** – this review would follow the first phase of the waste and resources work identified in response to the Government consultation on its Waste and Resources Strategy and would explore the potential models and associated costs and benefits of each to identify the preferred model to be recommended.

NOTE: following the appointments made by Cabinet to the Waste Management and Fly Tipping Working Party, to avoid duplication of work it was agreed that this work would be passed to the Working Party and the review would be removed from the work programme.

**DIGITAL INCLUSION** – the review would link into the Council's work on a new Digital Strategy and would focus on communication and community engagement.

**MANAGING HOUSING ARREARS** – an assessment of the wider impact of Covid-19 on tenants was needed before the review could commence.

## STANDING ITEMS

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There are a number of standing items that return to scrutiny every year. They include:

**CRIME AND DISORDER** - in accordance with Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, scrutiny has responsibility to carry out an overview of crime and disorder at no less than one meeting each municipal year to scrutinise decisions made, and actions taken, by the responsible authorities that make up the Rugby Community Safety Partnership in connection with the discharge of their crime and disorder functions. The item had been included in the work programme for consideration but delayed due to purdah.



FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE reports are reviewed by scrutiny on a quarterly basis.

HOLDING THE EXECUTIVE TO ACCOUNT is one of the primary responsibilities of scrutiny to ensure that Cabinet is making decisions effectively and acting in the best interests of the local community. A question-and-answer style meeting was scheduled to take place. The Committee will review and decide on a fresh approach for the 2021/22 municipal year.