

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at The Jeffrey Room,
The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on
11 November 2019 commencing at 6pm

George Candler
Chief Executive

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, telephone 01604 837408 (direct dial), email ttiff@northampton.gov.uk who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** please visit the website www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Members of the Committee

Chair	Councillor Jamie Lane
Deputy-Chair	Councillor Graham Walker
Committee Members	Councillor Tony Ansell Councillor Rufia Ashraf Councillor Mohammed Azizur Rahman (Aziz) Councillor Janice Duffy Councillor Gareth Eales Councillor Penelope Flavell Councillor Luke Graystone Councillor Samuel Kilby-Shaw Councillor Dennis Meredith Councillor Emma Roberts Councillor Cathrine Russell Councillor Brian W Sargeant Councillor Zoe Smith

Calendar of meetings

Date	Room
9 January 2020 6:00 pm 20 February 20 April	All meetings to be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Item No and Time	Title	Pages	Action required
1 6:00pm	Apologies		Members to note any apologies and substitution
2	Minutes	1 - 6	Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019.
3	Deputations/Public Addresses		<p>The Chair to note public address requests.</p> <p>The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a Public Address Protocol and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.</p>
4	Declarations of Interest (Including Whipping)		Members to state any interests.
5 6:05pm	Northampton Forward		
6 6:25pm	Facilities for Students	7 - 8	The Committee to receive a briefing around facilities for students
7 6:45pm	Sports Policy	9	<p>The Committee to receive a verbal update regarding the carried motion of full Council of 11 March 2019:</p> <p>“In preparation for the transition to Unitary we call upon NBC to produce a Sports Strategy for the people of Northampton that draws on the Sports Strategy for West Northamptonshire of 2009.</p> <p>The purpose of this strategy, as well as reviewing current</p>

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee

			<p>facilities, would be to identify gaps, reflect current user preferences and requirements.</p> <p>Only by doing this can we protect the assets in Northampton for the people of the town.</p>
8 7:05pm	Promotion of Information	11 - 13	The Committee to receive a briefing around how Northampton Borough Council promotes information to the public
9 7:20pm	Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities	15 - 53	The Committee to consider a briefing note on the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
10 7:45pm	Monitoring Of Overview and Scrutiny Reports		The Committee to review the implementation of the accepted recommendations contained within the following Overview and Scrutiny reports.
10 (a) 7:45pm	Culture and Tourism	55 - 74	
10 (b) 7:55pm	Cemeteries	75 - 83	
11	Scrutiny Panels		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive a progress report from the Scrutiny Panel and Working Group.
11 (a) 8:05pm	Scrutiny Panel 1	85	
11 (b) 8:15pm	O&S Working Group - Gangs and Knife Crime	87	
12 8:20pm	Overview and Scrutiny Reporting and Monitoring Working Group		The Committee to approve the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Reporting and Monitoring Working Group 2019/2020 (Copy to follow.)
13 8:25pm	Tree Policy		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider setting up a Working Group - Tree Policy.
14	Potential future pre decision scrutiny.		The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider any potential

Northampton Borough Overview & Scrutiny Committee

835pm			issues for future pre decision scrutiny.
15 8:40pm	Urgent Items		This issue is for business that by reasons of the special circumstances to be specified, the Chair is of the opinion is of sufficient urgency to consider. Members or Officers that wish to raise urgent items are to inform the Chair in advance.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 30 September 2019

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Lane (Chair), Councillors Aziz, Duffy, Roberts, Russell and Smith

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council
George Candler, Chief Executive
Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment
Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager
Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet
Louise Musson, Call Centre Manager
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

Member of the Public Mark Bocyte

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received Councillors Ansell, G Eales and Walker.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

Councillor Smith declared an interest as a Member of Northampton Leisure Trust – agenda item 6- Sports Policy.

Councillor Aziz declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Performance Monitoring Scrutiny, as a director of a Company that has houses in multiple occupancy (HIMOs.)

5. NORTHAMPTON FORWARD

Councillor Nunn, Leader of the Council, and George Candler, Chief Executive, addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provided an update on Northampton Forward. Salient points:

- Since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a lot of progress has been made.
- The consultation has now finished. A lot of comments have been made and the Leader of the Council is working through the consultation comments but it appears that and the majority of comments, over 50%, were supportive. There was strong encouragement for food and drink establishments within the town centre, history and culture makes people proud and there was also an acceptance of getting people living back in the town centre. Further comments were around improvement areas such as the Market Square and Gold Street. They need to be clean, units improved and other suggestions such as the fountain to be replaced. Christmas and Seasonal events were supported. The Drapery was highlighted as people felt it was not a comfortable place to cross; 26% said it needs to be made more pedestrian friendly. There was huge support for independent shops. Further comments included support for the restoration of buildings, more green space and more event space.
- Workshops were also held at the University of Northampton and in the town centre
- The consultants are finalising their work and their report is awaited.
- A Members' briefing will be scheduled at the appropriate time. A report will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 16 October 2019 regarding the Town Centre Masterplan.
- The Rough Order of Magnitude (high level costings) was submitted to Government recently.
- The outline business case would be produced in January 2020, the full Business in April 2020 and the outcome reported in the summer of 2020.
- The Authority has been successful in a number of funding bids including the Stronger Town's Fund
- The Northampton Forward Board continues with its activity and the Cross Party Working Group continues to meet regularly.
- A further consultation is planned for December 2019 on the proposed areas that will form the business case submitted to government

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- In response to a query regarding ownership of buildings, the Committee heard that Gold Street has always been commercial but it was a good time for the Council to step in and acquire buildings to help improve shop fronts.
- The Market Square is one of the most valuable assets to the town and it is in a conservation area. Only 8% of respondents to the consultation commented that the Market Square should be left as it is.
- Local Plan, Part 2 - the intention is to adopt in Spring 2021. It was commented that December is not usually a good time to consult. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the timings of the consultation are driven by the submission date

- The Committee commented that plans need to be as strong as possible.
- Northampton Forward is an opportunity for all to be focussed on climate energy.

The Chair thanked Councillor Nunn, Leader of the Council, and George Candler, Chief Executive, for their informative address and asked for a further update at the November 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

AGREED: That a further update on Northampton Forward is given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2019.

6. SPORTS POLICY

The update on the motion on the Sports Policy was noted. The Chair asked the Committee to forward to him any questions they might have and highlighted that progress on Motions is presented to full Council twice a year. It was suggested that the Sports Policy is included on the agenda of the November 2019 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

AGREED: That a further update on the Sports Policy is presented to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny on 11 November 2019.

7. AIR QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT CHANGE WORKING GROUP

In the absence of the Chair of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group; Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment advised that the next meeting of the Working Group had been set for 8 October 2019. The two speakers at the recent meeting of full Council would be asked to attend the meeting; as would a representative from the Woodland Trust; along with a bag designer for supermarkets.

The Chair confirmed that Councillor Kilby-Shaw, Chair, Air Quality and Management Change Working Group, would provide an update to the November 2019 meeting of this Committee.

AGREED: That an update on the work of the Air Quality and Management Change Working Group is presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING SCRUTINY

Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager appraised the Committee on the following KPIs:

- ESCO2 - Percentage of household waste recycled and composted
- ESCO9 - Percentage of fly tipping incidents removed within two working days of notification

A comprehensive written brief was circulated and the salient points were highlighted. The Committee heard that an end of year recycling figure of 49% would put NBC at around 85th

in the country compared to 219th. The "Clear Sack" Recycling Project being run in Far Cotton has shown that the increased level of recycling is far higher than the average increase across the Borough – this is a project we are looking to rollout further in areas not suitable for wheelie bins. Around 3000 properties were originally missed by Enterprise and didn't received recycling bins even though these properties may have been suitable – a programme has been developed to roll these out in the coming weeks, this will also assist in increasing recycling percentages.

The Cabinet Member for Environment emphasised that flytip incidents are amongst the highest in the county and officers, along with the relevant stakeholders, are taking action to address this. The Warden team was recently featured in a national newspaper report ranking them 3rd highest nationally based on the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices they had issued. A new CCTV system is being trialled for enforcement and the cameras run on long life batteries. A camera is currently live in an undisclosed area. It is proposed that further cameras will be purchased.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

- It is a very good system but Councillors have received complaints about sack deliveries. The Committee was reassured that problems have now been rectified.
- In response to a query, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the longest wait for a bulky waste collection is one week.
- Should waste be fly-tipped on private land, officers have to speak with the landowner.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, and Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing presented information on the following KPIs:

- HML01 – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- HM008 - Number of HMOs with an additional licence

A comprehensive written brief was circulated and the salient points were highlighted.

The Committee asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a query regarding someone having to live in temporary accommodation, Phil Harris confirmed that both parties must make an effort and Officers do work with private tenants.
- It was confirmed that if people are homeless but living with family they are still included in the temporary accommodation figures
- There are different types of temporary accommodation, for example NPH has accommodation that is dedicated to temporary accommodation
- Individuals that are in temporary accommodation are given priority on the housing register; it is not common practice but they can bid for properties.

- In answer to a query regarding vulnerability, the Committee heard that Officers are careful to establish reasons why individuals are unable to stay with family
- Statistics are fairly stable currently
- In response to a query regarding whether HMOs are used for temporary accommodation, it was confirmed that they are not but hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation
- In accordance with HMO licensing standards are regulated and limits are set.
- Phil Harris confirmed that the consultation regarding HMOs ended in July and the Council is considering Article 4.
- In response to a number of unlicensed HMOs, Phil Harris advised that good, experienced Officers are in post and the consequences of non-licensing are serious.

Councillor Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Chris Carvell, Contracts Manager
Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, and Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing

9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chair asked the Committee for suggestions for future performance management scrutiny. He advised that he felt there were just four KPIs:

- 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

However these had been performance management scrutinised at this meeting, therefore it was suggested that the Committee keeps a watch on the above KPIs and should it feel the need to further performance management scrutinise them the Chair would contact the relevant Cabinet Members.

10. MONITORING OF O&S REPORTS

(A) DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

Louise Musson, Call Care Manager, presented the monitoring action plan in relation to the accepted recommendations of the Scrutiny Review - Dementia Friendly Town and highlighted the salient points.

The Committee made comment, asked questions and heard:

In response to a query regarding whether taxi drivers receive relevant training regarding dementia friendly, Louise Musson confirmed that she would liaise directly with the Licensing department regarding speaking with taxi drivers direct.

A keep safe card has been launched, however, taxi drivers understand what a keep safe card is

Concern was raised that dementia only features ones in the Local Plan and it was queried whether there was opportunity for it to be included more. It was confirmed that Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for the Dementia Strategy and this is currently being ratified. Comments made would be forwarded to the Head of Customers and Cultural Services.

Louise Musson, Call Care Manager, was thanked for her address.

AGREED: That a further update on the accepted recommendations of the Scrutiny Review - Dementia Friendly Town is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 January 2020.

11. SCRUTINY PANELS

12. SCRUTINY PANEL 1

The written update was noted.

13. O&S WORKING GROUP - GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

The written update was noted.

14. POTENTIAL FUTURE PRE DECISION SCRUTINY

There were none.

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:36 pm



Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11th November 2019

Briefing Note: Facilities for Students – What facilities NBC offers for students around the town and borough, including housing and leisure facilities

- 1.1 At a recent meeting of the Scrutiny Panel, a Briefing Paper was requested regarding facilities NBC offers for students around the town and borough, including housing and leisure facilities.
- 1.2 Whilst the services, events and facilities provided or supported by the council are inclusive, the facilities offered particularly for students are briefly outlined below.

2 Housing

- 2.1 The Housing Enforcement Team designed a Dos and Don'ts Checklist for students looking for student housing. This was well received at the University of Northampton Freshers Fair where the Housing Enforcement team joined other members of the University's Multi Agency Student Housing Hub to improve students' housing.
- 2.2 The Housing Enforcement Team ensures students are living in a healthy, safe, well-managed home. They provide confidential advice and help for students experiencing any disrepair problems with their accommodation, any concerns about the condition of their gas or electricity supply or any worries that they do not have adequate fire precautions.
- 2.3 The Housing Enforcement team provide general advice and support for students living in a House in Multiple Occupation. The team also works with landlords to improve students' housing, through advice, support, and enforcement.
- 2.4 Properties that are occupied by full time students only are exempt from payment of Council Tax.

3 Leisure

- 3.1 Northampton Leisure Trust (NLT), on behalf of Northampton Borough Council, offer a SuperGold Student Membership covering the gym, pool and classes at all sites for a reduced monthly fee plus an initial admin fee. This is offered on a no contract basis.
- 3.2 NLT also offer a Cripps Student Budget Membership covering the gym, pool, classes, Myride (virtual cycling), at the Cripps Recreation centre for a reduced monthly fee. This is offered on a no contract and no joining fee basis.
- 3.3 NLT offers a 9 month Cripps Student Membership scheme covering the gym, pool, MyRide and classes at Cripps Recreation Centre. This is offered on a one off payment upfront basis which represents a lower cost than that of 9 months use of the Cripps Student Budget Membership.

3.4 As part of wider work on a Museums membership scheme launching next year, the Museum service will be looking at a student membership package, and events for students will be promoted accordingly, for example the Steam Punk weekend in May 2020.

4 Community Partnerships

4.1 For young people aged 11 to 19 the council runs the Youth Forum to engage young people in conversations and involve them in decision making. The annual International Youth Day is organised by the Community Partnerships team and Youth Forum.

4.2 The Community Partnerships team supports the taxi marshalling and safer routes initiative to support students in the night time economy. The team also arranges bike marking and personal safety events aimed at students.

4.3 The Community Partnerships team arranges primary school and secondary school community safety awareness events – delivering key community safety messages around hate crime, anti-social behaviour, gangs, knives, cyber bullying, personal, water and fire safety.

4.4 Partnership Grant funding to support Street Pastors, Free2Talk, Warts and All theatre and the Lowdown, all supporting young people, is administered by the Community Partnerships team.

4.5 The council secured significant funding through the Home Office trusted relationships fund, to deliver the ‘True Knowledge’ programme, youth provision being delivered by Free 2 Talk in Blackthorn, Spring Boroughs and Semilong and in the Town Centre (tackling knife crime and child sexual exploitation).

5 Other services for students

5.1 The council’s Elections team works in partnership with the University of Northampton to ensure all students are registered to vote. They attend the Freshers Fair and events in the Halls of Residence and in the Market Place to provide advice and guidance to students.

5.2 The council’s Licensing team regulate taxi, driver and premises licences to protect the safety of students.

5.3 Parking at St Michael’s car park is currently offered at a reduced rate for students using the Mounts leisure facilities.

5.4 Through student engagement events, the council offers volunteering opportunities to students e.g. at the Nightshelter

3. In preparation for the transition to Unitary we call upon NBC to produce a Sports Strategy for the people of Northampton that draws on the Sports Strategy for West Northamptonshire of 2009.

The purpose of this strategy, as well as reviewing current facilities, would be to identify gaps, reflect current user preferences and requirements.

Only by doing this can we protect the assets in Northampton for the people of the town.

Head of Customers and Communities

Cllr Anna King

The Head of Customers and Communities is liaising with Northampton Leisure Trust in relation to developing a wider health and wellbeing strategy which will include sport in preparation for unitary

UPDATE:
In January 2008 Syzygy Leisure was commissioned by Daventry District Council, on behalf of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit to undertake the development of a Sports Facilities Strategy for West Northamptonshire.

A number of strategic documents, i.e. national policy documents, regional policy documents, county policy documents and the plans of Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council helped frame the Sports Facilities Strategy.

Thirty Governing Bodies of Sport were approached to ascertain their needs. These needs were then considered against the facilities available across the West Northamptonshire area and a number of issues were identified, some specifically in Northampton.

The report then looked at the needs and demands of the sports facilities across West Northamptonshire. Again, a number of issues were identified, some specifically in Northampton.

The report also looked at future requirements for the West Northamptonshire area, and outlined the conclusions and action plans. The report identified a number of new facilities that were required to meet the growth in the West Northamptonshire area as well as identify where there was insufficient provision to meet demand at that time. The report also identified that there is an overall need to ensure that where facilities exist that their access for community use is maximised.

The Sports Facilities Strategy for West Northamptonshire (2009) has helped shape the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of the area covered by Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District councils for the plan period up to 2029.

An assessment of the current supply and demand, future requirements and recommendations was undertaken in the development of the West Northamptonshire Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategies for Northampton Borough dated 2017/18. These strategies will be used to inform the development of the Local Plan Part 2.

In preparation for the transition to Unitary we need to ensure that we deliver and build on the strategies already produced for West Northamptonshire and jointly maximise any opportunities to increase participation in sport and physical activities, e.g. taking advantage of any funding available, joining in with national sports initiatives and building upon the work of Northamptonshire Sport.

Together we need to put healthy living at the heart of our communities and support each other to deliver this.

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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 November 2019

Briefing Note: How we promote information to the public

1 How we communicate

There is a wide variety of methods for communication and we try and utilise as many of them as possible, to ensure we reach the maximum number of people. This document deals primarily with external communications, but we also use a wide variety of internal communications channels to engage with staff.

1.1 Media

Media can be an effective way to disseminate information but the results can be variable. Advertising is the only guaranteed way to ensure the Council's primary messages remain intact.

1.2 Press conferences

These are used extremely sparingly in order to maintain impact. They are usually necessary when there is a particularly big announcement which requires or is likely to attract a high level of media involvement.

1.3 Media interviews

Cabinet members usually undertake media interviews though, in some circumstances and with their agreement, staff might offer interviews where that is the more expedient or effective option.

1.4 Press releases

These are used frequently in order to ensure key messages remain in the public domain. Content is always focused on Council or partnership activity with the intention of informing members of the public about initiatives, events and developments in the borough.

1.5 Social Media

Primarily Facebook and Twitter, though the council also utilises Instagram to promote Love Northampton activity. This activity is often used to support more extensive activity via web,

press release, direct mail and so on, or to provide bite-sized chunks of detail to ensure key messages become established.

1.6 Website

The Council's revamped website was launched in November 2018 and its news section is used as a repository for council updates which are then promoted via a variety of methods, primarily social media. The top tasks tiles in the banner section at the top of the site enable us to highlight key issues at any given point.

1.7 Direct mail and advertising

Due to cost these are used sparingly for particularly hard-to-reach groups or communications which require heavy community engagement, though Council Tax demands offer an ideal opportunity to communicate with every household within the borough. Advertising is sometimes considered in local publications to promote events.

1.8 Parish meetings and community groups

Parish meetings or attendance at community groups offers the opportunity to engage directly with specific communities, where residents can ask questions and receive updates. It is often also a good opportunity to distribute printed materials without the additional cost of postage.

1.9 Members

Council members are clearly ambassadors for the Council and its work, and have the ability to access and inform sections of their communities which might otherwise be hard to reach. They are provided with as much information as possible in order that they can speak with authority when asked about Council activity.

1.10 Staff

Well-informed and engaged staff can provide an effective ambassadorial front-line role when dealing with residents.

1.11 Voluntary and community organisations

We deal with a wide range of local voluntary groups and community forums and they are encouraged to distribute and spread the word about Council activity.

1.12 Internal channels

The Council uses a wide variety of internal communications channels including:

- Internal newsletter
- Intranet
- Senior Management Team blog
- Senior Management Team briefings to staff
- Internal Communications Champions
- Managers' Sessions, DMTs and other team meetings
- Desktop screen splash
- Notice Boards
- All-staff emails

2 Engagement and consultation

The council engages and consults with the public regarding many aspects of its work. This is usually carried out by individual service areas but where appropriate the Communications Team helps publicise.

A variety of methods are adopted for both engagement and consultation:

2.1 Forums

Departments work with a wide variety of organisations including residents', community, and parish clerks' forums, park management committees, and voluntary sector partners, including regular meetings. These offer the opportunity to engage directly with the community and encourage participation in consultations.

2.2 Survey Monkey

This is the Council's primary tool for carrying out consultations, coupled with publicity through an appropriate assortment of channels as detailed in the 'How we communicate' section above.

2.3 Email

In some circumstances, consultation responses are requested via direct email, publicised in the same way as the Council's Survey Monkey work.

2.4 External consultants

The council also makes judicious use of consultants where the situation dictates that this is the most appropriate mechanism.

Brief Author: Craig Forsyth, Marketing and Communications Manager

Date: 1 October 2019

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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 November 2019

**Briefing Note: Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in
Local and Combined Authorities**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 7 May 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published the document, 'Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Overview and Scrutiny'. The new guidance seeks to clarify the role and benefits of scrutiny to local authorities, taking into account the significant changes to scrutiny since the previous guidance was published in 2006.
- 1.2 Noting that this is statutory guidance, it also recognises that Local Authorities are best placed to decide how Overview and Scrutiny should operate within their own political structures. As such the guidance highlights best practice and lets individual Councils determine its implementation.
- 1.3 Although a number of parts of the guidance relate to the wider culture of the organisation in respect of Overview and Scrutiny and are therefore outside the remit of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to directly determine, other sections provide more practical advice. Where the guidance makes practical recommendations, the Committee needs to consider how it wishes those to be implemented. The areas within the remit of the Committee to implement are highlighted in this report. The report goes on to summarise the recommended policies and best practice included in the statutory guidance that Local Authorities should adopt, or consider adopting, with an overview of how the current arrangements at Northampton measure up and some suggested areas for possible further discussion and development.
- 1.4 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Rules are set out in Part 5 of Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution. Any changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements may require a change to these rules which would require the approval of full Council.
- 1.5 Local and Combined Authorities must have regard to the new statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) when exercising their functions. It is emphasised that this does not mean that the sections of the guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is good reason not to in a particular case.

2. Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

Background

- 2.1. In September 2017 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee (the Select Committee) undertook a review of the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities. This review took into account a broad range of evidence from a variety of sources. The review concluded with the publication of the Select Committee's findings and recommendations in December 2017.
- 2.2 The Select Committee made 21 findings and recommendations underpinned by two key conclusions; that effective Overview and Scrutiny requires the right organisational culture, working best where constructive challenge and democratic accountability is welcomed, and that the independence of Overview and Scrutiny needs strengthening.
- 2.3. The Government published its response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee report in March 2018, giving a commitment to publish new scrutiny guidance for local authorities by December 2018. Although the publication of the guidance was delayed, it was eventually published in May 2019. A copy of the full guidance is detailed at Appendix A.
- 2.4 The Government Response states that Councils are best-placed to shape scrutiny arrangements to suit local needs and recognises the flexibility Local Authorities need to put those arrangements in place. In particular, the Government Response emphasises that the Government is cautious of imposing particular arrangements on Local Authorities, such as prescribing how Overview and Scrutiny chairs are appointed, resources and training, governance monitoring systems and how to hold external bodies running public services to account.
- 2.5 The Guidance bases 'effective scrutiny' on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles, which set out that good scrutiny:
 - provides a constructive "critical friend" challenge;
 - amplifies the voices and concerns of the public;
 - is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
 - drives improvement in public services.

Themes of the Guidance

- 2.6. The guidance highlights a number of specific areas that directly contribute towards the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny. These range from practical advice on items such as the importance of work programming to the less tangible and harder to influence, such as organisational culture. The six themes as set out in the guidance are:

- i. Culture
- ii. Resourcing
- iii. Selecting Committee Members

- iv. Power to Access Information
- v. Planning Work
- vi. Evidence Sessions

2.7. The six themes are summarised below:

Culture

- 2.8. The guidance acknowledges that organisational culture within local authorities is one of the key determinates of the success or failure of Overview and Scrutiny, with an emphasis placed on the importance of Scrutiny being owned and Member led.
- 2.9. It is also emphasised that the performance of Overview and Scrutiny and its effectiveness can be considered by external bodies such as regulators and be highlighted in public reports published by those bodies.
- 2.10. The guidance details a number of suggested methods that will help to ensure that the organisational culture is supportive of the role of scrutiny:

a) Recognising Scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy

The need for all members and officers within the Council to recognise the importance and legitimacy of scrutiny, and specific legal powers of Scrutiny Committees set out in law, is highlighted within the guidance.

b) Identifying a clear role and focus

It is recommended that there is a need for scrutiny to have a clearly defined role within the organisation and one that is focused on providing value.

It is highlighted that there needs to be a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny and audit functions.

c) Ensuring early and regular engagement between the Cabinet and Scrutiny

It is recommended that there should be early and regular discussions between Scrutiny and the Cabinet, particularly in regard to the Cabinet's future work programming.

d) Managing Disagreement

The guidance recommends that a protocol is developed to manage any instances when the Cabinet disagrees with Scrutiny recommendations.

e) Providing the Necessary Support

The guidance recognises that determining the level of support available for Scrutiny is a matter for individual authorities, but it does highlight that appropriate support should be given to allow Scrutiny Members to access information required to fulfil their duties.

f) Ensuring Impartial Advice from Officers

The guidance reaffirms the need for officers to be able to give impartial advice to Scrutiny Members, highlighting in particular the importance of the 'statutory officer' roles - the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the statutory Scrutiny Officer.

g) *Communicating Scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority*

The guidance highlights that a lack of awareness of the role of scrutiny across the Council can act as an impediment to its success. Therefore it is vital to communicate the importance of scrutiny and the role it plays in decision making across the Council. This will ensure that officers are aware of the role of scrutiny, its powers and the importance of providing support to the scrutiny function.

h) *Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of Scrutiny*

The guidance notes that it is important that other non-scrutiny Members are kept informed of the work of scrutiny. The suggested mechanism for this is through submitting reports and recommendations to full Council rather than solely to the Cabinet.

i) *Communicating scrutiny's role to the public*

The guidance suggests engaging with the Council's Communications team to publicise and raise awareness of the work of scrutiny in the local community.

j) *Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset*

The guidance acknowledges that the difficulty for Members in potentially having to scrutinise colleagues, but emphasises that in order for scrutiny to work effectively. It is fundamental that Members have an independent mindset. It highlights the need for Scrutiny Chairs to work proactively to identify any contentious issues and plan how to manage them.

2.11. As detailed earlier in this briefing note a number of the sections above are outside of the remit of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to directly influence. As such the Committee should consider highlighting the above to the Governance Review Panel, asking that consideration be given to how these can be implemented.

Resourcing

2.12. The guidance does not recommend prescribe a specific level of officer support allocated to scrutiny, but it does highlight that an appropriate level of support is required to ensure that scrutiny can function effectively.

2.13. In addition to specific officer support, the guidance highlights that any support should also include the way the wider Council engages with scrutiny.

2.14. This section of the guidance is also beyond the remit of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to directly influence however, Committee should consider reviewing current resource allocation and, if any shortfalls are identified which impact on effectiveness, raise these appropriately.

Selecting Committee Members

2.15. The guidance emphasises the need to consider experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group and capacity to serve when selecting Members to sit on **18** Overview and Scrutiny committees.

- 2.16. A perceived level of support for or against a particular political party should not be a factor taken into account when selecting Members for scrutiny.
- 2.17. The selection of Members to sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the Council is by the Political groups and is the direct control of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee. However, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ensures Members to the Scrutiny Panels that undertaken Reviews are those with a particular interest or expertise in the issue being reviewed.
- 2.18. The guidance acknowledges the importance the role of Chair plays in the success of scrutiny, with this role being responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working. A suggestion is made for using a secret ballot as a method for selecting scrutiny chairs, but it is acknowledged that it is up to local authorities to choose the best method for their circumstances. Committee should note however, that specific provisions exist in other legislation and the Council's Constitution in relation to voting generally.
- 2.19. It is recommended that ongoing training is provided for Scrutiny Members to allow them to fulfil their roles successfully. In particular the need for Members to be aware of their legal powers and understand how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at Scrutiny meetings are essential.
- 2.20. The guidance also recognises the value that can be added by outside expertise through either co-option of members onto a committee or the use of technical advisors for specific subject. At Northampton Borough Council, a number of co-optees are appointed to the Scrutiny Panels for the life of the reviews however, Committee may also want to consider whether technical experts can add value in relation to particular matters, along with any resulting resourcing requirements.

Power to Access Information

- 2.21. The guidance also highlights the enhanced legal powers for Scrutiny Committees to access information in order to be able to carry out its work. This includes regular access to key sources of information such as data on finance, performance and risk.
- 2.22. The guidance details a number of considerations for Scrutiny when requesting information from external organisations including the need to explain the purpose of scrutiny, highlighting the benefits of an informal approach, how to encourage compliance with the request and who best to approach.
- 2.23. In order to act as a reminder for Members on requests made for further information at Committee meetings and to ensure that the information is provided, a specific section has been added to the minutes of each meeting setting out the requests made. This has ensured more timely responses to requests for information by the Committee.
- 2.24. The wider question of how and when information is provided to scrutiny is something that should be referred to the Constitutional Working Group for further consideration.

Planning Work

- 2.25. The guidance reinforces the importance of work programming in the success of Overview and Scrutiny, with a focus needed on items that can make a tangible difference. In planning its work programme, it is recommended that scrutiny should have in the main a long term plan, but with enough flexibility to ensure

that urgent, short term issues can be considered as needed. At Northampton, there is a very good, structured work programming process in place that considers the views of the public. Space is always left should urgent reviews need to be programmed in; for example, in 2018/2019 an additional review was programmed in – Adult Social Care – Post Unitary.

- 2.26. It is recognised that there needs to be coordination across the work programmes of individual Scrutiny Committees/Sub-Committees with prioritisation being necessary to ensure that the intended outcome for a specific item remained focused. At Northampton, there is just one Work Programme as there is one Overview and Scrutiny Committee but the Scrutiny Panels (Task and Finish Groups) do regular updates on their work as the reviews progress.
- 2.27. The guidance recommends using a variety of sources to inform the work programme including the public, partner organisations, the Cabinet and senior officers. In consulting with the public it does highlight that a formal consultation on scrutiny can be less successful than informal approaches.
- 2.28. At Northampton a variety of sources are consulted when preparing the work programme at the start of the year, including the public and Cabinet regarding their priorities for the year; from this, pre-decision scrutiny items are often determined. The guidance also recommends the use of shortlisting to decide which topics to include in the work programme to ensure that the items chosen are ones in which scrutiny can add value. This is done at Northampton in the annual Overview and Scrutiny work programming event.
- 2.29. The guidance sets out a number of different ways topics can be scrutinised, including having a single item on an agenda, dedicating a whole meeting to one item, a short task and finish group, a longer term task and finish group or a standing panel. The guidance sets out when it might be most appropriate to use each of the above.
- 2.30. At Northampton, single items have been reviewed by the Committee in the past but more detailed reviews are carried out by Scrutiny Panels.

Evidence Sessions

- 2.31. The guidance emphasises that evidence sessions are a key way for scrutiny committees to inform their work and highlights the need for effective planning. In particular it is recommended that consideration is given to setting overall objectives for each session and the types of questions that need to be asked to achieve these objectives.
- 2.32. Evidence gathering via either desktop research or witness evidence is a key part of any Scrutiny review at Northampton. Reviews are planned thoroughly and a scope (terms of reference) is devised. The guidance does also highlight the importance of pre meetings; for example, so that Members can be delegated specific questions to ask a witness and be fully briefed prior to the evidence gathering sessions.

A Work Programme for the Committee is also put together and published so that Members are aware of upcoming items at the overarching Committee meetings.

- 2.33. In developing recommendations from the evidence sessions the guidance advocates the need for them to be evidence based and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed). The guidance also suggests that a

maximum of six to eight recommendations per topic are usually sufficient to ensure that a focused response is received. All of the recommendations from reviews at Northampton are SMART but on occasions there have been more than the suggested 6-8 recommendations.

- 2.34. At the conclusion of each scrutiny exercise at Northampton a final meeting of the Scrutiny Panel is held for the Panel to finalise its conclusions and recommendations and ensure they are in accordance with the evidence received, i.e. they are evidence based. Monitoring of the accepted recommendations always takes place after Cabinet has considered the report. Cabinet Members attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a completed action plan detailing progress on the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to set up a Working Group to look at the guidance in detail and give consideration to the current processes and whether any changes are required as a result of the guidance.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommendation that the Committee is asked to convene a Working Group to review the new Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities with a view to identifying any changes to current practice as a result of the guidance that can be directly implemented by the Committee or report to the appropriate bodies in relation to any matters outside its control.

Background Papers

Communities and Local Government Committee – Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Government Response: Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/communities-and-local-government/2017-19-Correspondence/Government-Response-to-the-Communities-and-Local-Government-Committee-First-Report-on-the-effectiveness-of-local-authority-overview-and-scrutiny-committees.pdf>

Centre for Public Scrutiny – Scrutiny Statutory Guidance published <https://www.cfps.org.uk/scrutiny-statutory-guidance-published-today/>

Brief Author: Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 October 2019

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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities



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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

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Ministerial Foreword

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.

It is vital that councils and combined authorities know the purpose of scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it and the benefits it can bring. This guidance aims to increase understanding in all four areas.

In writing this guidance, my department has taken close note of the House of Commons Select Committee report of December 2017, as well as the written and oral evidence supplied to that Committee. We have also consulted individuals and organisations with practical involvement in conducting, researching and supporting scrutiny.

It is clear from speaking to these practitioners that local and combined authorities with effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in place share certain key traits, the most important being a strong organisational culture. Authorities who welcome challenge and recognise the value scrutiny can bring reap the benefits. But this depends on strong commitment from the top - from senior members as well as senior officials.

Crucially, this guidance recognises that authorities have democratic mandates and are ultimately accountable to their electorates, and that authorities themselves are best-placed to know which scrutiny arrangements are most appropriate for their own individual circumstances.

I would, however, strongly urge all councils to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and, above all, ensure they embed a culture that allows overview and scrutiny to flourish.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rishi Sunak'.

Rishi Sunak MP
Minister for Local Government

About this Guidance

Who the guidance is for

This document is aimed at local authorities and combined authorities in England to help them carry out their overview and scrutiny functions effectively. In particular, it provides advice for senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees, and support officers.

Aim of the guidance

This guidance seeks to ensure local authorities and combined authorities are aware of the purpose of overview and scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it effectively and the benefits it can bring.

As such, it includes a number of policies and practices authorities should adopt or should consider adopting when deciding how to carry out their overview and scrutiny functions.

The guidance recognises that authorities approach scrutiny in different ways and have different processes and procedures in place, and that what might work well for one authority might not work well in another.

The hypothetical scenarios contained in the annexes to this guidance have been included for illustrative purposes, and are intended to provoke thought and discussion rather than serve as a 'best' way to approach the relevant issues.

While the guidance sets out some of the key legal requirements, it does not seek to replicate legislation.

Status of the guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Local authorities and combined authorities must have regard to it when exercising their functions. The phrase 'must have regard', when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.

Not every authority is required to appoint a scrutiny committee. This guidance applies to those authorities who have such a committee in place, whether they are required to or not.

This guidance has been issued under section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which requires authorities to have regard to this guidance. In addition, authorities may have regard to other material they might choose to consider, including that issued by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, when exercising their overview and scrutiny functions.

Terminology

Unless 'overview' is specifically mentioned, the term 'scrutiny' refers to both overview and scrutiny.¹

Where the term 'authority' is used, it refers to both local authorities and combined authorities.

Where the term 'scrutiny committee' is used, it refers to an overview and scrutiny committee and any of its sub-committees. As the legislation refers throughout to powers conferred on scrutiny committees, that is the wording used in this guidance. However, the guidance should be seen as applying equally to work undertaken in informal task and finish groups, commissioned by formal committees.

Where the term 'executive' is used, it refers to executive members.

For combined authorities, references to the 'executive' or 'cabinet' should be interpreted as relating to the mayor (where applicable) and all the authority members.

For authorities operating committee rather than executive arrangements, references to the executive or Cabinet should be interpreted as relating to councillors in leadership positions.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

¹ A distinction is often drawn between 'overview' which focuses on the development of policy, and 'scrutiny' which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.

1. Introduction and Context

1. Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities.
2. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers² to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Recommendations following scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and scrutiny committees can also play a valuable role in developing policy.

Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services.

3. The requirement for local authorities in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
4. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Local Government Act 2000 to allow councils to revert to a non-executive form of governance - the 'committee system'. Councils who adopt the committee system are not required to have overview and scrutiny but may do so if they wish. The legislation has been strengthened and updated since 2000, most recently to reflect new governance arrangements with combined authorities. Requirements for combined authorities are set out in Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
5. Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are democratically-elected bodies who are best-placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, and so gives them a great degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt.
6. In producing this guidance, the Government fully recognises both authorities' democratic mandate and that the nature of local government has changed in recent years, with, for example, the creation of combined authorities, and councils increasingly delivering key services in partnership with other organisations or outsourcing them entirely.

² Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 1 of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

2. Culture

7. The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.
8. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.
9. Creating a strong organisational culture supports scrutiny work that can add real value by, for example, improving policy-making and the efficient delivery of public services. In contrast, low levels of support for and engagement with the scrutiny function often lead to poor quality and ill-focused work that serves to reinforce the perception that it is of little worth or relevance.
10. Members and senior officers should note that the performance of the scrutiny function is not just of interest to the authority itself. Its effectiveness, or lack thereof, is often considered by external bodies such as regulators and inspectors, and highlighted in public reports, including best value inspection reports. Failures in scrutiny can therefore help to create a negative public image of the work of an authority as a whole.

How to establish a strong organisational culture

11. Authorities can establish a strong organisational culture by:

- a) **Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy** – all members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements and for combined authorities.

Councillors have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.

- b) **Identifying a clear role and focus** – authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority (see chapter 6).

Authorities should ensure a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny function and the audit function. While it is appropriate for scrutiny to pay due regard to the authority's financial position, this will need to happen in the context of the formal audit role. The authority's section 151 officer should advise scrutiny on how to manage this dynamic.

While scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of the authority's whistleblowing arrangements, the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications. Members should always follow the authority's constitution and associated Monitoring Officer directions on the matter. Further guidance on whistleblowing can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf.

- c) **Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny** – authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between scrutiny and the executive, especially regarding the latter's future work programme. Authorities should, though, be mindful of their distinct roles:

In particular:

- The executive should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee. This could be direct, e.g. by purporting to 'order' scrutiny to look at, or not look at, certain issues, or indirect, e.g. through the use of the whip or as a tool of political patronage, and the committee itself should remember its statutory purpose when carrying out its work. All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a 'critical friend' not a de facto 'opposition'. Scrutiny chairs have a particular role to play in establishing the profile and nature of their committee (see chapter 4); and
- The chair of the scrutiny committee should determine the nature and extent of an executive member's participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal scrutiny task group meeting.

- d) **Managing disagreement** – effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious. It is therefore inevitable that, at times, an executive will disagree with the findings or recommendations of a scrutiny committee.

It is the job of both the executive and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of this happening, and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement.

One way in which this can be done is via an 'executive-scrutiny protocol' (see annex 1) which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves in unhelpful and unproductive ways. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a framework for disagreement and debate, and a way to manage it when it happens. Often,

the value of such a protocol lies in the dialogue that underpins its preparation. It is important that these protocols are reviewed on a regular basis.

Scrutiny committees do have the power to 'call in' decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.

- e) **Providing the necessary support** – while the level of resource allocated to scrutiny is for each authority to decide for itself, when determining resources an authority should consider the purpose of scrutiny as set out in legislation and the specific role and remit of the authority's own scrutiny committee(s), and the scrutiny function as a whole.

Support should also be given by members and senior officers to scrutiny committees and their support staff to access information held by the authority and facilitate discussions with representatives of external bodies (see chapter 5).

- f) **Ensuring impartial advice from officers** – authorities, particularly senior officers, should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny committees. This is fundamental to effective scrutiny. Of particular importance is the role played by 'statutory officers' – the monitoring officer, the section 151 officer and the head of paid service, and where relevant the statutory scrutiny officer. These individuals have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.
- g) **Communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority** – the scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority's wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.
- h) **Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee** – part of communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority should happen through the formal, public role of full Council – particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council's work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.

One way in which this can be done is by reports and recommendations being submitted to full Council rather than solely to the executive. Scrutiny should decide when it would be appropriate to submit reports for wider debate in this way, taking into account the relevance of reports to full Council business, as well as full Council's capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner. Such

reports would supplement the annual report to full Council on scrutiny's activities and raise awareness of ongoing work.

In order to maintain awareness of scrutiny at the Combined Authority and provoke dialogue and discussion of its impact, the business of scrutiny should be reported to the Combined Authority board or to the chairs of the relevant scrutiny committees of constituent and non-constituent authorities, or both. At those chairs' discretion, particular Combined Authority scrutiny outcomes, and what they might mean for each individual area, could be either discussed by scrutiny in committee or referred to full Council of the constituent authorities.

- i) **Communicating scrutiny's role to the public** – authorities should ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consideration should be given to how and when to engage the authority's communications officers, and any other relevant channels, to understand how to get that message across. This will usually require engagement early on in the work programming process (see chapter 6).
- j) **Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset** – formal committee meetings provide a vital opportunity for scrutiny members to question the executive and officers.

Inevitably, some committee members will come from the same political party as a member they are scrutinising and might well have a long-standing personal, or familial, relationship with them (see paragraph 25).

Scrutiny members should bear in mind, however, that adopting an independent mind-set is fundamental to carrying out their work effectively. In practice, this is likely to require scrutiny chairs working proactively to identify any potentially contentious issues and plan how to manage them.

Directly-elected mayoral systems

12. A strong organisational culture that supports scrutiny work is particularly important in authorities with a directly-elected mayor to ensure there are the checks and balances to maintain a robust democratic system. Mayoral systems offer the opportunity for greater public accountability and stronger governance, but there have also been incidents that highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a culture that puts scrutiny at the heart of its operations.
13. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should ensure that scrutiny committees are well-resourced, are able to recruit high-calibre members and that their scrutiny functions pay particular attention to issues surrounding:
 - rights of access to documents by the press, public and councillors;
 - transparent and fully recorded decision-making processes, especially avoiding decisions by 'unofficial' committees or working groups;
 - delegated decisions by the Mayor;
 - whistleblowing protections for both staff and councillors; and
 - powers of Full Council, where applicable, to question and review.

14. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should note that mayors are required by law to attend overview and scrutiny committee sessions when asked to do so (see paragraph 44).

3. Resourcing

15. The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.
16. Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.
17. Authorities should also recognise that support for scrutiny committees, task groups and other activities is not solely about budgets and provision of officer time, although these are clearly extremely important elements. Effective support is also about the ways in which the wider authority engages with those who carry out the scrutiny function (both members and officers).

When deciding on the level of resource to allocate to the scrutiny function, the factors an authority should consider include:

- Scrutiny's legal powers and responsibilities;
- The particular role and remit scrutiny will play in the authority;
- The training requirements of scrutiny members and support officers, particularly the support needed to ask effective questions of the executive and other key partners, and make effective recommendations;
- The need for ad hoc external support where expertise does not exist in the council;
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny has been shown to add value to the work of authorities, improving their ability to meet the needs of local people; and
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny can help policy formulation and so minimise the need for call-in of executive decisions.

Statutory scrutiny officers

18. Combined authorities, upper and single tier authorities are required to designate a statutory scrutiny officer,³ someone whose role is to:
 - promote the role of the authority's scrutiny committee;
 - provide support to the scrutiny committee and its members; and
 - provide support and guidance to members and officers relating to the functions of the scrutiny committee.

³ Section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000; article 9 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017

19. Authorities not required by law to appoint such an officer should consider whether doing so would be appropriate for their specific local needs.

Officer resource models

20. Authorities are free to decide for themselves which wider officer support model best suits their individual circumstances, though generally they adopt one or a mix of the following:

- Committee – officers are drawn from specific policy or service areas;
- Integrated – officers are drawn from the corporate centre and also service the executive; and
- Specialist – officers are dedicated to scrutiny.

21. Each model has its merits – the committee model provides service-specific expertise; the integrated model facilitates closer and earlier scrutiny involvement in policy formation and alignment of corporate work programmes; and the specialist model is structurally independent from those areas it scrutinises.

22. Authorities should ensure that, whatever model they employ, officers tasked with providing scrutiny support are able to provide impartial advice. This might require consideration of the need to build safeguards into the way that support is provided. The nature of these safeguards will differ according to the specific role scrutiny plays in the organisation.

4. Selecting Committee Members

23. Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority.
24. While there are proportionality requirements that must be met,⁴ the selection of the chair and other committee members is for each authority to decide for itself. Guidance for combined authorities on this issue has been produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny⁵.

Members invariably have different skill-sets. What an authority must consider when forming a committee is that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.

25. Authorities are reminded that members of the executive cannot be members of a scrutiny committee.⁶ Authorities should take care to ensure that, as a minimum, members holding less formal executive positions, e.g. as Cabinet assistants, do not sit on scrutinising committees looking at portfolios to which those roles relate. Authorities should articulate in their constitutions how conflicts of interest, including familial links (see also paragraph 31), between executive and scrutiny responsibilities should be managed, including where members stand down from the executive and move to a scrutiny role, and vice-versa.
26. Members or substitute members of a combined authority must not be members of its overview and scrutiny committee.⁷ This includes the Mayor in Mayoral Combined Authorities. It is advised that Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime are also not members of the combined authority's overview and scrutiny committee.

Selecting individual committee members

27. When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member's experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve.

⁴ See, for example, regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/1020) and article 4 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).

⁵ See pages 15-18 of 'Overview and scrutiny in combined authorities: a plain English guide': <https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Overview-and-scrutiny-in-combined-authorities-a-plain-english-guide.pdf>

⁶ Section 9FA(3) of the Local Government Act 2000.

⁷ 2(3) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

28. Authorities should not take into account a member's perceived level of support for or opposition to a particular political party (notwithstanding the wider legal requirement for proportionality referred to in paragraph 24).

Selecting a chair

29. The Chair plays a leadership role on a scrutiny committee as they are largely responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working.

30. The attributes authorities should and should not take into account when selecting individual committee members (see paragraphs 27 and 28) also apply to the selection of the Chair, but the Chair should also possess the ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus among committee members.

Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the committee's independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the executive.

31. Given their pre-eminent role on the scrutiny committee, it is strongly recommended that the Chair not preside over scrutiny of their relatives⁸. Combined authorities should note the legal requirements that apply to them where the Chair is an independent person⁹.

32. The method for selecting a Chair is for each authority to decide for itself, however every authority should consider taking a vote by secret ballot. Combined Authorities should be aware of the legal requirements regarding the party affiliation of their scrutiny committee Chair¹⁰.

Training for committee members

33. Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.

34. When deciding on training requirements for committee members, authorities should consider taking advantage of opportunities offered by external providers in the sector.

Co-option and technical advice

35. While members and their support officers will often have significant local insight and an understanding of local people and their needs, the provision of outside expertise can be invaluable.

⁸ A definition of 'relative' can be found at section 28(10) of the Localism Act 2011.

⁹ See article 5(2) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).

¹⁰ Article 5(6) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

36. There are two principal ways to procure this:

- Co-option – formal co-option is provided for in legislation¹¹. Authorities must establish a co-option scheme to determine how individuals will be co-opted onto committees; and
- Technical advisers – depending on the subject matter, independent local experts might exist who can provide advice and assistance in evaluating evidence (see annex 2).

¹¹ Section 9FA(4) Local Government Act 2000

5. Power to Access Information

37. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds, and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.
38. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information¹². In particular, regulations give enhanced powers to a scrutiny member to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights for councillors to have access to information to perform their duties, including common law rights to request information and rights to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
39. When considering what information scrutiny needs in order to carry out its work, scrutiny members and the executive should consider scrutiny's role and the legal rights that committees and their individual members have, as well as their need to receive timely and accurate information to carry out their duties effectively.
40. Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk. Where this information exists, and scrutiny members are given support to understand it, the potential for what officers might consider unfocused and unproductive requests is reduced as members will be able to frame their requests from a more informed position.
41. Officers should speak to scrutiny members to ensure they understand the reasons why information is needed, thereby making the authority better able to provide information that is relevant and timely, as well as ensuring that the authority complies with legal requirements.

While each request for information should be judged on its individual merits, authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request, with scrutiny committee members.

42. The law recognises that there might be instances where it is legitimate for an authority to withhold information and places a requirement on the executive to provide the scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision¹³. However, members of the executive and senior officers should take particular care to avoid refusing requests, or limiting the information they provide, for reasons of party political or reputational expediency.

¹² Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

¹³ Regulation 17(4) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(4) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

Before an authority takes a decision not to share information it holds, it should give serious consideration to whether that information could be shared in closed session.

43. Regulations already stipulate a timeframe for executives to comply with requests from a scrutiny member¹⁴. When agreeing to such requests, authorities should:

- consider whether seeking clarification from the information requester could help better target the request; and
- Ensure the information is supplied in a format appropriate to the recipient's needs.

44. Committees should be aware of their legal power to require members of the executive and officers to attend before them to answer questions¹⁵. It is the duty of members and officers to comply with such requests.¹⁶

Seeking information from external organisations

45. Scrutiny members should also consider the need to supplement any authority-held information they receive with information and intelligence that might be available from other sources, and should note in particular their statutory powers to access information from certain external organisations.

46. When asking an external organisation to provide documentation or appear before it, and where that organisation is not legally obliged to do either (see annex 3), scrutiny committees should consider the following:

- a) **The need to explain the purpose of scrutiny** – the organisation being approached might have little or no awareness of the committee's work, or of an authority's scrutiny function more generally, and so might be reluctant to comply with any request;
- b) **The benefits of an informal approach** – individuals from external organisations can have fixed perceptions of what an evidence session entails and may be unwilling to subject themselves to detailed public scrutiny if they believe it could reflect badly on them or their employer. Making an informal approach can help reassure an organisation of the aims of the committee, the type of information being sought and the manner in which the evidence session would be conducted;

¹⁴ Regulation 17(2) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(2) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

¹⁵ Section 9FA(8) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

¹⁶ Section 9FA(9) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

- c) **How to encourage compliance with the request** – scrutiny committees will want to frame their approach on a case by case basis. For contentious issues, committees might want to emphasise the opportunity their request gives the organisation to ‘set the record straight’ in a public setting; and
- d) **Who to approach** – a committee might instinctively want to ask the Chief Executive or Managing Director of an organisation to appear at an evidence session, however it could be more beneficial to engage front-line staff when seeking operational-level detail rather than senior executives who might only be able to talk in more general terms. When making a request to a specific individual, the committee should consider the type of information it is seeking, the nature of the organisation in question and the authority’s pre-existing relationship with it.

Following ‘the Council Pound’

Scrutiny committees will often have a keen interest in ‘following the council pound’, i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services.

Authorities should recognise the legitimacy of this interest and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to scrutiny members and their support staff to obtain information from organisations the council has contracted to deliver services. In particular, when agreeing contracts with these bodies, authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a *requirement* for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees.

6. Planning Work

47. Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year.
48. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees' work to make best use of the total resources available.

Being clear about scrutiny's role

49. Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction. While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects 'the area, or the area's inhabitants', authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary, which means that there might be things that, despite being important, scrutiny will not be able to look at.
50. Different overall roles could include having a focus on risk, the authority's finances, or on the way the authority works with its partners.
51. Applying this focus does not mean that certain subjects are 'off limits'. It is more about looking at topics and deciding whether their relative importance justifies the positive impact scrutiny's further involvement could bring.
52. When thinking about scrutiny's focus, members should be supported by key senior officers. The statutory scrutiny officer, if an authority has one, will need to take a leading role in supporting members to clarify the role and function of scrutiny, and championing that role once agreed.

Who to speak to

53. Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:
 - *The public* – it is likely that formal 'consultation' with the public on the scrutiny work programme will be ineffective. Asking individual scrutiny members to have conversations with individuals and groups in their own local areas can work better. Insights gained from the public through individual pieces of scrutiny work can be fed back into the work programming process. Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results.

Authorities should consider how their communications officers can help scrutiny engage with the public, and how wider internal expertise and local knowledge from both members and officers might make a contribution.

- *The authority's partners* – relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful:
 - Public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers);
 - Voluntary sector partners;
 - Contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies);
 - In parished areas, town, community and parish councils;
 - Neighbouring principal councils (both in two-tier and unitary areas);
 - Cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships¹⁷; and
 - Others with a stake and interest in the local area – large local employers, for example.
- *The executive* – a principal partner in discussions on the work programme should be the executive (and senior officers). The executive should not direct scrutiny's work (see chapter 2), but conversations will help scrutiny members better understand how their work can be designed to align with the best opportunities to influence the authority's wider work.

Information sources

54. Scrutiny will need access to relevant information to inform its work programme. The type of information will depend on the specific role and function scrutiny plays within the authority, but might include:

- Performance information from across the authority and its partners;
- Finance and risk information from across the authority and its partners;
- Corporate complaints information, and aggregated information from political groups about the subject matter of members' surgeries;
- Business cases and options appraisals (and other planning information) for forthcoming major decisions. This information will be of particular use for pre-decision scrutiny; and
- Reports and recommendations issued by relevant ombudsmen, especially the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

¹⁷ Authorities should ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the effective democratic scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnerships' investment decisions.

As committees can meet in closed session, commercial confidentiality should not preclude the sharing of information. Authorities should note, however, that the default for meetings should be that they are held in public (see 2014 guidance on '*Open and accountable local government*':

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343182/140812_Openness_Guide.pdf).

55. Scrutiny members should consider keeping this information under regular review. It is likely to be easier to do this outside committee, rather than bringing such information to committee 'to note', or to provide an update, as a matter of course.

Shortlisting topics

Approaches to shortlisting topics should reflect scrutiny's overall role in the authority. This will require the development of bespoke, local solutions, however when considering whether an item should be included in the work programme, the kind of questions a scrutiny committee should consider might include:

- Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue?
- How could we best carry out work on this subject?
- What would be the best outcome of this work?
- How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?

56. Some authorities use scoring systems to evaluate and rank work programme proposals. If these are used to provoke discussion and debate, based on evidence, about what priorities should be, they can be a useful tool. Others take a looser approach. Whichever method is adopted, a committee should be able to justify how and why a decision has been taken to include certain issues and not others.

57. Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.

Carrying out work

58. Selected topics can be scrutinised in several ways, including:

- a) **As a single item on a committee agenda** – this often presents a limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue;
- b) **At a single meeting** – which could be a committee meeting or something less formal. This can provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a

given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of witnesses;

- c) **At a task and finish review of two or three meetings** – short, sharp scrutiny reviews are likely to be most effective even for complex topics. Properly focused, they ensure members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less;
- d) **Via a longer-term task and finish review** – the ‘traditional’ task and finish model – with perhaps six or seven meetings spread over a number of months – is still appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. However, the resource implications of such work, and its length, can make it unattractive for all but the most complex matters; and
- e) **By establishing a ‘standing panel’** – this falls short of establishing a whole new committee but may reflect a necessity to keep a watching brief over a critical local issue, especially where members feel they need to convene regularly to carry out that oversight. Again, the resource implications of this approach means that it will be rarely used.

7. Evidence Sessions

59. Evidence sessions are a key way in which scrutiny committees inform their work. They might happen at formal committee, in less formal ‘task and finish’ groups or at standalone sessions.

Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.

How to plan

60. Effective planning does not necessarily involve a large number of pre-meetings, the development of complex scopes or the drafting of questioning plans. It is more often about setting overall objectives and then considering what type of questions (and the way in which they are asked) can best elicit the information the committee is seeking. This applies as much to individual agenda items as it does for longer evidence sessions – there should always be consideration in advance of what scrutiny is trying to get out of a particular evidence session.

Chairs play a vital role in leading discussions on objective-setting and ensuring all members are aware of the specific role each will play during the evidence session.

61. As far as possible there should be consensus among scrutiny members about the objective of an evidence session before it starts. It is important to recognise that members have different perspectives on certain issues, and so might not share the objectives for a session that are ultimately adopted. Where this happens, the Chair will need to be aware of this divergence of views and bear it in mind when planning the evidence session.
62. Effective planning should mean that at the end of a session it is relatively straightforward for the chair to draw together themes and highlight the key findings. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to develop and agree recommendations immediately, but, unless the session is part of a wider inquiry, enough evidence should have been gathered to allow the chair to set a clear direction.
63. After an evidence session, the committee might wish to hold a short ‘wash-up’ meeting to review whether their objectives were met and lessons could be learned for future sessions.

Developing recommendations

64. The development and agreement of recommendations is often an iterative process. It will usually be appropriate for this to be done only by members, assisted by co-optees where relevant. When deciding on recommendations, however, members should have due regard to advice received from officers, particularly the Monitoring Officer.

65. The drafting of reports is usually, but not always, carried out by officers, directed by members.

66. Authorities draft reports and recommendations in a number of ways, but there are normally three stages:

- i. the development of a 'heads of report' – a document setting out general findings that members can then discuss as they consider the overall structure and focus of the report and its recommendations;
- ii. the development of those findings, which will set out some areas on which recommendations might be made; and
- iii. the drafting of the full report.

67. Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.

68. Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.

Sharing draft recommendations with executive members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense-check.

Annex 1: Illustrative Scenario – Creating an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol

An executive-scrutiny protocol can deal with the practical expectations of scrutiny committee members and the executive, as well as the cultural dynamics.

Workshops with scrutiny members, senior officers and Cabinet can be helpful to inform the drafting of a protocol. An external facilitator can help bring an independent perspective.

Councils should consider how to adopt a protocol, e.g. formal agreement at scrutiny committee and Cabinet, then formal integration into the Council's constitution at the next Annual General Meeting.

The protocol, as agreed, may contain sections on:

- The way scrutiny will go about developing its work programme (including the ways in which senior officers and Cabinet members will be kept informed);
- The way in which senior officers and Cabinet will keep scrutiny informed of the outlines of major decisions as they are developed, to allow for discussion of scrutiny's potential involvement in policy development. This involves the building in of safeguards to mitigate risks around the sharing of sensitive information with scrutiny members;
- A strengthening and expansion of existing parts of the code of conduct that relate to behaviour in formal meetings, and in informal meetings;
- Specification of the nature and form of responses that scrutiny can expect when it makes recommendations to the executive, when it makes requests to the executive for information, and when it makes requests that Cabinet members or senior officers attend meetings; and
- Confirmation of the role of the statutory scrutiny officer, and Monitoring Officer, in overseeing compliance with the protocol, and ensuring that it is used to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny, with matters relating to the protocol's success being reported to full Council through the scrutiny Annual Report.

Annex 2: Illustrative Scenario – Engaging Independent Technical Advisers

This example demonstrates how one Council's executive and scrutiny committee worked together to scope a role and then appoint an independent adviser on transforming social care commissioning. Their considerations and process may be helpful and applicable in other similar scenarios.

Major care contracts were coming to an end and the Council took the opportunity to review whether to continue with its existing strategic commissioning framework, or take a different approach – potentially insourcing certain elements.

The relevant Director was concerned about the Council's reliance on a very small number of large providers. The Director therefore approached the Scrutiny and Governance Manager to talk through the potential role scrutiny could play as the Council considered these changes.

The Scrutiny Chair wanted to look at this issue in some depth, but recognised its complexity could make it difficult for her committee to engage – she was concerned it would not be able to do the issue justice. The Director offered support from his own officer team, but the Chair considered this approach to be beset by risks around the independence of the process.

She talked to the Director about securing independent advice. He was worried that an independent adviser could come with preconceived ideas and would not understand the Council's context and objectives. The Scrutiny Chair was concerned that independent advice could end up leading to scrutiny members being passive, relying on an adviser to do their thinking for them. They agreed that some form of independent assistance would be valuable, but that how it was provided and managed should be carefully thought out.

With the assistance of the Governance and Scrutiny Manager, the Scrutiny Chair approached local universities and Further Education institutions to identify an appropriate individual. The approach was clear – it set out the precise role expected of the adviser, and explained the scrutiny process itself. Because members wanted to focus on the risks of market failure, and felt more confident on substantive social care matters, the approach was directed at those with a specialism in economics and business administration. The Council's search was proactive – the assistance of the service department was drawn on to make direct approaches to particular individuals who could carry out this role.

It was agreed to make a small budget available to act as a 'per diem' to support an adviser; academics were approached in the first instance as the Council felt able to make a case that an educational institution would provide this support for free as part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Three individuals were identified from the Council's proactive search. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee had an informal discussion with each – not so much to establish their skills and expertise (which had already been assessed) but to give a sense about

their 'fit' with scrutiny's objectives and their political nous in understanding the environment in which they would operate, and to satisfy themselves that they will apply themselves even-handedly to the task. The Director sat in on this process but played no part in who was ultimately selected.

The independent advice provided by the selected individual gave the Scrutiny Committee a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and meant it was able to offer informed advice on the merits of putting in place a new strategic commissioning framework.

Annex 3: Illustrative Scenario – Approaching an External Organisation to Appear before a Committee

This example shows how one council ensured a productive scrutiny meeting, involving a private company and the public. Lessons may be drawn and apply to other similar scenarios.

Concerns had been expressed by user groups, and the public at large, about the reliability of the local bus service. The Scrutiny Chair wanted to question the bus company in a public evidence session but knew that she had no power to compel it to attend. Previous attempts to engage it had been unsuccessful; the company was not hostile, but said it had its own ways of engaging the public.

The Monitoring Officer approached the company's regional PR manager, but he expressed concern that the session would end in a 'bunfight'. He also explained the company had put their improvement plan in the public domain, and felt a big council meeting would exacerbate tensions.

Other councillors had strong views about the company – one thought the committee should tell the company it would be empty-chaired if it refused to attend. The Scrutiny Chair was sympathetic to this, but thought such an approach would not lead to any improvements.

The Scrutiny Chair was keen to make progress, but it was difficult to find the right person to speak to at the company, so she asked council officers and local transport advocacy groups for advice. Speaking to those people also gave her a better sense of what scrutiny's role might be.

When she finally spoke to the company's network manager, she explained the situation and suggested they work together to consider how the meeting could be productive for the Council, the company and local people. In particular, this provided her with an opportunity to explain scrutiny and its role. The network manager remained sceptical but was reassured that they could work together to ensure that the meeting would not be an 'ambush'. He agreed in principle to attend and also provide information to support the Committee's work beforehand.

Discussions continued in the four weeks leading up to the Committee meeting. The Scrutiny Chair was conscious that while she had to work with the company to ensure that the meeting was constructive – and secure their attendance – it could not be a whitewash, and other members and the public would demand a hard edge to the discussions.

The scrutiny committee agreed that the meeting would provide a space for the company to provide context to the problems local people are experiencing, but that this would be preceded by a space on the agenda for the Chair, Vice-chair, and representatives from two local transport advocacy groups to set out their concerns. The company were sent in

advance a summary of the general areas on which members were likely to ask questions, to ensure that those questions could be addressed at the meeting.

Finally, provision was made for public questions and debate. Those attending the meeting were invited to discuss with each other the principal issues they wanted the meeting to cover. A short, facilitated discussion in the room led by the Chair highlighted the key issues, and the Chair then put those points to the company representatives.

At the end of the meeting, the public asked questions of the bus company representative in a 20-minute plenary item.

The meeting was fractious, but the planning carried out to prepare for this – by channelling issues through discussion and using the Chair to mediate the questioning – made things easier. Some attendees were initially frustrated by this structure, but the company representative was more open and less defensive than might otherwise have been the case.

The meeting also motivated the company to revise its communications plan to become more responsive to this kind of challenge, part of which involved a commitment to feed back to the scrutiny committee on the recommendations it made on the night.

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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ACTION PLAN: SCRUTINY PANEL – Culture and Tourism

Response and Action Plan in response to the Recommendations from Scrutiny Panel

Proposed dates for monitoring implementation of accepted recommendations

Report received by Cabinet	Monitoring activity	Monitoring complete
13 June 2018	11 November 2019	
<p>Recommendation 1: An action plan is devised and ensures the marketing and the promotion of Northampton’s culture, heritage and tourism is effective and includes:</p> <p>The action plan includes a vision for the promotion of the town which includes the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture - “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively”.• Tourism – “The commercial organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest”.• Heritage – “Valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from		

previous generations”.
and
Aspires to be a city of culture in 2025

Update : 10th June 2019 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Following research by Officers, Members and Partners regarding submitting a bid to be a city of culture it was proposed that a long term strategic vision and aim for Northampton to be a city of culture for 2029 would be launched. It was realised that 2025 was too soon. The Arts Council was supportive. It was commented that by this time projects such as the Vulcan works would be completed. Work will continue and funding would be identified

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Action	Lead Cabinet Member & lead responsible Officer	Resources required / available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A free map, highlighting key attractions, is produced and disseminated via existing infrastructure, such as the railway station, bus station, public transport and accommodation. 	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety Communications Manager	Communications Team	Complete Summer 2019	A town centre map has just been delivered outlining its key attractions and this is being distributed to town centre businesses. Copies are also available at the bus station, Northampton Railway Station and hotels across the Borough. A whole town map is being developed which will include details of hotels and Northampton’s leisure offer (such as the Nene Whitewater Centre, Pinnacle Climbing Centre, Boost Trampolining Centre and Riverside Hub). Outline work is complete and design work will start in the spring. The intention is that this will be distributed by similar methods to

				the town centre map.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review is undertaken of the success of the Britain's Best Surprise and funding is sought to support Northampton's contribution to it. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Communications Manager</p>	<p>Communications Manager.</p> <p>Funding required</p>	<p>Spring 2019</p>	<p>The Communications Manager has joined the Britain's Best Surprise board and is working to ensure Northampton's offer is clearly highlighted as part of its work. The board has now produced a Destination Management Plan and has been asked to propose delivery against elements of that to attract funding from Northampton Borough Council, which can be achieved through the cultural and heritage budget established in 2018/19.</p> <p>Update October 2019</p> <p>The current theme of activity is the Year of Food and Drink, next year (2019/20) it will be the Year of Arts and Culture (launch event on 24 October at the Royal & Derngate) and discussions have begun about the following year's theme</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An app. that gives details of what to do and where to visit in Northampton is developed similar to that produced by Hull – <u>Curious</u> 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Communications Manager and Digital Services Manager</p>	<p>Digital Services Team</p> <p>Communications Manager</p> <p>Northampton Town Centre BID</p>	<p>Autumn 2019</p>	<p>Initial discussions have taken place with the Digital Team about the possibility of revamping the Love Northampton website and App. As Northampton Town Centre BID are looking to be involved in the project, they were approached and asked whether they might be able to identify any resource to support this work. No response has been received to date. This will continue to be followed up as an option.</p>

<p><u>Collector App.</u></p>			<p>Summer 2019</p>	<p>We are also engaging with the producers of Trail Tale, an app which offers guided walks around British Towns. They are keen to create a package for Northampton at no cost to the Council. This is likely to be the preferred option</p> <p>Update August 2019 We have now engaged with the producers of Trail Tale and are pulling together a package of material for them to use. Northampton is featured on the app now, albeit in a limited form</p> <p>Update October 2019 We are pulling together content for the new Love Northampton website and will provide this as additional content for the Trail Tale app. This will be complete by Christmas</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoes, leather and lace manufacturing are promoted on the website "Britain's Best Surprise." 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Communications Manager</p>		<p>Aim to have this in place by unitary.</p>	<p>We have asked for this to be added to the Britain's Best Surprise forward plan for 2019 for discussion in the spring.</p> <p>Update October 2019 This has been discussed and is a contender for the 2020/21 theme year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ghost Hunt is widened to a Heritage 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and</p>	<p>Town Centre and Museum operations</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Already Implemented – Tours started in October 2018 and Phase 2 is in the process of being delivered in partnership with the University. Phase 2</p>

Walk/Trail that include tours of the theatres.	Safety Town Centre Manager and Culture and Heritage Manager	teams		includes shoe prints to explain the location of the ghosts and also promote footwear companies. This also doubles up as fun follow trail for children. Additional tours have now been added due to the popularity of these
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A trail around the town demonstrated by metal shoes is introduced 	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety Town Centre Manager, Culture and Heritage Manager	Town Centre Manager BID representatives	Complete	<p>This idea is currently being developed and we are working with the Town Centre BID to develop a metal shoe tour.</p> <p>The tour will complement the new shoe gallery at the museum and form an element of future public programming.</p> <p>Update August 2019 On 24 July the Large Shoe Project and Shoe Footprint trail was launched. The 12 large shoes include Brogues, Chelsea Boots, Dr Martens and Stilettos which stand about 1.6m high and 0.9m wide. The shoes have been individually decorated and the first three have been placed around the town centre in partnership with sponsors and artists.</p> <p>Update October 2019 Unfortunately due to vandalism, the first three large shoe sculptures have been removed. They are due to be repaired and reinstalled along with the</p>

				remaining shoes from the trail.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Green Badge qualification, offered by the Institute of Tourist Guiding (ITG) is investigated for Northampton in conjunction with Northampton BID. This qualification is opened to ward Councillors and Honorary Aldermen. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p>	<p>Town Centre BID representatives</p> <p>Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Facilities Team re: Guildhall Tours</p>	April 2020	<p>In partnership with Northampton Town Centre BID, Ward Councillors and Honorary Aldermen to be consulted in relation to their interest in the qualification.</p> <p>If positive, then training to be arranged as appropriate. This work will start in April 2019</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits of museum artefacts in empty retail units are displayed and promoted. As a pilot, a unit in the Grosvenor Centre is used for the display of Museum artefacts. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Culture and Heritage Manager</p>	<p>Culture and Heritage Manager</p>	Complete	<p>The museum developed a pop up exhibition, 'Nasty Northampton', in an empty unit in the Grosvenor Centre. The exhibition was open 12.00pm – 5.00pm from Wednesday – Saturday from 21st July – 6th September. A number of events and activities were run over the course of the exhibition, some in partnership with other organisations, two with Friends of Northampton Castle, two with Museum of London Archaeology, one with Northamptonshire Natural History Society and two by the museum service.</p> <p>The exhibition had 2,500 visitors over the course of</p>

				<p>the exhibition run.</p> <p>The museum continues to deliver an interesting and varied outreach programme whilst the Central Museum and Art Gallery is being redeveloped</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northampton Borough Council (NBC) works with its global brands to collectively promote the Northampton offer to a wider audience. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise</p> <p>Economic Development Consultant</p> <p>Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager</p>	<p>Economic Development Consultant</p> <p>Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager</p>	<p>Part complete – but more work to do. Aim to have this in place ahead of unitary.</p>	<p>Engagement with a number of those firms has started with regard to signage around the Enterprise Zone. A number of Northampton’s high-profile firms have agreed to be featured on newly revamped signage and designs are now in place for many of those new signs. Following the completion of this work, the intention is to extend the conversation to include how those firms might use their considerable influence to support and promote brand Northampton.</p> <p>We have also asked for this issue to be added to the Britain’s Best Surprise forward plan of work for 2019 as it is as much a countywide opportunity as it is one for the borough.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cluster comprising the Borough Council and major shoe companies in the town is developed so that they can 	<p>The Leader of the Council</p> <p>The Chief Executive</p>	<p>Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Northampton Borough Council has recently formed a cross partner Town Team ‘Northampton Forward’ to strategically develop and promote the town. It is using the recently announced High St Fund as a catalyst to start this wider place-shaping activity. Included in this work will be how we make best use of our retail offer including our shoe companies.</p>

network and share ideas.				Martin Mason from Trickers sits on the team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with NBC's Planning Department, encouragement is given to have a consistent and sympathetic appearance in accordance with Northampton's rich architectural and cultural heritage, for shop frontages. 	Cabinet Member for Planning	Head of Planning	Complete	Both the existing core strategy and the emerging Local Plan part 2 contain policies encouraging good design, in particular with regards to shop fronts. The Council also manage a shop front improvement scheme, where projects to enhance frontage can apply for grant funding. Shop front works may also attract future funding available from Historic England as part of a wider Future High Street Fund.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is undertaken on the promotion of the history of transport including the two double decker buses that have been restored by local groups. The Northampton Transport Heritage 	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety		Complete	Abington Park Museum held a Transport Day in June 2019, following on from last year's successful event. This featured a range of historic vehicles in including vintage motorcycles, cars, memorabilia and two double decker buses, with one giving trips around the Abington area. We are aiming to make this an annual event. The NTHG assisted with the Heritage Thank You day which is an opportunity for all heritage volunteers to meet and discuss ways forward to

<p>Group is consulted regarding the promotion of the history of transport in Northampton.</p>				<p>promote the town. The buses were also part of the annual Heritage Open Days event in September 2019.</p> <p>A further event is being planned for August 2019 involving Looking Glass Theatre and 100 Years of Northampton in History and Fashion and the Heritage Bus Tours.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recognising that local historians give Education and Heritage Talks throughout the year; these talks are promoted on the website "Britain's Best Surprise". 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p>		<p>Complete</p>	<p>The talks have been added to by the delivery of tours every month in collaboration with Looking Glass Theatre. All tours are related to people and places with a Northampton connection. These are being promoted widely. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement is working with Mike Ingram from The Battlefields Society to deliver more.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Tourist Information Centre for Northampton, is investigated located in a prominent place in the town, until the 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>Funding Required</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>A café has been included in the plans for the extended Museum and Art Gallery.</p> <p>A virtual TIC is currently available and supported until NCC have made a decision on the future of the TIC.</p> <p>The new museum development when open in 2020,</p>

<p>Museum is opened in late 2019; and a café is included in the extended Northampton Museum and Art Gallery is investigated.</p>	<p>and Enterprise</p>			<p>will be ideally placed to function as a tourist information centre. A significant tourist attraction in its own attraction, it will be open on weekends when other council venues are closed. The museum shop will have a strong focus on Northampton and Northamptonshire books, gift items and work by local artists and makers, which will add to the overall tourism offer.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs on the entrance to Northampton are erected that says what the town has to offer. “Don’t drive through, stop and visit” 	<p>Leader of the Council Communications Manager</p>		<p>Ahead of unitary</p>	<p>With the ongoing work in relation to promoting Northampton, signage will be included as part of this work. It is proposed that this action is not progressed until the name and branding has been formally agreed. The Communications Manager is liaising with NCC who are responsible for the current signs to understand the process required. Highways England would also need to be involved as they have a signage strategy</p> <p>Update October 2019 In the meantime, gateway signage has been introduced to the Enterprise Zone featuring some of the fantastic companies that call Northampton home, and part of the hoarding at Four Waterside – opposite the train station – has been similarly branded.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand Northampton as an exciting place to visit. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety</p> <p>Cabinet member for Regeneration and Enterprise</p>		Ongoing	<p>This work is ongoing through all other strands outlined in this document.</p> <p>Funding has been contributed from NBC and from the Lord Lieutenant to promote Northampton as a film industry location. Alan Moore recently filmed here at the Guildhall and Vulcan Works.</p> <p>A film location database has been established for Northampton.</p> <p>The Emporium way art project has seen funding contributed to street and art and the start of pop up covent garden style events, the first of which was held on 30th March 2019.</p> <p>Update August 2019</p> <p>In addition, we are working with the Digital Services Team to overhaul the Love Northampton website to make it fit for purpose.</p> <p>Also, we are in the early stages of a piece of place marketing work which will consider how best to attract a visitor audience as well as better engage local residents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue plaques are introduced around the town. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>		In progress	<p>The English Heritage publication <i>Celebrating People & Place Guidance On Commemorative Plaques & Plaque Schemes</i> provides detailed guidance on</p>

	<p>and Enterprise Communications Manager in liaison with the Planning and Regeneration Teams.</p>			<p>developing blue plaque schemes. This includes aims, selection process, criteria, costs, funding and project management recommendations.</p> <p>This should be used to help develop a strategic approach to establishing and implementing a blue plaque scheme for Northampton.</p> <p>A proposal is being developed in relation to reviving the practise of updating panels in the Mayors' Names Gallery in the Guildhall which commemorates local benefactors and philanthropists, setting out their works. These would be suggested criteria and consideration of the selection procedure would be required. A panel would be established to oversee the selection. In addition, this will provide an opportunity to consider a more permanent location for the new Boards</p> <p>Update October 2019 Planning Policy have produced a paper on the process surrounding Local Blue Plaque Schemes.</p> <p>A proposal to install new boards in the Great Hall Corridor dedicated to more recent benefactors and philanthropists who are now deceased was considered by the Executive Programme Board. Eight names were suggested for the new boards,</p>
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				i.e. George Thomas Hawkins, Joan Wake, Joseph Bassett-Lowke, Joanne Campbell, Frank Dickens, Joan Tice, James Manfield and Lynn Wilson. The Executive Programme Board accepted the proposal and consideration will also be given how to highlight high profile living individuals' connections to Northampton.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to promote our cultural heritage with Marlberg are investigated. 	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Communications Manager</p>	Communications Team	Autumn 2019	The communications manager has contacted the council's twinning association leads with a view to discussing this as a possibility. There is a twinning visit due from Marburg to Northampton in 2019 and an attractive offer is being developed for them to enjoy and feed back on their return.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is sought to maintain and upkeep monuments around the town, such as Eleanor Cross, the Tram Terminals and other historic buildings. 	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration	Ongoing	There are limited funding streams in relation to heritage assets and in order to tap into them the monument must be on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register. The Queen Eleanor Cross is on the risk register funding has been sourced from Historic England regarding the project. The cross is the only monument on the list. Very few heritage funding organisations offer grants to public bodies for maintenance and upkeep purposes. We have successfully secured funding for the Notre Dame project, (the site is not protected formally).

				In addition there are plans for a monument clean-up at St Giles Church in preparation for Mayflower 400. The year-long commemoration marking the 400 th anniversary of the Mayflower's pioneering voyage starts in November 2019. The Mayflower 400 events programme will share the values of migration, tolerance, freedom and democracy and tell the story of a ship and its passengers and the trail will attract visitors to Northampton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flower displays are maintained all year round, sponsorship to purchase and upkeep more planters is sought. Branding is in keeping with the signage. 	Cabinet Member for the Environment	Head of Customers and Communities	Complete and ongoing annually	The Council has a Bloom Team that consists of Officers, Councillors, Contractors and Sponsors. Their aim is to ensure that all the relevant planters are maintained throughout their bloom. The Bloom Team have successfully secured sponsorship and continue to do so. For 2019 the planters are being linked to the shoe trail further aligning the wide range of promotional work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Co-Ordinator role similar to that of the Tourism Executive of Leicestershire Promotions Limited is established in 	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety Communications	Communications Manager Funding Required	Aim to achieve before unitary	Initial discussions have taken place with Britain's Best Surprise over its involvement in delivering the new Destination Management Plan for Northamptonshire. Further discussion is needed as there is currently an aspiration at board level to hand responsibility over to local authorities in Northamptonshire for delivery. If sufficient funding

<p>conjunction with Britain's Best Surprise aspirations for a Destination Management Organisation.</p>	<p>Manager</p>			<p>can be identified countywide, there might be scope for this to be delivered independent of local authority control, but still meeting their aspirations.</p> <p>Update October 2019 There might be scope to consider this as part of a place marketing exercise which Northampton Forward is set to embark on in the coming months</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Cultural Strategy for the Borough is developed to look at investment, opportunities, infrastructure to promote Northampton and grow the cultural sector, to make an application to be the City of Culture 2025. 	<p>Leader of the Council Chief Executive</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Discussions began in the autumn 2018 with the Chief Executive of the Royal & Derngate on how best this could be developed. Further discussions are planned to progress the development of a Cultural Group that will lead on the creation of a new Cultural Strategy for the town.</p> <p>Update August 2019 Further discussions took place in March 2019 and wider discussions have since taken place. The meeting in May 2019 involved representatives from the university, Screen Northants, NN Contemporary, Business Improvement District, Engine Creative and NMPAT.</p> <p>Update October 2019 In early October the Chief Executive and a range of colleagues from across the cultural sector in Northampton met and started to explore the</p>

				<p>development of a Cultural Compact for the town. Toby Norman-Wright, Senior Relationship Manager from the Arts Council, was also at the meeting and he is very keen that we submit a proposal to them to be one of the early adopters. A Cultural Compact is essentially a partnership beyond just the cultural sector, but also involves the business sector as well as health, and the voluntary and community sector. The view is, once established, to develop several key priorities as well as a broader cultural strategy for the town. This will very much play into the wider work that we are doing and where we see culture as a unique selling point of Northampton</p>
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Recommendation 2:

As part of the induction process for Councillors, a leaflet of pamphlet on the history of Northampton is given to all Members. The same leaflet is available for events such as Heritage weekends.

Action	Lead Cabinet Member & lead responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety	Funding may be required to design and produce the leaflets	In Progress and due for completion April 2020	A timeline of significant events and dates has been developed as background research for what will be the new history galleries in the redeveloped Central Museum and Art Gallery. This can be developed into a useful and meaningful leaflet for use at events such as Heritage weekends and also for museum visitors and Councillors. It is envisaged that the majority of the information will be available online as part of the Museums Digital offer, this will negate the requirement to produce a large number of paper copies.

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Recommendation 3:

A copy of the report is sent to Michael Ellis, MP, who has the role of Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport).

Action	Lead Cabinet Member & lead responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
			Complete	This has been completed

Recommendation 4: Giving consideration to Unitary Status, civic pride and ceremonies are protected.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member & lead responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Undertake a Community Governance Review in preparation for a new Town Council for Northampton	Leader Chief Executive / Borough Secretary		In Progress	<p>A specific task and finish group has been established to progress this. A community governance review is being undertaken</p> <p>Update August 2019 A Cross Party member group was established in Autumn 2018 to begin work on a community governance review (CGR). CGR Phase 1 consultation was undertaken and finalised in late Spring 2019 with a report to Council in June.</p> <p>Update October 2019 Phase 2 consultation is due to finish on 8th November leading to a final report to Council.</p>

Recommendation 5:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.

Action	Lead Cabinet Member & lead responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Monitoring of the accepted recommendations – O&S Committee 11 November 2019, as per O&S Committee meeting 30 th April 2019	Tracy Tiff		11 November 2019	



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ACTION PLAN: SCRUTINY PANEL - Cemeteries

Response and Action Plan in response to the Recommendations from Scrutiny Panel

Proposed dates for monitoring implementation of accepted recommendations

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Report received by Cabinet	Monitoring activity	Monitoring complete		
June 2018	30 April 2019	Date to be added by O&S Committee when agreed monitoring is completed		
Recommendation 1: Some of the large trees located in the town's cemeteries that have been planted on or outside the burial plot investigated for removal as soon as possible.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
To remove trees and hedges where practical to do so, but ensuring minimal damage to grave stones and	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services	Resources were made available and suitable contractors were identified	Completed	Completed 2018

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headstones.	Partnership Unit, Asset Management and Parks & Open Spaces			
Recommendation 2:	The water tanks located in the extension at Duston Cemetery are plumbed in as soon as practicable.			
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Investigate the practicalities and costs involved of installing a new water supply and tanks	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Head of Economy, Assets and Culture Head of Customers and Communities Asset Management & Parks & Open Spaces	Investigating consultants and budget still to be identified. Anglian Water Authority will be required and therefore timescales will be dependent on their availability.	2019/20 financial year	Asset Management property services contractor visited the site and the trough was full and no leaks found
Recommendation 3:	The trees that are obscuring the sign at the entrance to Duston Cemetery are pruned as soon as possible.			
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
To arrange the cut back of the trees with the Environmental Services Contractor	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities	Resource within the Environmental Services Contract	Completed	Completed 2018

	Environmental Services Partnership Unit			
Recommendation 4: Litter and recycling bins in situ within the cemeteries are replaced with modern bins, including recycling bins, uniformed throughout all cemeteries, where appropriate.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Survey the open cemeteries for the types and numbers of the litterbins available onsite	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services Partnership Unit Contract and Parks & Open Spaces		Completed	The current wire baskets are suitable for the nature of the waste, which included wet organic matter such as dead flowers and wreaths. Wire baskets that are damaged and unrepairable will be replaced.
Recommendation 5: The footpaths and roadways in Kingsthorpe Cemetery that are in need of repair, are repaired as soon as possible.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
The footpaths to be surveyed	Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning Head of Customers and Communities Parks & Open Spaces	GF Capital	2019/20	In Progress: This is part of the ongoing Borough Wide Cemeteries Policy Planning

Recommendation 6: The tops of the vaults are made secure.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
The tops of the Vaults to be surveyed	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services Partnership Unit & Veolia	Resource within the Environmental Services Contract	Completed	Inspection was completed in January 2019 and all vaults were found to be secure.
Recommendation 7: The sign located at the entrance to Dallington Cemetery is cleaned and fresh signage placed behind the glass cabinet.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Assess the sign and carry out the required actions	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Head of Economy, Assets and Culture Asset Management and Parks & Open Spaces	Officer time	Completed	Completed

Recommendation 8: Signs be erected in cemeteries “Dogs to be kept on a leash at all times” “Please clean up after your dog.”				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Survey open and closed cemeteries and assess requirements	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customer and Communities Parks & Open Spaces	Officer time	Completed	Signs are in the process of being erected in Kingsthorpe, Dallington and Billing Road cemeteries following the survey.
Recommendation 9: All signs erected within the borough’s cemeteries are of the same style and standard as other Borough signage.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Survey open and closed cemeteries and assess requirements	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise Head of Planning, Asset Management and Parks & Open Spaces	Officer time. Budget still to be identified	2020/21	This has been paused pending agreement on signage, branding and style and budget.

Recommendation 10: Information regarding the usage and disposal of plastic bottles in cemeteries is produced for users. The information could be included within a Regulations Guidance booklet for users of cemeteries. All Funeral Directors are provided with a copy of the booklet.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Investigate cemeteries that may require this amount of waste segregation.	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services Partnership Unit & Veolia	Officer & Contractor time	December 2019	A comprehensive A4 Booklet is currently being designed and produced and will be available for all users and Funeral Directors. Producing this guidance booklet has been very complex and we have experienced delays due to wanting to ensure that all stakeholders, including the cemeteries working group and cemeteries forum are able to input.
Recommendation 11: The Policies and procedures for the usage of cemeteries within the borough are tightened up and a zero tolerance approach is applied.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Examine existing policies and procedures and	Cabinet Member for Environment	Officer and Contractor time	December 2019	A comprehensive A4 Booklet is currently being designed and produced and

amend where required	Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services Partnership Unit & Veolia			will be available for all users and Funeral Directors. Producing this guidance booklet has been very complex and we have experienced delays due to wanting to ensure that all stakeholders, including the cemeteries working group and cemeteries forum are able to input.
Recommendation 12: The Scrutiny Panel welcomed and noted the pristine condition of the war graves.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Compliment noted	Northampton Borough Council			
Recommendation 13: Consideration is given to the issuing to Funeral Directors based in the borough of Northampton, key passes, to the chapels in Towcester Road and Kingsthorpe cemeteries.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Examine existing policies and procedures and amend where required	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services	Officer and Contractor time		This recommendation was explored but is not possible due to security and safety issues. The keys are given out by the staff onsite and this system is working well.

	Partnership Unit & Veolia			
Recommendation 14:	The facility of the chapels at Kingsthorpe and Towcester Road cemeteries are promoted.			
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Examine existing promotional policies and procedures and amend where required	Cabinet Member for Environment Head of Customers and Communities Environmental Services Partnership Unit & Veolia	Officer and Contractor time	ongoing	Promotional activity is taking place and has resulted in increased usage for a variety of purposes including remembrance and commemorative events.
Recommendation 15:	The lack of burial space is addressed and potential new sites are investigated, for example, consideration is given to re-categorising the borough owned land (currently categorised as commercial land) that edges the cemetery at Dallington as further cemetery land.			
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Enzygo environmental consultants have completed a study identifying the town's burial requirements.	Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning Head of Planning, Head of Customers and Communities A new Cemeteries Group has been set up to examine the consultant's report and its findings. A number of trees have been	Officer time	Complete	Additional land has been identified at Dallington Cemetery, as a possible burial site. Two cemeteries working groups have been established – one looking at operational issues and one looking at strategic issues including future burial requirements and space.

	removed at Towcester Road Cemetery to create extra space, which can be used in two years' time (to allow for the soil to settle)			
Recommendation 16: A feasibility study is undertaken into the requirement of a new large crematorium and cemetery for the town that offers the required services and facilities.				
Action	Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Responsible Officer	Resources required/available	Target date	Achievement/Completed
Keep findings from feasibility under review.	Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning Head of Planning, Head of Customers and Communities		Ongoing	Work is currently underway - a strategic working group has been established with representatives from the relevant service areas.

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2019

BRIEFING NOTE:

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – FOOD POVERTY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake comprehensive Scrutiny activity regarding food poverty
- 1.2 Membership of the Scrutiny Panel comprises Councillor Dennis Meredith (Chair); Councillor Cathrine Russell (Deputy Chair); Councillors Aziz, Bottwood, Roberts and Smith.
- 1.3 The scope of the Review was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and evidence gathering has continued.

2 UPDATE

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Panel has held two evidence gathering meetings with further meetings scheduled. At its September 2019 meeting the Scrutiny Panel received a responses to its core questions from a number of key expert advisors and the Chair reported back the findings from the site visits that took place over the summer.
- 2.2 The next evidence gathering meeting is scheduled for 20 November 2019.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Scrutiny Panel Protocol, the Chair of this Scrutiny Panel will provide written progress reports to future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the progress report is noted.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager, on behalf of Councillor Dennis Meredith, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Food Poverty

14 October 2019

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2019

BRIEFING NOTE:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group to undertake comprehensive Scrutiny activity regarding gangs and knife crime
- 1.2 Membership of the Scrutiny Panel comprises Councillor Graham Walker (Chair); Councillor Jane Birch (Deputy Chair); Councillors Aziz, Lane and Russell.
- 1.3 The scope of the Review was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and evidence gathering has continued.

2 UPDATE

- 2.1 The Working Group has held two evidence gathering meetings with further meetings scheduled. At its September 2019 meeting the Working Group received comprehensive responses to its core questions from a variety of key expert advisors. The Working Group also undertook a site visit to Free2 Talk and a Boxing Club to inform its evidence base, the findings of which will be reported to the Working Group at its November 2019 meeting.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Scrutiny Panel Protocol, the Chair of this Scrutiny Panel will provide written progress reports to future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the progress report is noted.

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