



8 July 2022

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 JULY 2022

A meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held at 6pm on Monday 18 July 2022 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Mannie Ketley
Executive Director

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes
To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 28 March 2022 and 19 May 2022.
2. Apologies
To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.
3. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of:
 - (a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;
 - (b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;
 - (c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

4. Planning Service Performance and Discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Investment.
5. Draft Member and Officer Working Protocol (report to follow).
6. Review of Graffiti (report to follow).
7. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22.
8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors Eccleson (Chair), Edwards, T Lawrence, Mahoney, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Mrs Parker, Rabin and Ward

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer on 01788 533522 or email linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk. Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Planning Service Performance
Name of Committee:	Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 July 2022
Contact Officer:	Nicola Smith - Chief Officer Growth & Investment
Summary:	This report sets out details of performance and changes to the Growth and Investment Portfolio.
Financial Implications:	This is a report for information. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications:	This is a report for information. There are no direct risk/health & safety implications arising from this report.
Environmental Implications:	This is a report for information. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	This is a report for information. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
Equality and Diversity:	This is a report for information. There are no direct equality & diversity implications arising from this report.

Scrutiny Committee - 18 July 2022

Planning Service Performance

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Growth and Investment

Summary

This report sets out details of work undertaken by the Growth and Investment Portfolio over the last year and how it has performed against local and national performance indicators along with its plans for the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the key activities carried out by the service, how it is performing against defined indicators and the budget position for the previous financial year 2021/22. It also details work that is underway for the coming financial year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Growth and Investment Portfolio comprises of Development Management, Planning Enforcement, Land Charges, Building Control, Development Strategy and Economic Development.
- 2.2 Driving and fostering growth is a key driver for the service in line with the Council's Corporate Strategy. In terms of housing delivery in 2021/22 1,022 dwellings received planning permission and 124 affordable dwellings were built. In terms of employment 78,865 sqm of employment floorspace was approved.
- 2.3 In April 2021 the new service station at Junction 1 on the M6 opened, providing necessary national infrastructure on the strategic road network including overnight parking for lorries and 24 electric vehicle charging points.
- 2.4 At Houlton a wide range of housebuilders continue to deliver a mix of residential properties across the site along with the necessary infrastructure. An award winning new secondary school opened in September 2021 and the extension to St Gabriel's Primary School which will introduce a second form of entry is underway in preparation for the new school year starting September 2022.
- 2.5 At South West Rugby initial groundworks have commenced at the Tritax Symmetry employment site near Thurlaston which forms part of the Rugby South West allocation. Work continues with the Consortium in regard to the

delivery of the remainder of the allocation for housing along with the necessary infrastructure.

- 2.6 Adjacent to the town centre a 360 residential unit scheme on the former cattle market site is nearing completion.
- 2.7 Development has continued on parts of the former Rolls Royce site at Ansty with both the Cadent office building and multi-storey car park nearing completion. Permission was also secured across other parts of the site for employment uses, including four separate buildings totalling c50,000 sqm.
- 2.8 During 2021/2022 the final part of Rugby Gateway residential R2 was completed and works are due to start imminently on the approved primary school.

3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – 2021/2022

Development Management

- 3.1 The development management team is responsible for the determination of planning applications, enforcing breaches of planning control, and the local land charges service
- 3.2 During 2021/2022 staffing levels have fluctuated and unfortunately, we were unable to successfully recruit to the vacant Graduate Planning Officer role. During this time, we have recruited to two vacant Planning Officer roles and funding was secured for additional senior officers on a permanent and temporary basis respectfully for 2022/23.
- 3.3 Some of the vacant roles have been covered by agency staff and whilst this does bring with it cost implications over and above any salary savings from the vacant posts, during 2021/2022 the level of planning fee income received was able to sustain this.
- 3.4 1,229 applications were received during 2021/2022, compared to 1,092 during 2020/2021, this does not include pre-application enquiries. During 2021/2022 a total of £1,366,360 was received in application fee income, compared to £884,179 in 2020/2021. 2021/2022 was the second highest income year in the last 5 year period, whilst 2020/2021 was the lowest in the last 5 year period.
- 3.5 During the 2021/2022 the Local Planning Authority suspended its pre-application and general enquiry service for householder/domestic queries to help limit the sheer volume of queries that were received to ensure that officers could focus on determining planning applications whilst sufficient resources were put in place. During 2021/2022, 686 pre-application and general queries were received. This compares with 1276 during 2020/2021.
- 3.6 During 2021/2022 pre-application charging was solely restricted to major applications. The fees received during this period totalled £47,285.

- 3.7 The speed of determining planning application continues to be a key performance indicator for the service. Under-performance can lead to government intervention by removing decision-making powers from Local Planning Authorities. The speed measure is monitored on a quarterly basis for a rolling two year period. This indicator measures the percentage of planning applications dealt with in a timely manner: major, minor and other. A timely manner is defined as within 13 weeks for Major applications and within 8 weeks for Minor and Other applications, unless an agreed extension of time has been secured between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.8 The table below shows how the service has performed against the target which has been exceeded across all three application types for the previous two financial years.

Application Type	National Indicator	Actual Performance
Major Applications	60%	98%
Minor Applications	65%	86%
Other Applications	80%	86%

Table 1: Planning application performance (1st April 2020-31st March 2022)

Planning Committees

- 3.9 During 2021/22 36 applications went to Planning Committee. Of those 6 recommendations were overturned by the Committee and one was withdrawn. This compares to 37 applications going to Planning Committee in 2020/21 where 3 recommendations were overturned by the Committee.

Appeals

- 3.10 Planning appeal performance remains a key requirement of government. Under-performance can lead to government intervention by removing decision-making powers from Local Planning Authorities. The government measures performance at appeal against all decisions over a rolling 2 year period. No more than 10% of all decisions should be overturned at appeal.
- 3.11 81 major applications were determined during 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2022 and 3 major applications were appealed. Whilst 1 was dismissed and 2 were allowed, this only represents 0.024% significantly below the 10% national indicator. In terms of non-major applications 1,881 were determined during 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2022. 32 of these decisions were appealed and of those 14 were allowed, which equates to only 0.007% also significantly below the 10% national indicator as depicted in Table 2 below.

Application Type	National Indicator	Performance
Major Applications	10%	0.024%
Non Major Applications	10%	0.007%

Table 2: Quality of decision making (1st April 2020 to 31 March 2022)

Enforcement

- 3.12 Keeping faith in the planning system is critical to the public perception of the service and the enforcement of planning breaches is a key part of this.
- 3.13 Planning enforcement is a discretionary power that can be exercised by the Local Planning Authority. Where enforcement action is taken, the action should be necessary, in the public interest and consistent with previous enforcement action. Enforcement action will not normally be taken to remedy trivial or technical breaches of control that are considered to cause no harm to amenity.
- 3.14 The enforcement team is only able to investigate breaches of planning control and cannot become involved in trying to resolve non-planning issues such as legal or neighbour disputes.
- 3.15 Table 3 below compares figures during the first and second half of 2021. Whilst enforcement queries rose sharply during 2020 following covid restrictions, these have now started to drop back to a more measured level, although the team are experiencing a rise in the number of enforcement appeals.

	January- June 2021	July- December 2021
Live cases at the start of the period	133	125
New cases logged during the period	168	143
Ongoing cases at the end of the period	125	118
Completed cases during the period	156	150
Total number of cases worked on during the period	281	168
Number of Planning Contravention Notices (PCN) served	3	3
Number of Breach of Condition Notices (BCN) served	2	1
Number of Section 215 Notices (Sec215) served	0	0
Number of Temporary Stop Notices (TSN) served	2	0
Number of Stop Notices (SN) served	2	0
Number of Enforcement Notices (EN) served	6	3
Total number of Notices served during the period	15	7
Number of appeals worked on during the period	4	10

Table 3: Enforcement summary 2021

- 3.16 The Development Management service takes breaches of planning control very seriously and has a duty to investigate alleged breaches, however this

has been significantly impeded by having only one full time enforcement officer in post.

- 3.17 The Enforcement Service has been supported by an external consultant since April 2021. However, additional funding was secured during 2021/22 for a permanent enforcement officer role to commence in 2022/23 which will be more cost effective. Interviews have taken place and the successful applicant is due to start in July 2022.
- 3.18 Whilst planning enforcement prosecutions in the Courts have been delayed by the back logs they have been dealing with there were three notable cases during 2021/2022 where the Council was successful in prosecuting. These related to:
- the felling of protected trees in Buckwell Lane, Clifton upon Dunsmore and a total fine of £5990;
 - the failure to implement an approved landscaping scheme at Grace Close, Rugby associated with a housing scheme – total fine of £3170; &
 - failure to remove an unauthorised fence in Northampton Lane, Dunchurch – total fine of £370.

Enforcement Appeals

- 3.19 During the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 two enforcement appeals were determined. One appeal was dismissed, and the enforcement notice upheld, whilst the second appeal was partly allowed and partly dismissed, so recorded as a split decision. This split decision related to an agricultural barn which was allowed and a dwellinghouse that was dismissed in Broadwell. Further enforcement action in relation to the unauthorised dwelling is now being investigated.
- 3.20 As of 31st March 2022, 15 enforcement appeals remained outstanding with the Planning Inspectorate.

Land Charges

- 3.21 For 2021/22 1487 searches were received which generated an income of £132,320. The average end to end time to deal with a Land Charges Search was 4.43 days. The Government has set an expectation that all Local Authorities respond to search requests within 10 working days, so despite a high level of searches the Council achieved this target effectively. However, monthly processing targets can vary owing to the ebb and flow of the housing market and the service needs to be able to adjust to this. During 2021/2022 response times ranged from 1.59 days in February 2022 to 9.49 days in July 2021.
- 3.22 Her Majesty's Land Registry (HMLR) are currently embarking on the digitalisation of the local land charges register across England. This is intended to bring together existing paper and electronic local land charge records into a single web-based facility that can then be accessed by all interested parties 24/7. Rugby Borough Council have actively engaged with

HMLR to assist in this process and are due to migrate their records in 2022/23.

- 3.23 In order to assist in this program the Council will be receiving a burdens grant of around £75,000 from HMLR which will be used to secure additional staff to help with the process.

4. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – 2021/2022

- 4.1 The Development Strategy team is responsible for the production and monitoring of development plan documents, liaison with neighbouring planning and transport authorities and the parishes.

Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.2 The Local Plan was adopted in June 2019. Since then work has focussed on the delivery of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) that were required by the Inspector in adopting the Local Plan. The South West Rugby (SWR) SPD became a major focus for the team as this controversial allocation generated over 1,000 objections in each round of public consultation before final adoption in June 2021. Post adoption, the team have been heavily involved in working to bring Homes England on board to deliver the Homestead Link Road and with the first two applications on the site to ensure compliance with the SWR SPD.
- 4.3 Other SPDs that have been adopted are The Coton Park East SPD (December 2019), Housing Needs July 2021 and Air Quality July 2021.

Joint Working

- 4.4 The team attend monthly meetings with the other Warwickshire authorities and Coventry City Council to take a joint approach to evidence gathering and local plan reviews particularly around housing and employment needs. This does not commit the authority to taking growth from other areas but joint working to develop a shared evidence base reduces costs for each authority. The key piece of evidence is a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) that will examine need for both of these uses across the sub-region. Rugby is leading on this study for Coventry and Warwickshire.
- 4.5 Wider joint working takes place with attendance at the A5 and A46 partnerships (6-8 meetings a year per road corridor) which includes officers, Members and MPS along the corridor to lobby government for improvements. These partnerships are important to ensure that Rugby is part of the discussions regarding growth along these corridors and ensuring when improvements are delivered Rugby's views are considered.
- 4.6 There are also monthly meetings with the wider West Midlands authorities, again to ensure Rugby is aware of wider trends that could impact on the borough. The team are also attending four meetings a year liaising with

Harborough Council and Highways authorities about the future redevelopment of the Gibbet Hill roundabout to address the long-standing problems here.

Housing Delivery

- 4.7 The team also undertake monitoring of the Local Plan with a focus on assessing the delivery of residential permissions to ensure the maintenance of a 5 year supply of sites for housing development. Each year the Government publishes a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) that measures delivery against need for the last three years, so this is a retrospective measure. The HDT is a calculation of the number of houses delivered in an area over the past three years divided by the target number of houses over that same period, expressed as a percentage. On the last test (November 21) the authority was delivering more dwellings than expected achieving 108%, above the Government's requirement of 95%.
- 4.8 Authorities are also required to produce a forward-looking measure, does the Council have a 5 year supply of housing land (5YHLS)? Our latest figure (October 21) showed Rugby to have a housing supply of 6.2 years, above the Government target of 5 years.
- 4.9 Monitoring performance of both the HDT and 5YHLS matters because if performance falls below the HDT 95% figure or below the 5 year supply threshold then speculative development, which is likely to be in less sustainable locations, is more likely to be approved by Planning Inspectors.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.10 The team continue to support communities in the production of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted for Brandon & Bretford (June 2019), Coton Forward (December 2015), Ryton on Dunsmore (July 2021), Willoughby (December 2019) and Wolvey (May 2022). Neighbourhood Plans currently working their way through the system towards adoption are at Brinklow and Monks Kirby.

Consultation

- 4.11 The team also comment on planning applications (47 in the last financial year) and the plans of neighbouring authorities. The team have 21 days to respond to planning applications and last year the average response was 8 days, although this varied widely with the complexity of the application.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 With the loss of the Economic Development Manager in the autumn of 2021 and the restructuring of the team the focus on economic development priorities has not been able to be progressed.
- 5.2 The Council has continued to deliver support to businesses through its partnership with Warwickshire County Council, The Chamber of Commerce

and the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub. This work included working with the Growth Hub to deliver £916,000 worth of grants during the pandemic to 22 businesses that protected 471 jobs and created 109 new jobs.

- 5.3 Officers across different teams were also able to deliver £221,084 of Additional Restrictions Grant Funding to businesses affected by the pandemic.
- 5.4 Working with the leisure and cultural teams, the economic team helped administer the £193,000 of Welcome Back Funding to provide a range of summer and winter events including the beach, and the ice rink to encourage people back to the town centre.

6. BUILDING CONTROL

- 6.1 The building control service at Rugby forms part of the Building Control Partnership which is hosted by Warwick District Council. The establishment of the partnership has meant that skills and expertise can be shared to ensure that market share is maintained.
- 6.2 In the financial year of 2021/22 market share remained at 68% with an annual income of £849,741 which means that the service remains self funding.

7. GROWTH AND INVESTMENT– THE YEAR AHEAD

- 7.1 Following the appointment of new Chief Officer for Growth and Investment in November 2021 an initial review of the service has been conducted and service improvement plans produced. This has centred around 3 pillars corporate plan, statutory duty and the customer to ensure that the service is structured to enable the delivery of these 3 pillars.
- 7.2 Given the scale of growth to be delivered across the two Sustainable Urban Extensions at Houlton and SW Rugby and new development in the town centre; along with the need to attract inward investment, support and develop our town centre and local businesses a new team has been created. The new Major Projects and Economic Development Team will be centred on delivering a large part of the Corporate Strategy relating to economy.
- 7.3 This new team will comprise of a manager who starts on the 18th July. Two Principal Planners from the Development Management Team and a new Senior Planning Officer starting in August will be responsible for delivering the Major Projects. Attention has now turned to providing an economic development function and a report to Council on the 19th July sets out the posts needed to deliver the aims of the Corporate Strategy.

Development Management - Planning

- 7.4 Initial indications show the number of applications and pre-applications being received by the Local Planning Authority during 2022/23, together with associated fees, remains high.

- 7.5 In April 2022 the service introduced a paid pre-application advice service across all types of applications along with the introduction of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) for large major developments which will provide a valuable revenue stream for the Local Planning Authority. Initial indications imply the level of pre-application and general enquires is likely to rise back to 2020/2021 levels with 209 received already during April & May 2022.
- 7.6 We have successfully recruited to a Graduate Planning Officer post and an officer is due to start in July 2022. Due to further resignations within the team some other vacancies have arisen. Interviews have recently been conducted for a new Principal Officer and two Senior Officers, these posts have been recruited to internally which has led to further vacancies further down the team which are currently being recruited to. In the meantime consultants have been employed to ensure that the service remains able to determine applications in accordance with statutory targets.

Enforcement

- 7.7 Following the successful appointment of the new enforcement officer due to start in July 2022, it is hoped that they will quickly become embedded into the team and contribute to the service.
- 7.8 The enforcement team is currently producing an Enforcement Policy in the light of the updated National Planning Policy Framework in 2021, with the aim to make it clearer and more succinct as to how the Council will provide an enforcement service to manage breaches of planning control.
- 7.9 Introduction of performance indicators in connection with time taken to acknowledging enforcement queries, site visits, reporting back and determining the action to be taken will come out of the new Enforcement Policy.

Local Land Charges

- 7.10 HMLR have advised that the migration of the Council's local land charge records will be a time-consuming process and will take a considerable amount of existing resources. As mentioned above, to facilitate this national project HMLR will provide burden grants/funding to Local Authorities to bolster their resources to enable this process to happen more smoothly. The Council consider that it would be more expedient to use existing land charges and search and systems officers to assist with the migration of the local land charge records and backfill their existing posts/functions with the funding provided by HMLR.
- 7.11 Temporary roles have been created within the team and the recruitment process has commenced.

Development Strategy

Local Plan and SPDs

- 7.12 The Council's work programme in relation to the Local Plan and other supporting documents is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is published on the Council's website. The most recent LDS was approved by Cabinet in June 2022.
- 7.13 At the Local Plan Examination in Public the Local Plan Inspector required the authority to produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) to address the identified shortage of provision for the Gypsy & Traveller community. Background evidence has been undertaken during Spring 2022 and the first round of public consultation on this DPD is due to start this August.
- 7.14 The team are currently working on an update to the 2012 Sustainable Design & Construction SPD that will be broadened out to look at the contribution planning can make to addressing the climate change agenda in line with the Corporate Plan and Climate Change Strategy. Consultation is due to take place August-September 2022.
- 7.15 Plans to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be put before Cabinet on the 1st August. CIL is a charge levied on certain types of development that is payable on commencement direct to the Authority to spend on infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development. If approved by Council a period of consultation will be undertaken during the autumn with plans to introduce CIL and an accompanying revised Planning Obligations SPD to cover development not covered by CIL at the start of the next financial year.
- 7.16 The team is working closely with the economic development team on proposals to enhance Rugby Town Centre. This includes developing guidance on shopfronts, street furniture, street paving, a local list of buildings in the town centre and a methodology for identifying local list buildings across the borough, an action plan for enhancements to the town centre conservation area and a wider town centre regeneration action plan.

Joint Working

- 7.17 There will be the ongoing liaison meetings for the partnerships mentioned above. We anticipate that in this financial year, Rugby will be consulted on local plan reviews from Nuneaton & Bedworth, South Warwickshire and West Northamptonshire. These are likely to be major documents that will require substantial input from the team.

Major Projects and Economic Development

- 7.18 The team will be leading on the Town Centre Strategy. Further work on the proposals will be available in late summer with the document due for adoption by the end of the year. Following the production of the document further work

to establish the need for site specific Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents will be undertaken.

- 7.19 The team will also be developing an Economic Strategy for the Borough which its hoped will be adopted by end of the year.
- 7.20 In April a Business Breakfast was held with over 40 businesses attending which provided useful insight into the issues that they are facing. Following on from the breakfast, Officers have assisted in the formation of Working Groups focusing on the Markets, Public Realm, Events, Town Centre Safety and Business Supports. The outcomes will be reported to Council on the 19th July.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The global pandemic has not impacted on the level of development and investment to Rugby. It has been a busy year for the planning service and despite the issues around staffing levels that the service has experienced the service has performed well.
- 8.2 Looking forward, with the solid record of performance set out in this report against our statutory national indicators and performance targets in Development Management and Development Strategy attention will turn to fostering economic growth and support for business as well as large scale change and improvements to our town centre.

Name of Meeting: Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 18 July 2022
Subject Matter: Planning Service Performance
Originating Department: Growth and Investment

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22
Name of Committee:	Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 July 2022
Contact Officer:	Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01788 533522 or linn.ashmore@rugby.gov.uk
Summary:	The draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report presents a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2021-22.
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications arising from this report
Risk Management Implications:	There are no risk management implications arising from this report
Environmental Implications:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications arising from this report
Equality and Diversity:	There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report

Scrutiny Committee - 18 July 2022

Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance

Summary

The Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report presents a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2021-2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scrutiny is a central element of the Council's aims and objectives and a key part of the democratic process making a proactive and positive contribution to the development of policy and the discharge of the Council's functions.

Section 2A paragraph 6.4(f) of the Council's Constitution states that scrutiny will perform the following function:

"Report annually to the Council on the work of overview and scrutiny and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods, if appropriate."

The Constitution also states that the annual report shall be agreed by scrutiny before submission to Council.

2. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The draft report for the 2021/22 municipal year is attached at appendix 1.

3. FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK

The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. This is a standing item for consideration and approval at each committee meeting. The work programme is also informed by the Council's Forward Plan and in consultation with Members. The Leadership Team works with the Committee and provides briefings or information as required. Support is also provided by officers from various service areas as required.

The work programme is covered under item 7 of the agenda giving the Committee opportunity for a discussion on topics for review.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to consider the draft Annual Report and approve it for submission to Council with a recommendation that the report be published.

Name of Meeting: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 July 2022

Subject Matter: Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Originating Department: Legal and Governance

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

CHAIRS FOREWORD

TO BE ADDED



Cllr Peter Eccleson
Chair 2021/22

Members of the Committee 2021/22

Peter Eccleson (Chair)
Tony Gillias (Vice-Chair)
Mrs Eve Hassell
Tom Mahoney
Mrs Noreen New
Mrs Maggie O'Rourke
Mrs Lisa Parker
Jerry Roodhouse
Dr Mark Williams

WORK PROGRAMME

MEETING DATE	TOPICS
12 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 • Motion from Council on the topic of town centre heritage
13 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Performance Report • Discussion with the Executive Director and Leader of the Council • Motion from Council on the topic of Newbold Quarry Park
22 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Performance Monitoring • Discussion with the Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance Portfolio Holder and Chief Officer • Motion from Council on the topic of graffiti
2 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-page strategy on the review of the member and officer working relationship • One-page strategy on the review of Access to Emergency Health Care Provision
28 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report on Community and Safety • Discussion with the Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder and Chief Officer

HIGHLIGHTS

Topic	Outcome
Work programme	The Committee made a decision to extend an invitation to Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers to attend meetings and provide an overview of their portfolio area and answer questions from the committee.
Annual Performance Report	The Executive Director presented the <i>Sharing Our Success 2020/21</i> report highlighting the great work carried over throughout the pandemic. The Leader answered questions on performance and strategy from the committee.
Briefing on the closure of the Rugby Community Ambulance Station	The Director of Clinical Commissioning and the Strategic Development/Executive Nurse and the Strategy and Engagement Director from West Midlands Ambulance Service gave the Committee a detailed overview of the rationale behind the closure of the local ambulance station previously based at the Hospital of St Cross. The Committee also heard background information about the challenges faced by the ambulance service and the experience of the service throughout the pandemic.

Crime and Disorder	A detailed summary of the work in relation to crime and disorder delivered through the Rugby Community Safety Partnership was presented. The meeting was attended by a local Inspector from Warwickshire Police to answer questions from the Committee.
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MOTIONS FROM COUNCIL

TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE – on 20 April 2021, Council referred a motion to scrutiny. The Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the topic including the outcomes and progress of a Review of Town Centre Heritage carried out in 2017 making a number of related recommendations.

NEWBOLD QUARRY PARK – following a motion put to Council on 20 July 2021, the Committee considered a report covering background information and the situation at the nature reserve.

GRAFFITI – following a motion put to Council on 22 September 2021, the Committee set up a task group to carry out a scrutiny review.

TASK GROUPS

MANAGING COUNCIL TAX ARREARS – there was a delay in the work of the task group and this was due to recommence in the following municipal year. The focus of the review included:

- Understand the current situation and practices that are in place, including for potentially vulnerable customers.
- What financial support and advice is currently available.
- The level of capacity that is available to deal with a potential increase in demand for assistance due to the impact of Covid-19.
- Whether a formal protocol or policy should be introduced.

MEMBER AND OFFICER WORKING – a task group was convened to carry out a short, focussed piece of work to understand the member and officer working relationship and consider changes that would encourage a positive, constructive and professional environment to support members, officers and the Council as a whole.

GRAFFITI – the task group commenced work on the Review of Graffiti in February 2022 and its work was due to conclude in 2022/23.

STANDING ITEMS

There are a number of standing items that return to scrutiny every year. They include:

CRIME AND DISORDER - in accordance with Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, scrutiny has responsibility to carry out an overview of crime and disorder at no less than one meeting each municipal year to scrutinise decisions made, and actions taken, by the responsible authorities that make up the Rugby Community Safety Partnership in connection with the discharge of their crime and disorder functions.

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE an annual report on finance and performance is included in the work programme.

MOTIONS FROM COUNCIL – considered at the next available meeting of the committee.

LOOKING AHEAD

Mandatory training for committee members has been scheduled to take place during the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Scrutiny Committee will continue to seek suggestions for topics and areas that would benefit from the involvement of scrutiny. Ideas are welcomed from all Members, officers, partner agencies and residents of the borough.

The online form to submit suggestions for scrutiny reviews can be found on the Council website [Here](#)

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
Name of Committee:	Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 July 2022
Contact Officer:	Linn Ashmore, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01788 533522
Summary:	The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the overview and scrutiny forward work programme.
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Risk Management Implications:	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
Environmental Implications:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Equality and Diversity:	No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.

Scrutiny Committee - 18 July 2022

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Summary

The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the overview and scrutiny forward work programme.

1. CURRENT REVIEWS

1.2 Graffiti

The Graffiti Task Group met four times and recently completed its work. The draft review report is attached at item 6 of the agenda for consideration and approval for submission to Cabinet on 1 August 2022.

1.3 Member and Officer Working

The Task Group met twice and approved the content of a draft Member and Officer Working Protocol which is included at item 5 of the agenda for consideration by the Committee.

1.4 Access to Emergency Health Care Provision

At the meeting held on 2 March 2022 the Committee reviewed a draft one-page strategy and agreed that the focus of the review should be widened to include additional work linking to work being carried by University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire on its strategy for 2030 and input from Warwickshire County Council, GP surgeries and West Midlands Ambulance Service. The review work is due to be carried out by a task group. This was delayed due to resource issues and the period covering the local elections, but it is hoped that this will commence shortly.

1.5 Managing Council Tax Arrears

Following the retirement of two former councillors from the Council, two new Members have been appointed to the task group and its work is recommencing in mid-July. The Council's debt recovery agents, Bristow and Sutor will attend the next meeting.

2. WORK PROGRAMME

2.1 Current Work Programme

A copy of the current work programme is attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 Managing Housing Arrears

There was a historical request that scrutiny look at arrears collection. Given the changing make-up of the scrutiny group, year-on-year, it is assumed that the catalyst for this request was that the last two rent collection audits concluded only 'limited assurance'.

Rent collection was a potential item for the scrutiny group to consider at this meeting. However, as at the end of June 2022, a corporate audit has just been carried out and the detailed report is at sign off stage. The report has concluded 'substantial assurance' in terms of the controls in place for the recovery of rent. This will be reported back to Audit and Ethics Committee post sign off of the finalised report.

The audit process has effectively scrutinised all aspects of rent collection in reaching its conclusions. In light of the timing of this audit and the substantial assurance attributed, the Chief Officers for Legal and Governance and Communities and Homes are satisfied that to take this through scrutiny too, at this time, would be in effect a duplication of work.

2.3 Impact of the rise in energy costs

An item had been suggested for inclusion on the work programme to understand the impact of increased costs of living. The picture is fast changing in respect of the cost of living. Officers are keeping close contact with more financially vulnerable tenants to identify any particular issues that are emerging. The trends identified are likely to be common to other household types and tenures too and this will help to ensure that adaptations are made to ensure the information and signposting offer is the most appropriate in light of current trends.

There are a number of strategic pieces of work looking at these issues that will form part of the emerging service plan. These include:

- The development of a borough wide financial inclusion strategy.
- A review of our current policies for use of Discretionary Housing Payments and Preventing Homelessness Funds.
- The review of the current advice (the bulk of which is financial) contract, currently with the Citizens Advice Bureau and finishing 31 March 2023.

The input of Members will be sought to feed back into these pieces of work as part of the consultation process.

Discussions are held with Heads of Housing on a county wide basis in relation to future commissioning intentions and a move to a more co-commissioned approach to services that are responsive to localised issues.

3. FORWARD PLAN

The topics currently listed in the Forward Plan for the period August - November 2022 are available to download [Here](#)

4. CONCLUSION

The committee is asked to:

- a) note the progress in the task group reviews; and
- b) agree the future work programme for the committee.

Name of Meeting: Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 18 July 2022
Subject Matter: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY **YES** **NO**

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Date of meeting 2021/22	Item	Report Description
All meetings	Motions referred to scrutiny	
All meetings	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	Long-term rolling work programme.
18 July 2022	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	An overview of the work carried out by scrutiny during 2021/22.
18 July 2022	Discussion with Portfolio Holder/s and Chief Officer/s	Growth and Investment Portfolio Holder and the Chief Officer – Growth and Investment to attend.
18 July 2022	Impact of the rise in energy costs on residents.	To receive a report on the support available for residents.
18 July 2022	Review on the topic of Managing Housing Arrears	To receive a report on the outcomes of an internal audit on housing tenant arrears.
3 October 2022	Discussion with Portfolio Holder/s and Chief Officer/s	Operations and Traded Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Chief Executive to attend. The item will cover the Street Cleansing topic included on the work programme at the meeting held on 22 November 2021.
3 October 2022	Annual Performance Report and discussion with the Leader of the Council	The item will include an update on the strategies and action plans that feed into the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.
28 November 2022	To be agreed	
30 January 2023	To be agreed	
27 March 2023	To be agreed	

Items to be scheduled

Item	Report Description/Notes
Review of Managing Arrears (Council Tax)	Progress or final review report.
Annual review of Member training and development	Annual overview.
Motions to Council	Progress of Motions submitted to Council.
Review of Communication	To include internal and external communication.

Future work programme Items carried over from 2020/21 to be scheduled

Topic	Timescale	Notes
Corporate Strategy	To be agreed	Included on the work programme for the meeting on 3 October 2022.
Health and Wellbeing	To be agreed	Linked to recovery of the Covid-19 pandemic. A place-based Health and Wellbeing Strategy has had initial conversations between Chief Officer for Leisure & Wellbeing and Chief Officer Communities & Homes to outline the development of the new strategy. External advice is currently being sought to support the development of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership arrangements and the creation of a Place-based Rugby strategy. An initial workshop has been coordinated and delivered by LGA colleagues including Public Health, County and RBC colleagues towards a Place based approach.
Digital Inclusion	To be agreed	The Digital Strategy is currently in development and alongside the Corporate Strategy outcomes 3 and 4, supported by the developing IT & Digital Services Strategy, Communications Strategy and Customer Access Strategy there is particular reference and associated actions within service action plans to tackle the issue of Digital Exclusion. There are already considerations being applied during service reviews to reduce digital exclusion, such as access to services in an agile environment, and Town Hall reception.