

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/2024



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The Role and Function of Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny is about improving performance and providing better services for local people.

During 2023/2024, most Council decisions were taken by a Cabinet of 9 members (including the Leader of the Council). The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions, develop policy and monitor performance.

Whilst Overview and Scrutiny committees cannot compel change, their power of influence is through the making of recommendations based on reviews and investigation.

At South Holland District Council (SHDC), the scrutiny of existing and new policies is undertaken by the Policy Development Panel whilst the review of performance is the function of the Performance Monitoring Panel.

The Policy Development Panel and the Performance Monitoring Panel occasionally meet together as a joint panel to review and investigate issues of mutual/overlapping interest such as the scrutiny of the Council's proposed budget.

A framework for joint scrutiny activity across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership's (S&ELCP) three constituent authority areas, of South Holland, Boston and East Lindsey, has been developed to enable members to scrutinise matters of common strategic interest which would benefit from a partnership approach.

Introduction from the Chairmen of the Panels

Performance Monitoring Panel

It is my privilege to again chair the Performance Monitoring Panel. The year has again flown past, and it seems no time at all since we welcomed newly elected members to the first panel meeting of the new administration. The practice followed by the previous administration of allowing 'the opposition' to have a majority on PMP has not been continued and the membership is now in line with the percentages across the council, in effect giving the majority group a majority on the panel. Thus far the change does not appear to have altered the effectiveness of scrutiny but may have altered the external perception.

The year has been occupied by the usual scrutiny of council performance through regular examination against performance indicators and trends. There has been a consistent concern to ensure that the authority is well placed to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness, having sufficient capacity and resources to accommodate the potential increase and this has consistently featured in panel discussions.

Substantial increase in the number of contacts with the council has been seen to put a strain on the ability for the authority to respond in a timely manner and regularly featured in the concerns of the panel.

The South Holland Centre has again been the subject of joint panel work and I thank the Chairman of the Policy Development Panel together with the members for their co-operation and input in trying to help the Centre to deliver a varied good quality service to the general public, providing good value for money. I am sure it will continue to exercise our minds in these tough economic times.

Joint working across the three authorities adds to the workload and proves to be a challenge on members' and officers' time but as policies and practices align, will have greater benefit.

My thanks to my Vice-Chairman, Councillor Michael Booth, for his support and advice and to all members and officers who support and contribute to the panel's work programme.

Councillor Bryan Alcock
Performance Monitoring Panel Chairman



Introduction from the Chairmen of the Panels

Policy Development Panel

I would like to start this report with my closing sentence from my last one which was “As we now have a new administration with several new members, I look forward to new ideas and the scrutiny process being used to maximum effect for the benefits of SHDC, its residents, and those included in the wider partnership.”

These words have come true, and as Chairman, I see a vibrancy during panel meetings, with members asking good and at times challenging questions, or offering valuable input. So my first thanks goes to the members of the panel.

The content of the meetings over the past year has generally fallen into 3 categories:

- ▶ Review and renewal of expiring policies
- ▶ Scrutiny of emerging new policies and strategies.
- ▶ First year review of a new policy or strategy to monitor its progress.

Our Sovereign Policy register is in good shape with only a small number of policies over-running. This is due to the ongoing alignment of policies which are across the Joint Partnership with Boston Borough and East Lindsey District Councils and will over time, all become fully aligned. My next thanks, goes to Corey Gooch for ensuring relevant departments are reminded of a Policy coming up for renewal and keeping both the Sovereign and Partnership Policy Registers updated and members informed.

In respect of Task Groups, we have set up a Business Frontage Task Group with the objective to improve the appearance of shops and other types of business across the district. This is a complex piece of work but appears to be heading in the right direction.

We also continue to work with our colleagues on the Performance Monitoring Panel both at full Joint Scrutiny meetings such as Budget Scrutiny and through the ongoing South Holland Centre Joint Task Group. My thanks go to the Chairman Cllr Bryan Alcock and Vice-Chairman Michael Booth for their support to allow the two panels to work collaboratively, and in the best interests of the district.

My final thanks go to my Vice-Chairman Cllr Laura Eldridge for her input and support, to the Democratic Services team who work behind the scenes covering the administrative side and to the members of the Cabinet and Officers who have attended meetings, and by its true meaning, given Scrutiny the opportunity to maximise to its full effect for the benefit of all in South Holland and across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

Councillor Andrew Woolf
Policy Development Panel Chairman



Committee Memberships 2023 / 2024

Policy Development Panel
Cllr Andrew Woolf <i>Chairman</i>
Cllr Laura Eldridge <i>Vice-Chairman</i>
Cllr David Ashby
Cllr James Avery
Cllr Allan Beal
Cllr Nanette Chapman
Cllr Sam Chauhan
Cllr Margaret Geaney
Cllr Robert Gibson - from 23/11/23
Cllr Manzur Hasan
Cllr Joanne Reynolds
Cllr James Le Sage
Cllr Mark Le Sage
Cllr Ingrid Sheard - until 22/11/23
Cllr Sally Slade
Cllr Thomas Sneath
Cllr Jan Whitbourn

Performance Monitoring Panel
Cllr Bryan Alcock <i>Chairman</i>
Cllr Michael Booth <i>Vice-Chairman</i>
Cllr Paul Barnes
Cllr Chris Brewis
Cllr Nanette Chapman
Cllr Sam Chauhan
Cllr Laura Eldridge
Cllr Margaret Geaney
Cllr Angie Harrison
Cllr Sophie Hutchinson
Cllr Joanne Reynolds
Cllr Glynis Scalese - from 23/11/23
Cllr Sally-Ann Slade
Cllr Jan Whitbourn - until 22/11/23
Cllr David Wilkinson
Cllr Andrew Woolf

As the role of Scrutiny is to hold Cabinet to account, neither panel can include membership from the Cabinet.

Corporate Management Support

During 2023/2024, each committee was sponsored by a member of the Corporate Management Team to offer support on relevant matters as these arose.



Support for the Performance Monitoring Panel was provided by :

Matthew Hogan
The Assistant Director
for Strategic Growth
and Development



Support for the Policy Development Panel was provided by :

Emily Spicer
The Assistant Director
for Wellbeing and
Community Leadership

Committee Meetings and Summary of Work

Both committees have undertaken a full programme of work across the municipal year.

In addition to the consideration of standing items, such as upcoming Key Decisions, the Panels received reports and discussed items which were relevant to their specific function.

Policy Development Panel

During 2023/2024, the Policy Development Panel met 5 times to review existing policies and assist in the shaping of new policies.

The Panel considered the SHDC and S&ELCP Policy Registers at each meeting and the following gives a brief summary of additional work activities undertaken during the year:

Policy Development Panel Meeting Dates	Items and Reports Considered
25 July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Communications Strategy <i>N</i> Procurement Strategy 2023/2026 <i>N</i> Proposed Joint Scrutiny Activity for 2023/2024 for S&ELCP
11 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations Policy Lincolnshire Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance Policy <i>N</i> Revision to Travel and Expenses Policy Review of Housing Allocations Policy
12 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Products Policy Mobile Homes and Caravan Site Licensing and Fee Policy Graffiti and Street Art Management Policy 2022 Derelict and Untidy Sites Policy Update
6 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Landlord Strategy <i>N</i> Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Partnership Policy <i>N</i> Health and Safety Policy - General Statement of Intent and Arrangements Review of HR Policies Review of Litter and Fly Tipping Engagement and Enforcement Strategy Housing Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy <i>N</i>
9 April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Engagement Pledge <i>N</i> Unreasonable Behaviour Policy Joint Scrutiny of the S&ELCP Healthy Living Plan

N = New Policy

[Click on dates to view details](#)

Committee Meetings and Summary of Work

Performance Monitoring Panel

During 2023/2024, the Performance Monitoring Panel met 5 times to review performance and receive requested updates.

The following outlines the programme of work activities during the year:

Performance Monitoring Panel Meeting Dates	Items and Reports Considered
4 July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Joint Scrutiny Task Group for S&ELCP• Proposed Joint Scrutiny Activity for 2023/2024 for S&ELCP• Q4 Performance Report 2022/2023• South Holland Centre Task Group Update• Final Report of the Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group• Peele Leisure Centre• Health and Wellbeing Hub Update
13 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q1 Performance Report 2023/2024• Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Task Group Update Q4 2022/2023• South Holland Centre Business Plan
15 November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q2 Performance Report 2023/2024• Q1 & Q2 Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Task Group Update 2023/2024• Crime and Disorder Report• Review of Implemented Planning Decisions• Joint Annual Scrutiny of the S&ELCP
23 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary Health Care Provision• Attendance by Homelessness Reduction Manager• Review of Implemented Planning Decisions• Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group Update
19 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q3 Performance Report 2023/2024• Peer Challenge Action Tracker Update

[Click on dates to view details](#)

Budget Scrutiny



Examining the Council's proposed budget is one of the most important roles that Overview and Scrutiny undertakes. In **January 2024**, the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel held a joint meeting to look at the Budget Overview 2024/2025 and Draft Budget.

Scrutiny councillors considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Development and made a number of recommendations for consideration prior to the budget being presented to the Council for approval.

[Click on date to view details](#)

Other items considered by the Joint Panel

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel also met jointly to consider the following items:

- ▶ S&ELCP Customer Experience Strategy
- ▶ Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan
- ▶ Sub-regional Strategy for the S&ELCP
- ▶ Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23



South Holland Task Groups

The Performance Monitoring Panel and the Policy Development Panel have the power to set up Task Groups to undertake individual pieces of work.

The **Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field Task Group** reconvened in February 2023 so that specific issues raised by members could be investigated. The Task Group's final report, which included a recommendation to Cabinet, was presented to the Performance Monitoring Panel in **July 2023**. A further progress report was received by the Panel in **January 2024**.

Updates in respect of recommendations made to Cabinet from the **South Holland Centre Task Group** were presented to the Performance Monitoring Panel in **July 2023** and September 2023.

The Policy Development Panel commenced a **Business Frontage Task Group** in January 2024 which aims to explore options to improve the aesthetics of shop fronts and empty commercial buildings in the district's town centres. To date, the Task Group has held a number of meetings and progress is being made. A report outlining the recommendations of the Task Group will be received in due course by the Policy Development Panel and will then proceed to Cabinet for consideration.



Partnership Task Groups

In addition to SHDC Task Group activities, representatives from the two scrutiny Panels met with their counterparts from Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council to investigate the following areas of mutual interest across the S&ELCP region:

Joint Annual Scrutiny of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (S&ELCP) - the Task Group's final report, with recommendations for consideration at Cabinet, was noted by the Performance Monitoring Panel in **November 2023**.

Joint Scrutiny of the S&ELCP Healthy Living Action Plan - recommendations from the Task Group were noted by the Policy Development Panel on **9 April 2024**.

[Click on dates to view details](#)

Out And About

Review of Implemented Planning Decisions Tour



A function of the Performance Monitoring Panel is to 'revisit a number of implemented planning decisions' so that the quality of Planning decisions and development can be assessed.

During October 2023, members of the Performance Monitoring Panel visited 5 such sites across the district. Their observations were reported to the committee in **November 2023**.

The Panel reported 31 positive aspects and suggested 40 areas for improvement across the five sites with common themes including feedback relating to parking provision, use and maintenance of green spaces, location of meter boxes, play areas, drainage and easement areas, appearance and design. The recommendations made by the panel were then considered by the Planning Committee.

[Click on date to view details](#)

For more information of issues covered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, please visit the Council and Democracy area of the SHDC website:
www.sholland.gov.uk/councilelections

Contacting Us



South Holland District Council
Council Offices
Priory Road
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE11 2XE



01775 761161



info@sholland.gov.uk



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[SouthHollandDCofficial](https://www.facebook.com/SouthHollandDCofficial)



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