A Message from Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This Annual Report is a summary of just some of the work Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) has done this year, what has worked well and what issues we need to concentrate more on next year.

It has been another very busy and interesting year for O&S with one in-depth reviews being undertaken and two Working Group undertaking Scrutiny activity:

Food Poverty
Gangs and Knife Crime
Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

Due to the unprecedented situation of the Covid19 pandemic, our meetings, like others across Local Government were halted in March 2020 therefore Review work also ceased. We had to quickly bring in a new way of working and remote meetings became the new normal way of hosting a Committee meeting. My Committee started meeting remotely again in June 2020, with the Review work commencing again in July. Reviews will therefore not report their findings until the autumn at the earliest. I would like to invite you to observe a meeting of our Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels but watching it on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/northamptonbcTV or you can still address a meeting by registering to speak with the Democratic and Member Services Manager.

I have continued to promote the good work of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton wider. I am delighted that again this year, the Centre for Public Scrutiny has again noted Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton Borough Council as examples of good practice. It will be publishing in its 2020 edition of Scrutiny Frontiers information about our comprehensive Work Programming event and one of our indepth Scrutiny Reviews – Homelessness.

Overview and Scrutiny work continues to be member-led and evidence-based. It is fundamental that the work of scrutiny adds value and improvement and I will very much look forward to presenting the outcome of 2019/2020 review work to Cabinet.

Once again, we asked the citizens of Northampton to suggest topics for Scrutiny reviews. Yet again the public forwarded a number of suggestions for scrutiny and I would like to emphasis that Overview and Scrutiny values and encourages the input of the public into its Work Programming. Non- Executives carefully considered the suggestions at a workshop held in March 2020. From these suggestions, Cabinet's priorities for the year and ideas put forward by Councillors, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its June 2020 meeting, approved items that it would like to consider during 2020/2021.

The Committee scrutinised the Council's budget proposals by delegating work to its Reporting and Monitoring Working Group who identified four budget proposals for the Committee to scrutinise in-depth. This Working Group will continue to meet during the Municipal year 2020/2021. I highlight that this is a process that has previously been noted as best practice. The Committee, at its meeting in July 2020, is scheduled to undertaken some budget Scrutiny, in addition to the work of the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in and have supported Scrutiny over the past year. I would like to thank all those who have been involved in and have supported Scrutiny over the past year. In particular, I would like to thank my colleagues who chaired the Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups last year.

Overview and Scrutiny welcomes and encourages members of the public who live or work in the borough to get involved in Scrutiny. If you have any suggestions for the work of scrutiny we would welcome your comments by post or email. For more information about scrutiny and to view current and past reports, please visit our website at www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny.

Instead of a complete commentary of all that O&S has achieved over the year this Annual Report provides a summary of the key highlights of the work O&S has been engaged in during 2019/2020. I hope it reflects what I feel has been a very important year in Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton. I do hope that you find this report informative and interesting.

Achievements

How was this impact made during 2019 - 2020 ?

The Scrutiny Panels carry out in-depth Scrutiny reviews, whilst the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee concentrates on strategic issues, including holding the Cabinet to account, performance management and scrutiny of crime and disorder. This structure attracts increased public participation and the involvement of non-Executives in Scrutiny reviews.

Involvement of Non- Executives (not Scrutiny Members) in Overview and Scrutiny

The O&S structure enables non-Executives, who are not members of the O&S Committee, to be fully involved in the O&S process.

Both the Scrutiny Panel and the Working Group, this year had non-Executive Councillors who were not O&S Councillors as members. Membership for the Scrutiny Panels closed quickly as they reached maximum capacity; this enabled the option of appointing a co-optee.

Key Example: The Scrutiny Panel that investigated Food Poverty was made up of five non-Executives, of which one was not O&S Councillors, demonstrating involvement of non-Executives in the O&S process. Two experts were also co-opted to the Scrutiny Panel.

Co Optees to Scrutiny Panels

The of the Scrutiny Panel this year benefitted from the expertise and knowledge of a co optee. Paul Foster of Emmanuel Church and Clive Ireson of the Northamptonshire Community Foundation were valued co-optees

It was really enlightening being part of the part of the food poverty scrutiny committee.

It was interesting to hear the different groups sharing with views on local issues close to my heart.

I hope the outcomes of the panel are taken up to help those in Northampton in poverty.

Paul Foster Emmanuel Church

It has been really important to represent the Food Poverty Network on the Food Poverty Scrutiny Panel. I am optimistic if all - statutory and voluntary sectors work together food poverty can be eradicated from Northampton. Hopefully this report will play a part in that ambition.

Clive Ireston
Development Manager
Spring Family Centre

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

Key Example: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny is an example of excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners.

The scrutiny of crime and disorder was formalised in 2010, putting in place clear working arrangements between the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Committee. An annual report from the CSP informs the O&S Committee of work undertaken; non-Executives decide whether further review or scrutiny is required. This report focuses on the levels of performance in the light of reduced resources, if so what measures have been taken to meet any shortfall in performance. This demonstrates excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners.

Overview and Scrutiny acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, its purpose is to review the work of the Community Safety Partnership, including the delivery of the strategy and associated action plans. The work of the Committee adds great value to the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership, whose primary focus is to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour to make Northampton a safer place to work, visit and live.

Vicki Rockall

Community Safety and Engagement Manager

The O&S Committee has also looked at:

Gangs and Knife Crime through a Scrutiny Working Group

Performance Management Scrutiny

A process enabling the Committee to identify key performance measures earlier on was introduced in 2013/14. The Committee informs the Chair prior to a meeting of the O&S Committee of performance measures that it feels warrant future scrutiny.

The scrutiny of specifically identified measures is included on the agenda of meetings of the O&S Committee. This results in measures being reviewed on an exception basis with relevant Cabinet Members being called to present information to the Committee. Cabinet Members are scrutinised on performance, the causes of underperformance and the corrective actions being taken. Active

debate is undertaken and support and challenge is offered to the recommendations being made to deliver service improvements.

Key examples: Performance management scrutiny of:-

- HML01 Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- HM008 Number of HMOs with an additional licence
- ESCO2 Percentage of household waste recycled and composted
- ESC09 Percentage of fly tipping incidents removed within two working days of notification
 - PP22 Percentage of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles inspected which comply with regulations

Critical Friend to Cabinet

Call-In

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly. During 2019/2020 there were no Call-In Hearings.

Influencing Policy Development

Two in-depth Scrutiny reviews and one comprehensive Scrutiny activity was undertaken during 2019/2020: These reviews are still evidence gathering as review work was halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

Food Poverty
Gangs and Knife Crime
Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

Review work of 2018/2019 has received Cabinet's response. Almost all of the recommendations were accepted, which highlights that Overview and Scrutiny is continuing to make significant influence of Council policy, both in terms of holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development, and the well-being of the citizens of Northampton.

Raising the profile of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton

The profile of O&S has continued to be raised with a number of important and successful reviews carried out during 2019/2020. O&S is keen to keep this up and invites suggestions for the work programme from various partners, Agencies and members of the public.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny will be highlighting again the work of O&S at Northampton in its publication of Scrutiny Frontiers that will be published later this year.

The Scrutiny review process at Northampton is widely recognised both within the Council and amongst the citizens of Northampton which is demonstrated by their attendance and interest in the O&S Committee and its Review work.

The O&S Work Programme received extensive press coverage, locally, which just under 30individuals responded to, suggesting over 40 ideas for future Scrutiny review.

Paperless Overview and Scrutiny

As reported in the last five year's Annual Reports, the innovation attracted national interest. External interest in the innovation has again continued this year, with a number of enquiries regarding the success of the paperless Committee. However, due to the unprecedented situation of Covid-19, paperless meetings have halted as Councillors require their ICT equipment to view and take part in remote meetings, however, as soon as meetings can revert back to being face to face, I will be re-inducing paperless meetings for Overview and Scrutiny.

Public engagement within the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton

O&S has included various issues referred to it from the public onto its Work Programme. The details below provide key points of how O&S work has reflected the concerns of service users.

Key example:

Food Poverty

Key Example of review work during 2019/2020:

Food Poverty

This review is still evidence gathering and it will report its findings in the autumn 2020.

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To examine the extent to which individuals and families are experiencing food poverty, the range of contributing factors and the changes that have been made to the way the Council and partners support residents during hardship.
- To review the impact and concentration of food poverty across the Borough of Northampton

Key Lines of Enquiry

- What are the impacts of food poverty?
- How widespread is food poverty in the borough?
- What strategic approaches are in existence to tackle food poverty?
- What approaches are in existence to reduce people's dependency on food aid, such as Food Banks?
- > To receive an understanding of how food poverty is addressed
- > To evaluate how the Borough Council, together with its partners, can collectively respond to food poverty
- ➤ To identify the specific issues relating to food poverty
- > To identify the existence and impact of "holiday hunger"
- > To identify how food poverty differs across the borough of Northampton and the reasons for this

The Scrutiny Panel was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with one non-Executive who is not a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committe. The Scrutiny Panel benefitted from the expertise of two co optees – Paul Foster of the Emmanel Chruch and Clive Ireston of the Northamptonshire Community Foundation. The Scrutiny Panel received both written and spoken evidence from a wide variety of expert advisors. Desktop research was carried out by the Democratic and Member Services Manager. Representatives undertook site visits to a variety of Food Banks and the Northamptonshire Community Foundation, of which produced a wealth of information that informed the evidence base of this high profile Scrutiny review. The Scrutiny Panel was very impressed by the facilities offered by Community Groups and recognised the need for joined up working. Following the collation of the evidence, the Scrutiny Panel will draw various conclusion and recommendations that will be contained in the report. The Review commenced in June 2020 and is expected to concluded in the autumn 2020.

Councillor Dennis Meredith Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Food Poverty

Co-Opted Members

This year, the Scrutiny process chose to engage the expertise and knowledge of co-optees in its review process for all of its in-depth reviews. It also fully utilised expert advisors in the witness evidence process. Further details are contained at page 2 of this Annual Report.

Review work 2019/2020

O&S at Northampton has again undertaken some excellent review work again this year.

The best practice Scrutiny review work has continued to be built upon. Over the last year, Scrutiny reviews have attracted interest from both external organisations and the public.

Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton continues to be Councillor-led and focuses on the major issues affecting the town. It has therefore carried out some very high profile reviews this year, the

impact of which will be reported in next year's O&S Annual Report:

Scrutiny Panels

The Scrutiny Panels obtain information to inform the Review through a variety of methods, including:

- Research and briefings commissioned from officers
- · Select committee-style meetings with external experts and relevant officers
- Informal interviews
- Site visits
- Surveys

Some meetings of the Scrutiny Panels are often held in a 'Select Committee' format, with the Scrutiny Panels seeking evidence through a question and answer session with senior officers, Cabinet Members, external experts, representatives of interested groups or members of the public who have relevant experience.

Food Poverty

Please refer to page 5 for a precis of this review.

Gangs and Knife Crime

As with the Food Poverty Scrutiny Panel, the work of this Working Group was halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic; but meetings will resume in July 2020 and evidence gathering will continue.

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was:

 To investigate how Northampton Borough Council (NBC) can play an active role in tackling knife crime and gangs in Northampton

Key lines of Inquiry:

- ➤ To gain an understanding of the work currently being undertaken by partnerships, statutory and voluntary organisations, and the Police to address these issues
- Whether there are links between knife crime, gangs other issues
- > How Agencies can work with Community to reduce and respond to
- How young people can be engaged with in preventing knife crime and gangs
- To raise awareness of knife crime and gangs in Northampton
- Whether there ae any common factors that lead to involvement in Gangs
- > To explore best practice elsewhere in identifying and providing support to victims of knife crime and gangs
- To understand what NBC is doing outside the Scrutiny process in relation to knife crime and gangs

A comprehensive review commenced in June 2019 and will conclude in the autumn 2020. A wealth of background data and information was received by the Scrutiny Working Group and a series of interviews with a number of key expert advisors were held. A number of organisations and community groups provided written information. Informative site visits also took place, for example to a local Boxing Club. Desktop research was undertaken by the Democratic and Member Services Manager, the findings of which will inform the review. Information gathering was very important to this review so that the Scrutiny Panel could map what is taking place and who is involved in the activities. This will enable the Working Group to devise its recommendations that will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet later this year. As part of the monitoring regime, Overview and Scrutiny will review this report six months after Cabinet has received it. I would like to thank everyone who took part in this in-depth piece of work.

Councillor Graham Walker, Chair O&S Gangs and Knife Crime Working Group

O&S Working Group - Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

The objective of this Working Group was to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrutiny at Northampton Borough Council against the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

The Working Group met once, and early evidence has highlighted the success of the Protocols and ways of Overview and Scrutiny working at Northampton Borough Council, but the Working will convene again and formalise its report.

How has the work of the Scrutiny Panels made a difference to the Council and our residents?

Accepted recommendations from previous Scrutiny reviews, undertaken during the previous year, will be monitored by the O&S Committee.

Key examples

Scrutiny Panel 1 - Homelessness and Rough Sleepers

The objectives of this Scrutiny Panel was to review ways in which the Council and its partners engage with rough sleepers and long term homeless individuals, consider the best way in which

'Housing First' can be used to reduce rough sleeping in the borough, and understand the nature and extent of 'hidden homelessness' and how it can best be addressed.

Key Lines of Enquiry

- To gain an understanding of how and why people become homeless
- To gain an understanding of the causes and extent of rough sleeping in the borough, the impact that rough sleeping has on the health, safety and life expectancy of people who are sleeping rough, and the implications for safeguarding and community safety.
- To gain an understanding of the work that is currently being undertaken by Northampton Borough Council (NBC), local groups, organisations and voluntary services to engage with rough sleepers
- To consider the effectiveness of the action that is being taken (by NBC and local groups, services and organisations) to help people who are sleeping rough to come off the streets.
- To gain an understanding of the 'Housing First' model and consider how best it could be used to reduce rough sleeping in the borough.
- To gain an understanding of the nature and extent of 'hidden homelessness' in the borough, including the profile of the people affected and what contact (if any) they have had with NBC, Northampton Partnership Homes or local advice agencies.
- To explore various ways of connecting with, and engaging with, harder to reach groups
- To gain an understanding of the specific needs and assistance provided for young people, between the age of 16-25, including care leavers.
- To gain an understanding of the specific needs and assistance provided for ex-Offenders
- To understand how data, statistics and demographics are gathered and used to meet the needs of rough sleepers, men and women, who are homeless

The recommendations were around:

Additional bed spaces for homeless women in the borough Housing solutions Refresh of the Rough Sleepers' Strategy Plan for strengthening equal relationships and partnership working Social Media Strategy Multi-Agency Publicity Campaign

The report was be presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2019/2020.

Impact of the Move of the University

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to review the impact on the town and local areas; including student accommodation, concentrating on:

- To understand the work currently being undertaken by the University of Northampton, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), and other partners regarding the move of the University
- To gain an understanding of the social, cultural, physical, economic and environmental effects of the move of the University
- To gain an understanding of the challenges, including all areas of the town, in respect of the move of the University
- To gain an understanding of the implications of the move of the University

Recommendations were around:

Communication
Traffic flow
Impact on the town
Community

Overview will monitor the effectiveness of these recommendations as part of its monitoring regime.

Northampton Post Unitary

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was to look at Northampton, (being mindful of the potential Unitary Authority), giving particular consideration to how civic pride and ceremonies can be protected

Key Lines of Enquiry

- To gain an understanding and overview of the civic pride, events and ceremonies (compiling a formal list) that currently take place within the Borough of Northampton
- To gain an understanding of how Northampton's civic events and ceremonies are marketed
- To understand the role of the Mayor of Northampton
- To understand the roles of both the previous Northampton Borough Council and other partners in civic events and ceremonies within the borough
- To consider how the pride and history of the Borough and the Guildhall can be preserved and enhanced as part of any new Unitary Authority

The recommendations were around:

- Retaining the Mayor of Northampton
- The creation of a Civic Quarter
- The location of a possible Town Council
- Protection of Civic Pride
- Civic events

Overview and Scrutiny will monitor the effectiveness of the accepted recommendation this Municipal year.

Other reviews that were undertaken during 2018/19:

- Northampton Post Unitary
- O&S Evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny Reports

Budget Scrutiny

Each year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee sets up the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group to:

- To review the budget proposal.
- To consider the Council's medium term financial plans.
- To recommend a short list to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for detailed consideration.
- To consider suggestions from the public and other Councillors for items to be included in the short list for scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny finds it helpful for a small Working Group of Councillors to take a brief overview of all the budget proposals and bring a small selection to the Committee for detailed scrutiny.

This year the Working Group comprised five Councillors from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in January 2020, undertook budget scrutiny of the following issues:

- HRA Saving Option or Budget Risk
- Housing Temporary accommodation and income streams
- Unitary budget of £2.4 m
 Staff and resources capacity and sustainability
- EAC Maintenance budges for example the Mayorhold Car park and the Guildhall and NBC assets
- electric boiler replacement programme for HRA, or potential insulations grants for private home
- Councillor empowerment fund and the proposed reduction from £3,000 per Councillor to £2,000

Looking ahead

The Work Programme for 2020/2021 was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the spring 2020 and work will commence from July 2020. All work will need to be completed by early 2021.

Details of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020/2021 will be published on the Overview and Scrutiny webpage as soon as it is finalised.

What are our Challenges for 2020/2021?

- To have completed the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and effective monitoring by early 2021.
- To build on Overview and Scrutiny's achievements by setting stretching targets to broaden our impact. An example would be to ensure the Committee continues to undertake pre-decision scrutiny activities.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny continues to make a positive contribution to the development of policy and the continuous improvement of the Council's operations.
- To continue to ensure the O&S work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and public – ensuring that a wide range of organisations, partners and the public are consulted with for suggestions for scrutiny review and then on the actual work programme.
- To ensure O&S is able to respond effectively to legislative requirements, such as the new powers, for example, wider powers to influence policy and public service delivery in their area – for example investigated issues beyond its traditional remit but affect local people.
- To continue to ensure O&S works with the community and key partners to respond to concerns. We often do this by involving the community and key partners as witnesses or co-optees to our Scrutiny review process.
- To continue to ensure that the work of O&S has a positive effect on decision-makers and provide evidence that it has made a real difference.
- To continue to increase public participation in O&S at Northampton by increased public suggestions for scrutiny review and increased attendance at O&S Committee and Panel meetings during 2020/2021

Glossary of Terms

Call-In

The process by which the O&S Committee considers whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision.

Cabinet (Executive)

The Executive body responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which they take executive decisions.

Councillor (Member)

An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole

Pre-decision Scrutiny:

O&S may inform Executive decisions on topics on the Forward Plan by making evidence based recommendations or advice prior to formal decision by the Executive.

Review

A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other Councils' countrywide, and challenge existing practice where relevant.

The review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken.

Contact details for more information

Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, is always very happy to speak to local people about the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest areas which may be appropriate topics for future work, you can speak to her by calling 0300 330 7000 or by email.

You can view recent agendas and minutes on the Council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk or by contacting Democratic Services

Overview and Scrutiny has its own dedicated website within the Council's website. The current work of Overview and Scrutiny and the reports already published are available on this site. The address is www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Suggest an item for Overview and Scrutiny to investigate?

Do you have any suggestions for issues for inclusion onto the Overview and Scrutiny future Work Programme? If so please complete the form overleaf and return to: -

Democratic and Member Services Northampton Borough Council The Guildhall St Giles Square Northampton NN1 1DE

Email: Scrutiny

Suggest an item for Overview and Scrutiny to investigate

Do you have any suggestions for issues for inclusion onto the Overview and Scrutiny future Work Programme? If so please complete the form opposite and return to: -

Democratic and Member Services Northampton Borough Council The Guildhall St Giles Square Northampton NN1 1DE

Email: Scrutiny

Just as Overview and Scrutiny has considerable influence when used in the right way, there are times when other procedures are more appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny cannot help in the following areas:

Individual complaints about specific issues - these should be taken up through Northampton Borough Council's Customer Care Procedure.

Proper accounting for money of the Council - this is the responsibility of the Audit Committee - for information, contact 01604 837722

The conduct or behaviour of a councillor or officer - this is the responsibility of the Standards Committee - for information, contact 01604 837408.

It cannot be guaranteed that items raised in this way will actually be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

Suggested	Issue	for	Overview
and Scrutin	y		

Name:

Email:

Telephone

Issues suggested for inclusion on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Tracy Tiff on 01604 837408.

Jesli angielski nie jest Twoim jezykiem ojczystym a potrzebujesz pomocy w przetlumaczeniu tego Если английский не Ваш родной язык и Вам нужна помощь с переводом этого документа, то свяжитесь с Трайсу Тиф.Тел. 01604 837408

Haddii afka Ingriisigu aanu ahayn luuqad-daada kowaad oo aad u baahan-tahay in lagaa caawiyo turjumidda warqaddan fadlan kala xidhidh Tracy Tiff tilifoonka 01604 837408

如果英語不是你的主要說用語言而需要幫助將這份文件翻譯,請致電 01604 837408 向 Tracy Tiff 提出要求。

যদি ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এই দলিলটি অনুবাদে আপনার সাহায্যের দরকার হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে ট্রেইসি টিফ-এর সাথে 01604 837408 এই টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

LARGE PRINT AND TAPE

If you would like this document as large print or as a tape recording please call 01604 837408