Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report
2015 - 2016

Overview and Scrutiny

Task Groups

If a Panel wishes to examine an issue in more depth, it can set up a Task Group. The Task Group is made up of up to five members of the Panel and will agree a project scope for the piece of work which will agree what the Task Group wishes to find out, who the Task Group will need to talk to, and how information will be gathered. At the end of the process a final report is produced which contains recommendations to Cabinet or Council.

During 2015/16 the Performance Monitoring Panel set up the Swimming Pool / Leisure Centre Contract Task Group, which will report its findings and recommendations to the Cabinet in November.

In addition, the Panels have monitored progress of the recommendations of the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group.

In addition to the task groups, the Panels have undertaken a variety of work including:

- Crime and Disorder and monitoring of progress in installation of the new CCTV system
- Scrutiny of procurement/tendering processes
- Scrutiny of contracts and on-line contracts register
- Monitoring how the Authority addresses long-term empty housing
- Provision in the district of medical and dental services and primary and secondary schools

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- Overview and Scrutiny is about improving performance and providing better services for local people.
- Most Council decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Members (including the Leader of the Council). Overview and Scrutiny hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions, develop policy and monitor performance.
- Overview and Scrutiny also carries out in-depth investigations; talks to witnesses and produces reports which make recommendations for improving Council services.

Further Information

You can find out much more about what we do by looking on our scrutiny web pages at:

www.sholland.gov.uk/article/3609/Overview-and-Scrutiny

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October 2016
Introduction from the Chairmen of the Panels

Performance Monitoring Panel
I have had the privilege of being re-elected as Chairman of the Performance Monitoring Panel for the ensuing year together with my Vice Chairman Councillor Michael Booth. The new councillors elected in May 2015 have settled in to the work of the Panel, and I thank them for their interest and enthusiasm.

The Panel’s work during the past year has again been varied:

- We routinely receive reports on the Council’s performance against corporate priorities, and have also had updates on contract management and procurement.
- The Panel received reports, and assisted in resolving the resourcing of the Planning Department.
- The proposed bandstand in Ayscoughfee Gardens was the subject of scrutiny.
- Other subjects which have occupied our time include the monitoring of recommendations from the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group; Crime and Disorder update reports; and ongoing scrutiny of CCTV. The Panel has also been seeking a meeting with Network Rail for many months to discuss the various issues concerning the railway. Arrangements are now in hand for their representatives to address all members of the Council instead.

The Council continues to respond to the ever-changing financial picture, and is currently doing so through a Transformation Programme. The Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panels have met jointly to undertake scrutiny of the Programme, and also to scrutinise the Compass Point Business Services Draft Business Plan 2016-2020, the delivery of Super-Fast Broadband, and the Authority’s draft budget.

Policy Development Panel
I was delighted to be selected as Chairman of the Policy Development Panel, but before giving a brief summary of what has been happening in the past year and our plans for the next 12 months, I would like to offer my personal thanks to Councillor Michael Seymour who did an excellent job as my predecessor. I also welcome Councillor Jack McLean as my Vice-Chairman.

Within the last year, the Panel has been focusing on how we can make the District more inviting and an area that we can be even more proud of. It has been working with the Town Centre Manager and Planning Department to evaluate what can be done to improve the street scene. This has produced positive results which can be seen within our towns, especially Spalding. In addition, the Panel has been considering ways of reducing the number of off-licences within a small radius.

Other work that the Panel has undertaken includes:

- Looking at the infrastructure within the District, and working with external partners to ensure that adequate facilities are in place as our population increases. Representatives from South Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England and LCC Children’s Services have assisted with this.
- Monitoring how the issue of long term empty homes is addressed by the Authority. The Panel was delighted to hear that the number of empty properties in the District is reducing.

Scrubny of the Council’s Budget
Examining the Council’s proposed budget is one of the most important roles that overview and scrutiny undertakes. In December 2015, the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel held a joint meeting to look at the Draft Budget, Medium Term Plan and Capital Strategy.

Scrutiny councillors considered the report of the Executive Director Commercialisation and made a number of recommendations for consideration prior to the budget being presented to the Council for approval. A similar budget scrutiny exercise will be taking place in November 2016.