

**OVERVIEW
AND
SCRUTINY
ANNUAL
REPORT
2019 – 20**

Foreward by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019-20

Our Overview and Scrutiny work programme was agreed at the beginning of the municipal year in May 2019 and the main Committee and its six scrutiny panels have covered a wide range of topics.

The Council has had to make unprecedented budget savings in response to the government's austerity measures and Overview and Scrutiny has played, and will continue to play, an important role in examining budget proposals and putting forward recommendations to Cabinet.

Like so many other parts of our Council, the scrutiny function then had to work differently through the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to these pressures it was agreed that the work programme going forward will be rolled into the next municipal year as well creating an 18-month programme. This will mean that we will have the flexibility to add urgent and ad-hoc items as and when needed, especially considering the challenging financial outlook. We have also allowed for some dedicated sessions to look into the effects of Covid-19 on our community and on the Council. We will use these to examine our response and to form constructive feedback where possible.

Through 2019-20 the main Committee and its Panels have all focused on the many challenges facing the borough's residents, examples of which are shown on the following pages.

Public involvement in our reviews has been high and we have had an unprecedented number of ideas put forward for our new work programme 2020-21. I am very grateful for these valuable contributions and look forward to their continued participation.

Councillor Chris Lloyd

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019-20

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprises the Chair with the Chairs of the six Scrutiny Panels and two Members from the Conservative Party. These are as follows:

Councillor Chris Lloyd	Chair (Labour)
Councillor John Fahy	Vice-Chair and Chair of Corporate Finance & Performance Scrutiny Panel (Labour)
Councillor Spencer Drury	(Conservative)
Councillor Matt Hartley	(Conservative)
Councillor Mark James	Chair of Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel (Labour)
Councillor Adel Khaireh	Chair of Community Safety & Environment Scrutiny Panel (Labour)
Councillor Clive Mardner	Chair of Housing & Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel (Labour)
Councillor Gary Parker	Chair of Regeneration, Transport & Culture Scrutiny Panel (Labour)
Councillor Ivis Williams	Chair of Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel (Labour)

Membership of Scrutiny Panels 2019-20

<p>Children and Young People</p> <p>Ivis Williams (Chair) Labour Linda Bird Labour Angela Cornforth Labour Gary Dillon Labour Ann-Marie Cousins Labour Mariam Lolavar Labour Anthony Okereke Labour Patricia Greenwell Conservative</p>	<p>Community Safety and Environment</p> <p>Adel Khaireh (Chair) Tonia Ashikodi Angela Cornforth Labour Ann-Marie Cousins Labour Ian Hawking Labour Rajinder James Labour Clive Mardner Labour John Hills Conservative</p>
<p>Corporate Finance and Performance</p> <p>John Fahy (Chair) Labour Norman Adams Labour Mark James Labour Mehboob Khan Labour Matthew Morrow Labour Anthony Okereke Labour Ivis Williams Labour Nigel Fletcher Conservative</p>	<p>Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care</p> <p>Mark James (Chair) Olu Babatola Labour Ann-Marie Cousins Labour John Fahy Labour Mariam Lolavar Labour Dominic Mbang Labour Linda Perks Labour Matt Hartley Conservative Roger Tester Conservative</p>
<p>Housing and Anti-Poverty</p> <p>Clive Mardner (Chair) Tonia Ashikodi Leo Fletcher Labour Bill Freeman Labour Christine May Labour Dominic Mbang Labour David Stanley Labour Spencer Drury Conservative</p>	<p>Regeneration, Transport and Culture</p> <p>Gary Parker (Chair) Norman Adams Labour Angela Cornforth Labour Leo Fletcher Labour Linda Perks Labour Aidan Smith Labour David Stanley Labour Matt Clare Conservative Charlie Davis Conservative</p>

Introduction

Background to the Overview and Scrutiny Function

Councils are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their political management arrangements.

In Royal Greenwich we have:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
- Community Safety and Environment Scrutiny Panel
- Corporate Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel
- Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel
- Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel
- Regeneration, Transport and Culture Scrutiny Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its panels:

- Monitor service delivery and performance
- Review policies and practices
- Make recommendations to Council on matters which affect the area or the public
- Carry out pre and post scrutiny of executive decisions and post scrutiny of non-executive decisions
- Hold executive (Cabinet) Members and Chief Officers to account
- Scrutinise public services provided by external organisations.

The Annual Work Programme

Within the Council's Constitution, it is Full Council that approves the annual scrutiny work programmed based on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

In the drawing up of the work programme for 2019-20, the Committee and its Panels took into account how they could assist in delivering the Council's priorities; address performance improvement in priority service areas; and address the concerns of local people. Members of the public were asked to submit their ideas for the work programme via Greenwich Info and the website.

Reports from the Committee and its Panels

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair – Councillor Chris Lloyd

It has been a busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Issues that have been looked at include the following:

Council Consultation Process – this report was an update on the standardisation of consultation processes across the Council. O&S Committee recommended that the use of a Common Place platform should be considered whilst the procurement process was being undertaken. It also sought confirmation that ward councillors were always involved in any consultation that affected their ward.

Initial Review and Health Check of the Third Sector Commissioning Process – the Committee noted the outcomes of a survey reviewing the initial feedback from third sector organisations following the completion of the first phase of the Third Sector Commissioning Framework 2019-23. Undertaking this survey had been a recommendation from O&S and the results were largely positive. Officers advised however, that some key lessons for the future had been learnt, such as making more time available for the coproduction phase so that organisations had time to directly engage with service users. The VCS team will continue to monitor developments in grant giving programmes and will bring forward another more detailed paper in 2021 to advise on the shape and format of the 2023-27 grants application process.

Headline Equality Measures 2018-19 (HEMS) – Members put some very probing questions to officers showing the importance they place upon this issue. This report will continue to be an annual standing item on the O&S agenda.

Outside Bodies – this item had originally been brought to O&S last April following concerns raised about the lack of monitoring of Members' attendance and no evaluation being done on whether membership achieved any benefit to the Council. It was agreed that officers in Corporate Governance should regularly contact all outside bodies to request attendance details and where possible, obtain minutes. These details will be passed to the Whips. A report will also be brought to O&S on an annual basis updating the Committee on attendance and every member will be asked to fill out a short pro forma annually about their membership which will also be brought to O&S.

Improving Engagement, Governance and Accountability – this report was based on the requests of two Members who had put these items forward for the work programme. One of the questions raised was about how much pre-scrutiny is done in other London boroughs and this data has now been passed to the Committee members. Another issue raised was Scrutiny reporting to Council – this has now been agreed and the Chair will take an annual report to the last Full Council meeting of the year.

Meridian Home Start (MHS) – MHS were invited in to give an update and take questions from the Committee. They gave an update of the building work they have achieved so far and a briefing on what else was in the pipeline. Members asked for some additional information to be sent to them concerning their allocations policy and their equalities monitoring. They were also asked to give a written briefing about themselves to all councillors – which has now been done.

Apprenticeships – an annual report on apprenticeships is brought to O&S. The number of apprentices is relatively low and so O&S members suggested that a recommendation be put to Cabinet that performance on hiring apprentices should be added to the Directorate KPIs so that Directors are held to account about achieving their targets. The Chief Executive welcomed this proposal and it has now been put in place.

Agency and Interim Usage Q1 2019/20 – the figures for usage are brought to O&S every six months. The number is starting to decline and the Committee was advised that there is now a dedicated resource to look at agency assignments and how the number can be brought down further.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-21 – the Committee was asked to pre-scrutinise the proposals before being taken to Cabinet. Members had a very worthwhile debate and put some recommendations to Cabinet for change.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 – this is a standing item on the O&S agenda and is discussed regularly. The updates explain how the income is being spent and the latest report also gave an overview of some of the policy changes that have recently been introduced and affect how the planning obligations will be collected and spent going forward.

Council's Trading Companies, GS Plus and GSS – this is another standing item on the agenda for the Committee to be updated on an annual basis.

Forward Plan – The Council’s Forward Plan is reviewed at every meeting of O&S to identify whether there are issues relating to any upcoming decisions requiring scrutiny. Each panel is also asked to monitor the plan to scrutinise relevant decisions within their service areas.

For further information about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, please contact:

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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel

Chair – Ivis Williams

The Panel received quarterly performance monitor updates on the progress in delivering the four fundamentals (Strong foundations, Prevention, Safe and Secure, Resilience and good mental health) in the Children and young People Plan 2017-2020.

The 2019/20 work programme was structured thematically which has allowed focused discussions on specific areas within its remit thereby facilitating effective scrutiny on matters of concern. The themes are as follows:

- School Place Planning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Safeguarding
- Children in our care
- Education Outcomes
- Education

The Panel reviews and monitors services delivered under the portfolio for Children's Services and Community Safety therefore the Chair works in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Community Safety and the Director of Children's Services.

As part of its work programme 19/20 the Panel has received and conducted pre-decision scrutiny on several reports:

The Panel jointly with Members of the Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel (HCASC) considered the Greenwich Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) noting the recommended next steps and provided input as part of pre-decision scrutiny to inform the CAMHS service re-design, including a 0-25 service. The Panel and HCASC also received an update on Start Well Greenwich noting and considering the plan and timeline for the commissioning of a range of services to support children aged 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND) and their families in the Borough.

The School Place Planning and Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2021/22 report was received for pre-decision scrutiny to which the Panel noted the considerations for Cabinet, the demand for places at Royal Greenwich schools, post 16 provision, and the action being taken by the Council.

The Panel also received a pre-decision scrutiny report on Special Guardianship Order Allowances making a recommendation to Cabinet for 'Option 1' of the three available options in the report for "the change to be brought in over a 12-month period in two stages in January 2020 and July 2020 with the first 50% accounted in January and the remainder 50% in July 2020." Further requesting that a report be brought back in 2020/21 updating the Panel on the impacts the implementation of changes have had on Special Guardians.

A task group was set up to conduct a review of Fixed Term Exclusions in Greenwich following an observed spike in the 2016/17 figures. The review is ongoing with an update expected to be received at the Panel meeting on 2 April 2020.

For further information about the work of this Panel please contact:

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Community Safety and Environment Scrutiny Panel

Chair – Adel Khaireh

2019/2020 Work Programme

The Panel has met 5 times, with a final meeting, for this municipal year at the end of April. The first meeting of the Panel received a report embracing the work of the 3 Cabinet Member updates;

- Community Safety & Integrated Enforcement.
- Air Quality and Public Realm
- Culture, Leisure and Third Sector.

Subsequent meetings have sought individual Cabinet Member comments and clarification on how the matters, being scrutinised by the Panel, were addressed as part of their Cabinet Portfolio. This provided the Scrutiny Panel with a relatable real time perspective.

In order to allow meaningful scrutiny of the matters being considered, every effort was made to ensure that the Panel had no more than two substantial reports to consider at any one meeting and that the matters be related. This has produced some interesting and intensive scrutiny with meaningful recommendations.

As part of the Panel's desire to gain first-hand information on aspects being reviewed a number of the meetings of the Panel in 2019-20 invited representatives from outside bodies and partners to address them. A good example of this was the meeting of 25 July 2019, which was attended by a number of 'Friends of Parks' representatives and resulted some proposed changes to Council practices in terms of information sharing and communication between the Council and Friends of Parks Groups.

Both Members and Officers have found this approach to be informative and beneficial in identifying what is working well and where areas, particularly of interdepartmental communication, require reviewing.

The Panel has a Statutory requirement to scrutinise the Safer Greenwich Partnership (SGP) and at the 19 September 2019 meeting an initial report was presented to the Board about the key priorities of the SGP and a further in-depth report looking at the work being undertaken around burglary is to be presented to the upcoming meeting of 1 April 2020.

In Depth Scrutiny Review of RBG's CCTV provision

At the meeting of 27 June 2019, the Scrutiny Panel confirmed the initial process for the undertaking of an In-Depth Scrutiny Review into RBG's CCTV services across the Borough to ensure that they are effective and to identify best practice in supporting the Councils Corporate Plan 2018-2022, particularly in relation to creating A Safer Greenwich. A smaller working team, of three Panel Members, was established to lead on this Review.

A number of fact finding visits and meetings have been held between the Review Panel Members and Officers in a number of Departments. The final review report with recommendations will be presented shortly after the final meeting in April. However, the review has already identified weakness in communication between Departments which have been addressed, such as the CCTV control room being considered a standard consultee as part of major planning applications which has now become standard working practice.

For further information about the work of this Panel, please contact:

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Corporate Finance and Performance

Chair – John Fahy

The Corporate Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel undertakes to scrutinise various aspects of Council performance, across a number of directorates. These relate to aspects both to how the Council functions and to provision of public services.

Almost all the things that the Panel looks at come under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

A long standing topic for the Panel has been procurement. As part of the Council's constitution the Panel receives quarterly reports on contract exemptions and variations. The Panel has questioned why some these were taking place, and in particular the issue of re-tendering. Last year the Panel reviewed the procurement process. It is expected that the new Procurement Strategy, by introducing pre-procurement engagement and a more corporate approach, will tackle the issues arising in the exemptions and variations.

During 2019-2020 the Panel, in addition to the monitoring of the Advice and Benefits service performance, received additional reports on the introduction of Universal Credit. A concern is the effect it will have on the vulnerable. The Panel notes the work of the Universal Support Team and the Welfare Rights Service in helping claimants, wherever possible.

At the request of a resident the Panel agreed to undertake a review of customer services. This is a multifaceted area, and it is also an area which is undergoing change. The public experience issues about not getting responses, and so having to make repeated contact. Depending on what service is contacted there may be a number of reasons for this; there is no complete or singular corporate interface for customers. One change which will have a major impact for customers is the move to digital channels, as some service provision will be able to be dealt with online. Greater use of social media by the customers, is something that the Council needs to be cognisant of.

Among other matters the Panel the Panel looked at was the use of bailiffs, a topic which has been also raised in Council via Members' Questions. The Panel also looked at the Council's policy on 'sale of buildings and land / assets of community value / concessionary / peppercorn rents'.

Future Considerations

The Panel recognises that the Procurement Strategy will take some time to implement. It is suggested that the financial aspect of the Strategy could be monitored by the Panel, in a similar manner to the monitoring of Contract Standing Orders Exemptions and Variations. However, as well as the financial aspect the Strategy also has a Social Value element, and therefore consideration should be given as to how this might be monitored and whether by this Panel or another.

The Panel will continue to look at the performance of Advice and Benefits. Considering the emerging effects on some vulnerable people of Universal Credit it is suggested that aspect might be something that the Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel could consider.

Whilst the Panel's review of Customer Services has not been completed, it is clear that changes are ongoing with regard to ICT. The Panel should perhaps now consider Customer Services as an area of performance to be regularly scrutinised. As Customer Services is an area which obviously directly effects residents, perhaps consideration should be given to establish public user groups in conjunction with this, or at least an attempt should be made to get greater attendance by residents when this matter is looked at by the Panel.

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Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

Chair – Mark James

The HCASC SP, as in previous years, had an ambitious work programme that included scrutiny of Health Partners. The meetings were held in a themed manner, which meant that officers and partners were not taken away from essential service delivery as they did not have to attend many or every meeting.

Panel heard from the Chief Executive of the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Foundation Trust has attended meeting to provide the Panel with an update on priorities and how they have managed through times of greater demand, whilst delivering a quality service.

The Managing Director of the Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group was questioned about the regional CCG Mergers and the development of Greenwich's Primary Care Networks to ensure that Greenwich residents were not disadvantaged in any way.

This year, at the behest of Cabinet, the HCASC SP undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals for Adult Special Care Charges. 2 additional, dedicated meetings were held in early January 2020, which provided an opportunity for Panel to hear from service users before drawing conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet to consider when making their decision. Panel found this to be a fruitful exercise, recording what residents had to say in a focused way which meant that they were able to influence the final decision.

During the course of the year, Health and Adult Services saw a change of Director. Panel are working closely with the new Director to understand department priorities, challenges and upcoming policy changes so that the work programme for 2020/21 can incorporate some of this, where possible.

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Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel

Chair – Clive Mardner

During the current municipal year, the Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel has considered the following:

Housing

1. Housing Contracts Procurement – Delivery and Value for Money

The Panel received a report outlining the approach to procurement taken by the Repairs and Investment Service (RIS) within the Housing and Safer Communities directorate

2. Homelessness Decision Making

The Panel received a report which set out information about the decisions made by officers to provide support for those people who the Council has a duty to help with regard to Homelessness. The report also included equalities data on those the service supports, and information on collaborative working between the Housing Inclusion Service (HIS) and Community Safety.

3. RBG's Council Housing Delivery Programme – Greenwich Builds

The Panel received a report on progress to date and next steps in relation to the Greenwich Builds programme.

4. Registered Providers

The Panel received a report detailing the topics affecting housing provision specific to Registered Providers, the work they carry out jointly with RBG, and their relationship with elected members.

Deep-Dive Review on Housing Repairs

This was conducted in recognition of a review on tenants' engagement that took place in April 2017. The review, and recommendations therein, will be concluded at the 12th March 2020 meeting of the Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel.

Anti-Poverty

1. Greenwich Migrant Hub
The Panel considered a report from Greenwich Migrant Hub about the support they provide to vulnerable families.

2. RBG's Social Mobility Strategy and Priorities
The Panel heard from the Director of Communities and Environment about the work of the Social Mobility Board and provided updates in relation to the 25 recommendations set out in the Social Mobility Delivery Plan.

The Panel will hold its last meeting in the municipal year on 14th April 2020 and will agree topics for consideration in 2020/21.

For further information about this Panel, please contact:

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Regeneration, Transport and Culture Scrutiny Panel

Chair - Gary Parker

The work programme for this Panel is varied due to the number of service areas within its remit which requires the inclusion of 4 cabinet portfolio updates, these are:

- Regeneration & Growth
- Culture, Leisure and the Third Sector
- Air Quality Sustainability & Transport
- Economy, Skills and Apprenticeships.

There are also 2 pre-decision scrutiny items, the “Economic Development Strategy” and “Borough Halls - Proposed disposal for Theatre usage”. The consideration of these items is dependent on when the decisions are ready to be taken to Cabinet, officers have been advised to include the pre-decision scrutiny as part of the decision timeline.

A time-limited review on community led regeneration was concluded in September 2019 with the final report presented by the project group, which included community group representatives. Subsequently an executive summary was produced and provided to all the community groups that had made representation. Once the recommendations and conclusions of the review were noted they were forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who formally requested a response from the Chief Executive in October 2019.

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The Scrutiny Function

In May 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued its long awaited Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities.

The Guidance recognised that each authority was best placed to know which scrutiny arrangements were most appropriate for their own individual circumstances but strongly urged all councils to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and above all ensure they embedded a culture that would allow overview and scrutiny to flourish.

It cites the most important things for effective overview and scrutiny as being that it should: -

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
and
- Drive improvement in public services.

Some alterations that Royal Borough of Greenwich has made in response to the guidance are:

- Regular meetings are now held between the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and the Leader of the Council.
- To raise awareness of Scrutiny amongst all Members the Chair arranged for a trainer to come to Greenwich from the Centre for Public Scrutiny to give several sessions of bespoke training to all Members.
- The Chair will now be taking an annual scrutiny report to the last Full Council meeting of each municipal year.
- The Council continues to be a member of the London Scrutiny Network and the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Various training and development opportunities have been undertaken with them both by Members and Scrutiny Officers.

Decisions Called In 2019-20

Under the Council's Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to call in decisions made by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and key decisions made by officers.

In 2019-20 no decisions were taken to the Scrutiny Call-in Sub-Committee although one decision was returned to the relevant Cabinet Member. Following her response, no further action was taken.

Councillor Call for Action 2019-20

One request was put in for a Councillor Call for Action but this was withdrawn following the Chief Executive proving to the Member concerned that the item had been considered sufficiently.