

Annual Scrutiny Report

2017/2018



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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2017-2018 Annual Scrutiny Report. The report highlights the key areas of work that each panel and the main committee have concentrated on during the past municipal year.

In particular, the scrutiny committees have undertaken vital work on the following crucial issues:

- All four committees and panels have been involved with scrutinising the Five Year Plan. Having divided the plan into its five outcomes and allocated these as is appropriate to the remits of each committee; they have now commenced work on scrutinising specific themes and actions. In 2018-19, it is intended to use the Five Year Plan as a key document in driving the work of scrutiny; which has already been undertaken by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel with positive effect.
- The point above has driven the commendable work of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on housing. This has also been supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (who have examined the Housing Strategy on a theme-by-theme basis) and ensured that members have had constructive input into one of the council's most important and dynamic areas of work during 2017-18. Through taking this approach, both committees have been able to examine the totality of the work taking place and make valuable contributions to the overall strategy.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to investigate how to make Slough Borough Council 'an exemplar council' in reducing obesity. This review considered a wide range of information from internal and external sources (as well as receiving research on the area in preparation for their work) and its recommendations are outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee section.
- The Health Scrutiny Panel has taken a particular interest in the area of mental health. Slough Borough Council's work in establishing Recovery Colleges, where previous service users mentor those currently receiving support, has been commended and saw the panel engaging directly with those who had benefitted from this innovation.
- The Health Scrutiny Panel has also continued to monitor the Transformation Programme for Adult Social Care. This has provided members with sight of the significant changes being made in provision, and provided corporate assurance that the decisions being made are in the interest of local residents. This has also applied to our offer to those with learning disabilities, where members have ensured that service users can access a new range of options with a greater emphasis on social interaction.
- Given the importance of the matter, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panels undertook a joint discussion on the local plan. While the broad objectives regarding increasing housing in Slough were welcomed, a series of priorities (mostly in the area of quality and diversity of the physical environment) were stressed for consideration in the compilation of the final Plan. Further details on this are available in the section on the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel.
- The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel have continued to work in collaboration with the Children's Services Trust. This will continue to be a key element of the panel's work in 2018-19.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have continued to finesse reporting on finance and performance. This has allowed members to engage more meaningfully at a strategic level, with the reporting structured to focus on areas of concern and provide clear guidance as to the issues being faced and the mitigation carried out to improve future performance.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also received two call-ins regarding Cabinet decisions; the acquisition of Nova House and the council's agreement with Slough Town FC regarding Arbour Park Community Stadium. By debating these matters in-depth, OSC was able to provide appropriate assurance to the Council that no further action was required.

- Scrutiny also received assurance on fire safety in the aftermath of Grenfell. This included the fact that the cladding in Slough Borough Council properties was not the type used at Grenfell, regular meetings of a Task Force were being held to monitor progress and a Mutual Aid Agreement provided Slough with external support in case of emergency.

I hope the report does justice to the quality of the work carried out by the panels this year and gives an insight into the diverse nature of the areas which have been scrutinised.

I would like to thank my own vice chair as well as the chairs and vice chairs of all the panels for their support and leadership throughout the year. On behalf of all the chairs and vice chairs I would also like to thank sincerely all members, officers and partners who have contributed to the work of the overview and scrutiny function over the past year.

Councillor Nimrit Chohan
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Introduction

In 2002, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister set out the role of overview and scrutiny in local authorities, its powers and work.

“Overview and scrutiny is potentially the most exciting and powerful element of the entire local government modernisation process. It places members at the heart of the way in which councils respond to the demands of modernisation. In addition, overview and scrutiny is the mechanism by which councils can achieve community leadership, good governance and by which councillors can become powerful and influential politicians.”

In order to do this, Scrutiny Committees have three key roles:

- holding the cabinet to account
- policy development and review
- external scrutiny.

Through requesting information and questioning decision-makers, an Overview Scrutiny Committee can review the quality of local services, hold decision-makers to account (whether the cabinet or other statutory bodies, such as NHS Trusts), and put forward ideas for developing and improving services.



The Centre for Public Scrutiny has set out the four principles for effective scrutiny as:

- critical friendship to decision-makers
- engaging the public, enabling the voice of the public and communities to be heard in the process
- owning the process with non-executive members driving the scrutiny process
- making an impact through driving forward improvements in public services.

To achieve the desired quality of effective scrutiny, an overview and scrutiny function must:

- be independent
- be robust, rigorous and challenging
- fully engage all non-executive members
- come from a positive culture that supports and promotes the process
- involve local citizens and service users
- ensure that its purpose is clear and widely understood
- demonstrate the value added
- be creative in its ways of monitoring service performance
- have dedicated resources
- bring the conclusions of its reviews to the attention of full council
- have a comprehensive member development programme.

The questions an overview and scrutiny function must ask itself in terms of its own effectiveness are:

- is it effectively holding decision-makers to account?
- is it helping to improve services?
- is it building links between the Council, its partners and the community?
- is it helping to improve the quality of life for local people?
- is it adding value?

The annual report looks to assess the effectiveness of the work done by the overview and scrutiny function at Slough Borough Council in the 2017-18 municipal year.

Overview and Scrutiny at Slough Borough Council

The overview and scrutiny function at Slough Borough Council is made up of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three standing panels: Health Scrutiny Panel, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

The panels enable greater focus on specific subject matter, while the overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee focuses on cross-cutting issues, corporate, financial and performance management of the council. The committee and panels look to work closely together, using joint meetings where appropriate, to develop their work programmes and effectively scrutinise the work of the council and its partners.

Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three panels receive research and administrative support from a dedicated scrutiny officer; with democratic services also providing committee administration to the main committee and Health Scrutiny Panel.

Getting involved

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all three panels meet in public, and welcome members of the public who wish to observe proceedings.

The agendas and related papers are published on the Slough Borough Council website five working days in advance of any meeting and are available to download for free.



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Sadiq (chair until 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Chohan (chair from 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Chahal (vice chair)
Councillor Chaudhry
Councillor N Holledge
Councillor Parmar
Councillor Rana
Councillor Sarfraz
Councillor A Sandhu
Councillor R Sandhu

Constitutionally, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will undertake the following:

- review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the executive, committees and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time
- review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets, data quality and/or particular service areas
- question members of the executive, committees and directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects
- make recommendations to the executive and/or appropriate committee and/or council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process
- review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Committee and local people about their activities and performance
- question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

In order to undertake this work, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has appointed three standing panels to cover specific remits of works:

- Health Scrutiny Panel - undertaking the council's statutory responsibility to scrutinise provision of healthcare in the local area, as well as the cabinet portfolio for health and social care

- Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - scrutinising the cabinet portfolio for education and children's services
- Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - scrutinising the cabinet portfolios for housing and urban renewal, environment and leisure and transport and highways.

This delegation of work allows the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take an overarching view of the work of the council and its partners, as well as specifically focusing on the cabinet portfolios of regeneration and strategy, transformation and performance and regulation and consumer protection.

Specific focuses of work

Budget pressures

Recent financial settlements for the local authority sector have prioritised budget management in all councils. Given its overarching remit, the committee has maintained its strategic overview of this area. This has taken the form of the work on the budget for all areas (conducted every February), regular monitoring of financial and performance information and specific investigations into areas such as adult social care and housing.

The Committee has continued to finesse the reporting it receives, to allow a clear narrative to emerge on the key themes faced by Slough Borough Council. Reporting has been amended to include more detailed information regarding the financial impact of measures taken to rectify issues. For example, key projects are reported and where these are rated as 'red', further scrutiny is undertaken. The Committee has also pursued further details on key projects, such as The Curve, and the transfer of education services in-house from Cambridge Education to ensure that 'lessons learned' are absorbed by the council and used to support continual improvement in service delivery. The benefits of these improvements have allowed for a greater focus to be placed on the areas that matter, as opposed to reporting all areas, regardless of the need for greater scrutiny on progress.

The budget was taken by the committee on 1 February 2018. Members supported the use of the new flexibilities for councils to use capital receipts, while questioning the fee levels for some services (e.g. burials and cremations). The committee will also track the progress being made on achieving planned savings by reducing agency staff. However, members were supportive of the council being able to keep the proposed increase in Council Tax at a level lower than the other five authorities in Berkshire.

The Housing Strategy

While the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel have provided the scrutiny of the Five Year Plan outcome for housing (detailed later in this report), the overall strategy has been scrutinised by the committee. The supply of new housing was the first to be examined, with the need for 20,000 new homes by 2036 making this the main priority. The committee has provided clear views as to the need for such housing to avoid an over-reliance on high-rise flats and to ensure that such developments need to support social cohesion and allow families to settle in Slough (rather than building solely for young professionals).

The committee has also addressed homelessness and housing for vulnerable groups. Emphasis was placed on the potential for the use of modular homes to provide temporary accommodation, while members also prioritised the re-housing of domestic abuse victims. However, given the growing prevalence of homelessness in Slough (and across the South East in general) this matter is likely to remain an area of interest to the committee in 2018-19.

The Housing Allocations Scheme has also been taken by the committee. Given the pressure on local housing, the committee has represented its views on the need to ensure that looked after children, key workers and long-term residents (defined as five years or more of residency) are supported in their applications for social housing. They have also supported Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel's request that anyone offering to downsize be given incentives (e.g. more than one offer for a new home).

Obesity

The committee discussed a review of the progress being made on recommendations included in the 2013 review into childhood obesity. While the progress on these was noted and welcomed, the need for an overarching obesity strategy remained and the committee established a Task and Finish Group to support one of the areas this would study; making SBC 'an exemplar council'.

The work of this group has now been completed, and is available as part of the agenda papers for the committee's meeting on 15 March 2018. The background research for the final report included the circulation of a briefing paper, a workplace survey (with over 230 respondents), discussions with key departments and stakeholders at Slough Borough Council and a site visit to Mars Foods. The review made the following recommendations:

- a) that the current food offer at Slough Borough Council be reviewed, to include canteen provision (e.g. traffic light labelling of food) and vending machines
- b) that methods for increasing levels of physical activity and reducing levels of sedentary behaviour within work and outside work be implemented through behaviour change



- c) that the incentivising of activity through outsourced services be supported (e.g. reduced cost for use of the Montem Leisure Centre)
- d) that engagement with senior leadership and councillors be undertaken to establish a wellbeing ethos across the council which will include team / departmental 'Health Champions'.

Progress on these recommendations will be reviewed by the committee in 2019. The committee will also be retaining responsibility for scrutinising childhood obesity in Slough.

Digital transformation

As Slough Borough Council's relationship with Arvato (provider of transactional services) continues to develop, Arvato's role in supporting easier online access to services is becoming increasingly prominent. With the handover of key contracts (e.g. environmental services returning in-house, Osbornes becoming the provider of the repairs, maintenance and improvements service for tenants) having seen Arvato undertake projects to support these, the committee has monitored this crucial work and provided feedback on progress ahead of the 'go live' dates for these online services in November 2017.

Police and crime commissioner

In conjunction with the Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld attended the committee meeting on 16 November 2017. The recent assessment of policing across the Thames Valley as 'outstanding' in all areas (effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) were welcomed, while it was also noted that crime levels were rising at a level below the national average. Members offered continued endorsement for the productive relationship between the police and the Safer Slough Partnership and offered to assist neighbourhood action teams in addressing anti-social behaviour. It was also welcome that, despite the overall reduction in Thames Valley Police's budget, the number of officers in Slough had increased. The committee will continue to be part of the positive relationship between the police, the police and crime commissioner, the Safer Slough Partnership and Slough Borough Council.

Corporate Strategy - The Five Year Plan

The committee has also ensured that the priorities of the cabinet, as set out in the new Five Year Plan, will be monitored effectively and regularly. The outcomes assigned to the committee are as follows:

- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.

The committee has received a report outlining the progress made on understanding residents' perceptions, promoting the town as a safe and vibrant place and social cohesion. While concerns remain regarding the perception of the town centre, the committee has recommended that the charges for events be reviewed to encourage greater take up. The committee is also keen to see progress on the Business Improvement District. In addition, safeguarding measures for taxi drivers and hotels have been evaluated and monitored. The committee also recommends that a residents' survey be undertaken to map local perceptions.

- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents.

This will be the subject of a report to be taken on 12 April 2018 covering inward investment, developing residents' skills to meet the needs of employers, opportunities from Heathrow Airport expansion and the town centre.

Note: The full work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2017-18 municipal year is attached as Appendix A.

Health Scrutiny Panel

Membership

Councillor Rana (chair)
 Councillor Smith (vice chair)
 Councillor Ajaib (from 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Chaudhry
 Councillor M Holledge
 Councillor Pantelic (until 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Qaseem
 Councillor A Sandhu
 Councillor Sarfraz
 Councillor Strutton
 Colin Pill (Healthwatch Slough)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoints the Health Scrutiny Panel to undertake its constitutional role looking at the specific cabinet portfolio for health and social care. In addition, the Health Scrutiny Panel also undertakes the statutory council responsibility to scrutinise the provision for healthcare in the local area.

Specific focuses of work

Adult social care

The Adult Social Care Transformation Programme continues to be a key corporate priority. The Health Scrutiny Panel has monitored and supported the work of the adult social care team, which has been delivering the required changes to services and funding whilst ensuring the move from council control of provision to one where service users have more control.

The panel have scrutinised data on the 25 projects included in this programme, and offered views on the progress being made. In particular, members have raised some concerns that the proportion of Slough Borough Council's budget spent on adult social care was lower than that of neighbouring authorities. Despite this, they are supportive of the programme's progress and are assured that this is caused by the young local demographic and that the transformation programme is delivering the necessary savings while maintaining the quality of service provision. As noted in the section below on services for those with learning disabilities, they are also satisfied with the work being undertaken to address last year's questions regarding individualised care and the need to ensure that loneliness or social isolation are not caused.

Members will also be involved in the development of the communications and engagement strategy currently being developed by the adult social care team as a result of a request by the panel.

Members have also signalled their support for the Quality Assurance Framework for Adult Social Care. In particular, the focus on the needs of local residents, the relevant governance structures and the proactive approach taken to complaints were supported.

Frimley Park NHS Foundation Trust and the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

The panel have continued to have oversight on the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, which has moved towards being an accountable care system during the course of the municipal year. The issue of governance and maintaining the role of local members in the new set up has been raised through the panel, and has also helped shape reporting on the partnership to ensure that the focus is on the seven work streams which form the programme. As part of this, the three East Berkshire CCGs will be merging in 2018 and the panel will ensure that progress on this is scrutinised in 2018-19.



The panel have also raised concerns over the impact of the partnership on the health and social care model. Recent reduction in access to GP surgeries had led to increased pressure on accident and emergency units. Members have requested that analysis of local geography and populations be undertaken to compile a model for service provision. This will then be open to public consultation for feedback on any proposals.

With regards to the Frimley Park NHS Foundation Trust, the panel has maintained its positive working relationship with the organisation. Prior to the meeting on 22 November 2017, the panel undertook a tour of Wexham Park Hospital, noting the radical transformation which had taken place both in terms of the physical environment and working practices. Subsequent to this, the panel was updated on the continued investment being made by the trust and were very supportive of the plans. The panel also wished Sir Andrew Morris (Frimley Park NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive) well in his retirement, noted the extensive preparations which had been made to hand over to his successor, and looked forward to working with him in his new role within the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.



Mental health

The panel have taken a particular interest in mental health in 2017-18. The panel supported Slough Borough Council's work to raise the profile of the service, with members attending the World Mental Health Day event at the Curve on 10 October 2017. The panel have also sought to support moves to bolster preventative care, with the work of Recovery Colleges receiving specific attention in January 2018.

The item on Recovery Colleges featured input from service users, who highlighted the importance of these institutions, in terms of working with the community, reducing isolation and providing support. On the last point here, the panel particularly commended the work of peer advisers who supported those facing issues they themselves had previously encountered. The panel has clearly signalled its intention to support this work and build a relationship with the service, with the matter to return to the panel for an update in 2019.

Services for users with learning disabilities

As Slough Borough Council has maintained its aim of improving community-based opportunities for activity, the panel has offered support and guidance on the proposals being made. With the closure of the Elliman Centre in 2017, work on the Phoenix and Priors buildings has been monitored by the panel. Extra investment in the refurbishment of these buildings was recommended, and the quality of the redesigned offer has been investigated by the panel. The panel were satisfied with the approach to quality assurance and the corporate response to any concerns raised about the quality of the service.

The panel have also scrutinised the results of a survey carried out in October 2017 regarding the revised service offer. The panel have supported the work, which respondents stated had improved the social opportunities for service users and the increased access to teaching on skills. However, they have also recommended that transport to and from these centres needs further improvement given the impact on access this was having for some in the community. The panel will monitor this aspect of the service in 2018-19.

Public health

The panel discussed the overall picture regarding public health in Slough; while some indicators remain less favourable than national averages, recent improvements in childhood obesity were welcomed and the impact of the council's work since the 2013 review was recognised. The forthcoming work of the Wellbeing Board on obesity was also addressed, and may be an area for collaboration between the two bodies in 2018-19.

The panel have also commented on the levels of smoking and drinking in Slough. As a result, they have recommended that the public health team give further consideration to the actions that could be taken to reduce the levels of public alcohol consumption and smoking in Slough's parks and open spaces.

Adult safeguarding

The panel have been keen to ensure that previous concerns around safeguarding have been addressed. In particular, the Slough Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report generated discussion on the need for all parties to provide the necessary 'critical friend' challenge to drive service improvement. As part of this, the panel welcomed the appointment of a chair who would also be responsible for the equivalent children's body. They also sought details as to the mechanisms to protect the board's independence, and the performance management of the chair. The panel were satisfied that these had improved after discussion.

Corporate Strategy-The Five Year Plan

The panel has responsibility for the following outcome:

- our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.

The panel took an overview of the outcome in August 2017. The resulting debate recommended that work be undertaken to ensure that all local communities were accessing health checks with equal frequency (although it was recognised that overall take up levels exceeded national averages). The panel have also prioritised work on adult safeguarding within this outcome, as discussed above in this section, as well as discussing the 'speaking up' model which provided service users with a suitable platform to raise their views and concerns.

Note: The full work programme for the Health Scrutiny Panel for the 2017/18 municipal year is attached as Appendix B.



Neighbourhoods' and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Membership

Councillor Plenty (chair)
Councillor Kelly (vice chair)
Councillor Anderson (until 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Bal (from 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Davis
Councillor N Holledge
Councillor Mann (until 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Parmar (from 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Rasib
Councillor Sharif (from 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Swindlehurst (until 19 Dec 2017)
Councillor Wright

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoints the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (NCS Scrutiny Panel) to undertake its constitutional role looking at the specific cabinet portfolios for corporate finance and housing, planning and transport and environment and leisure.

Specific focuses of work

Fire safety and emergency planning

The first panel meeting of the municipal year was held in the shadow of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Given the importance of the matter and the need for assurance, a written question was taken which was discussed in depth by officers and members. The panel was informed as to the establishment of a task force which (amongst other responsibilities) was analysing cladding. This allowed officers to confirm that no Slough Borough Council blocks were using the cladding which was present at Grenfell; despite this, the quality of cladding would continue to be monitored. Members also received confirmation that Slough Borough Council was part of a Mutual Aid Agreement which covered Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The importance of the issue also led to an update being taken in the autumn. Broom and Poplar Houses were undergoing improvement works to bolster their fire safety, with the compartmentalisation of apartments the focus (rather than cladding). Sprinkler systems for the Council's two high rise blocks were also being prioritised.

On a related matter, the council's Emergency Plan was checked by the panel in January 2018. This provided assurance that the plan had been recently updated (late 2017), contacts were regularly checked as being up to date and that the existing Memorandum of Understanding which was part of the Mutual Aid Agreement avoided the co-ordination issues which had hampered emergency efforts at Grenfell.

Housing

The panel's main focus, resulting from its allotted outcome from the Five Year Plan, has been the council's housing service. Using the overview report on the outcome taken in June 2017, the panel has scrutinised the following three key actions in depth:

- housing allocations policy
- regulation of the private rented sector
- making best use of existing public housing stock.

The Housing Allocations Policy was taken in September 2017. While the panel noted the pressure on the housing stock (and the backdrop of rising homelessness), they raised the possibility that the reduction in offers of housing to tenants from two choices to one meant that a wider range of factors should be considered when making the offer (e.g. schooling arrangements). The panel also noted the different priorities of key workers to the majority of other applicants for Slough housing and raised the possibility of making mortgage-based offers rather than ones solely related to a specific property. However, they supported the proposed changes to the policy, with the exception that tenants offering to downsize should receive more than one offer for a new property. This will now be included in the final policy to be proposed to cabinet in April 2018.

Regarding regulation of the private rented sector, the panel focused on the council's attempts to resolve the issue of rogue landlords. Given the complexity of the situation in Slough (e.g. a number of these cases related to competence as opposed to malice) the panel recommended that resources be targeted on this rather than universal registration. The panel also welcomed the work undertaken in Chalvey to pilot licensing of homes under multiple occupation and supported its extension across Slough. The panel reinforced its views on downsizing in discussions of existing public housing stock, recommending that incentivising it be prioritised in future policy.

Services for tenants

The municipal year saw the handover of the pivotal Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements (RMI) contract to Osborne Property Services Limited (OPSL). The panel received updates in the build up to the transfer, providing security to members that the process had been robust and would lead to an improved service. In particular, the panel sought specific details as to how the management of void properties and the time taken to hand over from one tenant to another would improve. This was taken in November 2017 and was welcomed by members, but the matter will continue to be scrutinised (as will OPSL's performance overall).

The panel also examined the work undertaken on garages. Members reflected their concerns that, previously, garages were in poor condition; undertakings were given but not fulfilled and there had been a lack of engagement with residents and councillors. However, they were satisfied that the work by OPSL had addressed these issues and would lead to future improvements. Given this, they endorsed the proposed programme of redevelopment and refurbishment for garages, and will monitor progress on the matter.

Local plan

The overarching nature of this document saw it taken as a joint agenda item with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members stressed the need for housing to be sympathetic to the diverse areas of Slough (e.g. high rise living may be more suited to the town centre than outlining districts). Members also supported the plans to ensure that the period between the demolition of existing buildings in the town centre and the opening of new facilities provided alternative amenities (e.g. 'Pop Up' attractions). Given the dynamic nature of change in Slough at present, members will continue to take an interest in developments in future.

In its final consideration, the panel recommended that the following matters be considered in the compilation of the final version of the Local Plan:

- space for infrastructure and playing fields
- the need for high quality design
- suitable transport facilities
- a mixture of types of housing

- a variety of retail options
- landscaping and the creation of a 'tree rich' environment.

The panel will also return to the Local Plan in 2018-19.

Performance management

The panel has worked on ensuring that the information it receives can be examined in a meaningful and productive fashion. Throughout the municipal year they have worked with the neighbourhoods and housing teams to refine the bank of information presented to them, which has led to a series of scrutiny overview indicators being taken by the panel on a regular basis. They have also used it to highlight areas to report to the panel by exception (e.g. performance on voids) where issues have arisen. The chair of the panel will be meeting with officers in April 2018 to complete this and ensure that the panel can monitor the work of the teams effectively throughout 2018-19.



Safer Slough partnership

Following on from the discussions at the last Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel, the NCS Scrutiny Panel evaluated the work of the Safer Slough Partnership. The panel were keen to provide their support for the continued work of the partnership in relation to the safety of Slough's public spaces. In particular, the dedicated focus of the Parks and Open Spaces Task and Finish Group was commended, as was the focus on long-term mitigation (e.g. work with schools) as well as short-term solutions (e.g. reducing the number of 'blind spots' in parks). This has led to a decrease in sexual offences that was above the national average rate of decline, and the panel's satisfaction with progress was reported back to full council on 28 November 2017.

Air quality

Members raised the issue in light of statistics regarding health problems and mortality caused by local air quality. While the panel recognised the limits of the council's powers on the matter (e.g. Air Quality Management Zones are undermined by high levels of traffic) it was keen to support and prioritise work being done. The panel indicated its interest in innovations such as Clean Air Zones, but also understood the cost of setting one up (£100,000) and the radical implications of such measures.

However, the panel recommended that all council decisions in future consider the impact on air quality and incorporate measures in the Low Emission Strategy. This strategy is due to come before full council in the summer of 2018; at this stage, the panel may wish to discuss environmental policy in more depth.

Corporate strategy-The Five Year Plan

The panel has responsibility for the following outcome:

- our residents will have access to good quality homes.

The work done on this is detailed earlier in this section.

Note: The full work programme for the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2017/18 municipal year is attached as Appendix C.



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

Membership

Councillor Brooker (chair)
 Councillor Kelly (vice chair)
 Councillor Anderson (until 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Carter (until 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Chahal
 Councillor Chohan
 Councillor A Dhaliwal (from 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor N Holledge
 Councillor Matloob (from 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Pantelic (until 19 Dec 2017)
 Councillor Qaseem
 Councillor Sharif (from 19 Dec 2017)
 Jo Rockall (secondary teacher representative)
 Maggie Stacey (head teacher representative)
 Hamzah Ahmed (Slough Youth Parliament)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoints the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel (ECS Scrutiny Panel) to undertake its constitutional role looking at the specific cabinet portfolios for children and education.

Specific focuses of work

Slough Children's Services Trust

Having now completed its second full year of operation, the trust continues to be a key area for member engagement. With co-operation now established through bodies such as the Joint Parenting Panel, the ECS Scrutiny Panel has a vital role to play in supporting this partnership working to secure the best outcomes for local children. The panel have welcomed the establishment of a permanent leadership team at the trust and the successful proposal to launch a programme for victims of domestic abuse ('Inspiring Families') which received an Innovation Grant from the government of £1.4 million.

However, the panel have also expressed their concerns that some Ofsted feedback from recent monitoring visits had highlighted a slower pace in improvement than was desired. Assurance was provided that this was being raised with the trust's mentor organisation (Essex County Council) and that subsequent visits had been more positive on the matter.

The trust's use of the Public Law Outline system (which was designed to make progress in cases which were not moving on as desired) was also noted as improving. As a result, the panel have been assured that the aim of achieving a 'Good' Ofsted rating within three years of the Trust's inception remained on track.

Safeguarding

The last Ofsted report had highlighted Section 11 Audits as a weak area for Slough Borough Council. These audits ensure that council services which are not directly linked to children's services are still aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding. In 2016-17, the panel had noted that Section 11 Audits were now in place but did not have the desired analytical rigour. The panel therefore welcomed the appointment of 'champions' within service areas to promote the importance of safeguarding, whilst taxi drivers have also now received training on the matter. Finally, the panel sought and received assurance that the new service providers for the repairs, maintenance and improvements contract for housing and Environmental Services would also receive training and guidance on safeguarding.



School standards and improvement

The high proportion of local schools which are academies or free schools have seen Slough Borough Council adopt innovative strategies to support education. The panel have expressed their support for the work of the Slough Teaching School Alliance, which liaised with local schools and also encouraged them to co-operate in submitting joint proposals to receive additional funding. The panel had also backed the moves for partnership working between schools (e.g. Upton Court Grammar assisting Ditton Park School with teaching higher achieving students) and the arrangement between Beechwood and Herschel Grammar Schools.

The results of these efforts by Slough Borough Council since the education service returned in-house have also been commended by the panel. In particular, the work to improve outcomes at early years foundation stage and to close the gender gap between boys and girls (who have achieved better outcomes, both in Slough and nationally) while maintaining the levels of attainment in the female intake, have been welcomed. The panel will continue to take an interest in ensuring that disadvantaged children close the gap with their peers, and that white British children do not lag in terms of the 'Progress 8' measure, which measures the value added by schools (a national as well as local trend').

Joint Parenting Panel

The Joint Parenting Panel (jointly run by Slough Borough Council and the Children's Services Trust) is a key element of the council's corporate parenting role. Given its pivotal nature, it has started to report to the panel on a quarterly basis. The panel will continue to work alongside the Joint Parenting Panel to support its strategic focus and welcomed the tone of recent meetings, which had emphasised a co-operative approach.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel have also pledged to ensure that the need for the councillors on the Joint Parenting Panel to have greater continuity of membership will be reinforced. This will continue to be monitored by the panel in 2018-19 with a view to getting councillors to support the work of the body as effectively as possible.

Adult education

While the work on 16-18 year olds has been welcomed (covered in section below) the panel has continued to express concern regarding adult education. While aspects of the 2018 Ofsted inspection had improved (in particular safeguarding), the overall rating remained 'requires improvement'. The issue of the standard of teaching and its ability to motivate learners remained an area which the panel concluded had hampered progress. The panel requested details as to how upcoming teacher recruitment, training and monitoring would improve the service; this will return to the panel in 2018-19 for a progress update.



Corporate strategy - The Five Year Plan

The panel has responsibility for the following outcome:

- our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.

The panel have taken the following three key actions as agenda items:

- ensure children and young people are supported to be safe, secure and successful
- enable children and young people to enjoy life and learning, to feel confident about their futures and aspire to achieve to their individual potential
- support young people into employment, education and training.

On the first of these, the panel raised waiting times for access to Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as an area for further information and received an update on the statistics for Slough as a result. They also received assurance that cases of neglect were being resolved through child protection conferences.

With regards to enjoying life and achieving potential, the panel were satisfied that recent improvements in early years foundation stage provision had moved Slough from below national averages, to above them in the past year. They also recommended that teachers be prioritised as 'key workers' in the allocation of housing.

On the last matter, the panel were very happy to provide their backing to the numerous strands to the council's efforts to limit the number of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education and training. This was recognised as a regional leader and put the number of such young people in Slough well below national and local averages.

Note: The full work programme for the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2017/18 municipal year is attached as Appendix D.



Looking Forward

In terms of ensuring that scrutiny has a strategic focus, members will be supported in using the Five Year Plan to map their priorities and work for 2018-19. The Five Year Plan is refreshed each year and the new Five Year Plan has now been approved by full council. The five outcomes have been slightly reworded and each has a series of priorities for the year ahead and the longer term which will be used to develop the work programme for scrutiny.

It is no coincidence that the best work undertaken by scrutiny in the past year has been based on Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel's series of 'deep dives' into their allocated outcome. This has seen the panel engage at the appropriate level, offering considered and specific feedback on the council's proposals.

Where there are matters for more in-depth reviews, members are reminded of the opportunities offered by task and finish groups. With the one conducted this year (obesity) having allowed members to receive diverse input from workplace surveys, site visits and detailed conversations with council departments, a series of detailed recommendations emerged with a clear plan on measuring progress in 2019. Some commentators have suggested that committee meeting may not be the most productive environment for in-depth scrutiny of the impact of policies. By conducting an investigation into a specific area, and using methods that are not constrained by the procedures of committee meetings (e.g. site visits, bespoke research, questionnaires for service users) a sense of the realities for service provision can be gained. It also allows for members to make a number of highly specific recommendations, based on input from a wide range of individuals or external organisations that may rarely attend our committees.

The scrutiny function is also a key element in engaging with the public. While task and finish groups offer one route of organising public outreach events, methods by which the committees can face outwards to local residents may also need consideration. While the number of co-opted members has increased (with the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel appointing a representative of the Slough Youth Parliament and the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel appointing three local residents), each committee can appoint up to six.

Ensuring that meetings gain greater publicity (especially where specific agenda items attract particular local interest) could also raise the public prominence of the function.

With the current climate of austerity now well established across local authorities, councillors have become well accustomed to operating within constraints. However, the financial year 2018-19 promises to be one of particular hardship, and preparations for the required changes will be a central element of our work. In terms of specific areas, adult social care has become an area in need of transformative change; members are well apprised of this and have placed the matter at the centre of their plans. However, members are reminded of their responsibilities in this area. Given recent events regarding local authorities finding themselves in difficult financial positions (and the National Audit Office's recent report suggesting the situation may become tougher), members are asked to ensure that budgets, reserves and spending plans are suited for the difficult decisions that they may be asked to make.

Scrutiny committees in 2018-19 should also give consideration as to how it can engage more effectively with cabinet. The constitution currently stipulates that attendance by lead members is at the invitation of the chair; this has been used sparingly in 2017-18. In addition, while members have commented and made recommendations on policy proposals, these have not been fed directly to cabinet with the frequency that would give the function the desired prominence. Members may wish to consider how they can ensure that decision makers are being held to account with sufficient rigour.

Members are also reminded that the scrutiny officer will be receptive to any fresh ideas, skills or ideas which enhance the process of effective scrutiny. Whether the members for 2018-19 are long established or participating in these bodies for the first time, all can contribute fully to the process.

Appendix A: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18

Meeting Date	Meeting Date
13 June 2017	11 January 2018
Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of panels • Work programme 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transactional Services - Half Year Report • Housing Strategy - Themes 4 (homelessness and housing need) and 5 (special needs and vulnerable groups) • Five Year Plan - Refresh for 2018-19/2022-23 • Five Year Plan - Outcome 3 (Slough will be an attractive place) Key Actions 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 • Performance and Projects Report - Quarter 2 • Transport Strategy
13 July 2017	1 February 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thames Valley Transactional Service - Annual Report • Performance and Project Report - Quarter 4 • Financial Report - Final Outturn 2016-17 • Five Year Plan - Outcome 3 (Slough will be an attractive place) Overview 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Revenue Budget 2018-19 o Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19 o Capital Strategy 2017-2023
14 September 2017	15 March 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and Delivery of Key IT Projects • Housing Strategy - Theme 1 (New Housing Supply) • Five Year Plan - Outcome 5 (Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents) 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Social Care Transformation 2018 - Annual Update • Review of Housing Allocations Scheme • Obesity Task and Finish Group - Final Report and Recommendations
Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity in Slough • Performance and Project Report - Quarter 1 	
30 October 2017 (Extraordinary Meeting)	12 April 2018
Call In <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Acquisition of Town Centre Site (Nova House) 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Year Plan - Outcome 5 (Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents) Key actions 1, 3, 5 and 6 • Slough Urban Renewal • Votes at 16
16 November 2017	Information Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions - annual review
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call in: Arbour Park Community Stadium - Slough Town Football Club Agreement With Slough Borough Council • Thames Valley Police and crime commissioner • Obesity Task and Finish Group - Terms of Reference • Housing - future scrutiny approach 	Endorsement Item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Annual Report

Appendix B: Health Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18

Meeting Date	Meeting Date
10 July 2017	22 November 2017
Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of chair • Election of vice chair Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguration of the Borough's activity offer for people with learning disabilities • Progress update on the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme 2015-19 • Frimley Health and Care Sustainability and Transformation Programme 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Frimley Health Foundation Trust • CCG Operational Plan 2017-19 • Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - Annual Report • Frimley Health and Care System
31 August 2017	18 January 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventative Mental Health Services in Slough • Five Year Plan - Outcome 2 (Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs) Overview • Frimley Health and Care Sustainability and Transformation Programme 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Public Health Care Programme • Adult Social Care - Local Account 2016-17 • Recovery Colleges
10 October 2017	26 March 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report • Involvement of residents in shaping adult social care services • Quality management of adult social care services 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STP Update • Learning disabilities - Programme Update • Five Year Plan - Outcome 2 (Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs) - key actions 1, 3 and 5 • Autism Strategy • Disabled access to health centres

Appendix C: Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18

Meeting Date	Meeting Date
26 June 2017	16 January 2018
Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of chair • Election of vice chair Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Slough Partnership - update • Vehicle actuated signs • Five Year Plan - Outcome 4 (Access to Good Quality Homes) Overview • Neighbourhood and Housing Scrutiny Overview Indicators 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood and Housing Scrutiny Overview indicators • Five Year Plan - Outcome 4 (Access to Good Quality Homes) - Make Best Use of Existing Housing Stock • Emergency Plan • Development initiative Slough housing • 2018-19 Housing rents and service charges
7 September 2017	4 April 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Housing Allocations Scheme 2013 - 18 • Repairs, maintenance and improvements contract • Neighbourhood services garage licences and review of garage sites • CCTV in the local community • Slough local air quality and Low Emissions Strategy 	Including Crime And Disorder Reduction Panel Constitutional Item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New co-opted members: residents' panel Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thames Valley Police - overview • Prevent programme • Fly tipping • Neighbourhood and Housing Scrutiny Overview indicators
2 November 2017	
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan (NOTE: this item was held jointly with Overview and Scrutiny Committee) • Resident involvement • Voids process and performance relating to council homes • Five Year Plan - Outcome 4 (Access to Good Quality Homes) - Robust regulation of the rented sector • Fire safety 	

Appendix D: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18

Meeting Date	Meeting Date
18 July 2017	8 February 2018
Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of chair • Election of vice chair Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Year Plan - Outcome 1 (Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives) Overview • School improvement partnership • Soulsbury pay scale 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Children's Services Trust - second year achievements • Ofsted 4th Monitoring Visit • Five Year Plan - Outcome 1 (Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives) 'Enjoy and Achieve''
25 October 2017	14 March 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted third monitoring visit • Five Year Plan - Outcome 1 (Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives) 'Stay Safe' • Section 11 audits • Childhood obesity 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Year Plan - Outcome 1 (Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives) 'Achieve Economic Wellbeing' • 14-19 Provision • Ofsted inspection adult education • School standards and effectiveness • Joint Parenting Panel - quarterly update
7 December 2017	18 April 2018
Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective home education • Joint Parenting Panel - quarterly update 	Scrutiny Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School to school support in Slough • Progress with SEND reforms • School place planning

This document can be made available on audio tape, braille or in large print, and is also available on the website where it can easily be viewed in large print.

Annual Scrutiny Report 2017/2018

If you would like assistance with the translation of the information in this document, please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 875657.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज में दी गई जानकारी के अनुवाद कए जाने की सहायता चाहते हैं तो कृपया किसी अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्ति से यह अनुरोध करने के लिये 01753 875657 पर बात करके कहें.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ 01753 875657 ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Aby uzyskać pomoc odnośnie tłumaczenia instrukcji zawartych w niniejszym dokumencie, należy zwrócić się do osoby mówiącej po angielsku, aby zadzwoniła w tej sprawie pod numer 01753 875657.

Haddii aad doonayso caawinaad ah in lagu turjibaano warbixinta dukumeentigaan ku qoran, fadlan weydiiso in qof ku hadla Inriis uu ku Waco 01753 875657 si uu kugu codsado.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز میں دی گئی معلومات کے ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہئے تو، براہ کرم ایک انگریزی بولنے والے شخص سے 01753 875657 پر کال کر کے اس کی درخواست کرنے کے لئے کہیں۔