

ANNUAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL



BY
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CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE



Foreword by the Chair

It has been my pleasure to Chair the Overview Committee again this past year. The members of this committee have always engaged fully in scrutiny, with debates that are lively & detailed. The Council's performance has been diligently scrutinised.

The Overview Committee worked closely with the Executive and all Elected Members to act as a focus for constructive challenge in order to maintain the drive to improve public services, reflect public concerns, and enable improvements to be made to policies and their implementation.

New Councillors have received training to enable them to help continue the important work of this committee. It has been refreshing to see 2 of our new Councillors put themselves forward to Chair scrutiny panels this past year, as well as new Councillors volunteering to be panel members – this has helped bring a fresh perspective to issues under review.

Introduction to Scrutiny

On the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000, a new political system was introduced which allowed Councils to have a separate 'executive' rather than just the committee system: a Cabinet model which is similar to central Government.

To balance the Executive and monitor its decision-making, the function of Overview and Scrutiny was introduced requiring all Councils to have at least one Scrutiny Committee. The committee(s) would be similar to a select committee with back benchers acting as critical friends.

Scrutiny can look at:

- Decisions by the Executive
- External Partners
- Public Services
- Performance
- Budget
- Health

Scrutiny cannot look at:

- Any legal proceedings
- Individual complaints
- Licensing decisions
- Planning decisions
- Ombudsman

Overview Committee Agenda

The Overview Committee continues to consider regular items as well as one-off reports as follows:

Regular items:

- Health scrutiny updates
- Performance and governance framework (quarterly)
- Overview and Scrutiny recommendation tracker
- Executive / council forward plan
- Scrutiny topic submissions
- Updates from scrutiny and policy panels
- Annual scrutiny programme
- Scoping of scrutiny topics
- Overview annual programme (annually)
- Budget setting (annually)
- Rough Sleeping in East Lindsey (annual report)

Topics considered during the year:

- Crime and Disorder Report
- Partnership Communications Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- S&ELCP Customer Experience Strategy
- Household Support Fund
- Towns Fund Projects Update
- Internal Drainage Board Levies
- Sub-regional Strategy for the S&ELCP
- Budget Setting process 24/25
- Heritage Update x2
- Enviro Crime Contract Update x2
- Update on Operational Services
- FOI and EIR Policy
- Budget Overview 24/25 including consultation
- Review of the use of planning conditions
- Update on Rough Sleeping Annual Report 22-23
- Update on Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 22-28
- Community Safety Update
- Update on Artificial Intelligence
- Partnership Engagement Pledge
- Development of community reserves and investment in villages, parishes, and market towns across East Lindsey
- Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

Contributors to the work of the Overview Committee

The Overview Committee is always keen to engage with Executive Board members, and we invite them to attend Overview Committee to contribute to agenda items on a regular basis.

Officers often attend Overview Committee to provide updates and detail on agenda items; and provide support, information, and evidence to Scrutiny & Policy Panels.

The Committee is also grateful to external witnesses who attend Scrutiny & Policy Panels to support their work, and/or respond to questionnaires.

Annual Scrutiny Programme

Each year, the Overview Committee puts an Annual Scrutiny Programme in place, which sets out a proposed schedule of Scrutiny & Policy Panels.

The Scrutiny & Policy Panels are task and finish groups which report to either Executive Board or Full Council. The Annual Scrutiny Programme may also include Working Groups which may either be very short pieces of work (one meeting) reporting back to Overview Committee; or ongoing pieces of work where it is not possible to set a definite deadline for conclusion due to outside influences.

Only two planned Panels should run concurrently, but a third Panel may be set up in-year if an important and/or urgent topic is identified. Planned panels may be moved to accommodate urgent scrutiny topics if necessary.

Scrutiny & Policy Panels

The Overview Committee commissions Scrutiny & Policy Panels and Working Groups to consider agreed topics. This provides time for topics to be considered in more detail, and also provides opportunities for all non-executive Councillors to get involved in the scrutiny process. Councillors have considered some interesting topics that have involved quite detailed consideration. These were:

- To review the running of Invest East Lindsey Limited, with a particular focus on Kingfisher Caravan Park
- Review of the provision of public conveniences in East Lindsey
- To monitor the implementation of Magna Vitae's 5-year plan, including Key Performance Indicators.

Joint Scrutiny Programme

We have developed a joint scrutiny programme for the year ahead to support the partnership's work programme. The joint task & finish groups will look at key areas of common strategic interest and panel members will be taken from councillors across the partnership. It has been agreed there will be no more than 4 joint scrutiny panels per year. The topics chosen for this year are:

- Leisure & Cultural Facilities Offer
- Enviro-crime Enforcement Contract review

Also, the Annual Joint Scrutiny of the Partnership will take place between September and November of this year, as per the commitment made in the Memorandum of Understanding when the Partnership was formed.

Influencing & Monitoring

Influencing Decisions

In the past few years, acceptance of scrutiny recommendations by the Executive Board/Portfolio Holders has increased from just under 80% to over 90%. We expect this to continue as we aim to play a positive role in improving the achievements and outputs of the Council.

Monitoring

All recommendations from Scrutiny & Policy Panels are considered by the relevant Portfolio Holder, with the response recorded in the Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker, and then monitored through to conclusion at each Overview Committee.

Upcoming activity for 24/25

Members have recently been invited to submit a scrutiny topic form to suggest new areas of scrutiny for the current year. Topics already agreed for this year are:

- Review of the Carbon Reduction Plan and associated carbon reduction activity at ELDC
- Project Management Analysis: can the Council improve its management of major projects?
- Car Parking in East Lindsey
- To explore effective Councillor Development to improve engagement
- Review of support for Parishes and Communities.

Overview also hope to conduct scrutiny reviews on planning policy subject to a scope being finalised and agreed.

Topics considered at Overview Committee meetings are added throughout the year.