



# Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group

A meeting of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group will be held at Court Room, The Guildhall, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday 17 June 2021 at 6.00 pm

## Agenda

1.	<p><b>Appointment of Chair</b></p> <p>To appoint a Chair for this meeting of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group</p>
2.	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair to note any apologies for absence.</p>
3.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.</p>
4.	<p><b>Chairman's Announcements</b></p> <p>To receive communications from the Chairman.</p>
5.	<p><b>Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group</b> (Pages 5 - 6)</p> <p>Councillors to note the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group</p>
6.	<p><b>West Northamptonshire Council Scrutiny Committees Remits</b> (Pages 7 - 12)</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group to consider the remits for the three Scrutiny Committees:</p> <p>Corporate</p> <p>Place</p> <p>People</p>

7.	<p><b>Schedule of Meetings for the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group 2021-2022</b></p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group to note the schedule of meetings:</p> <p>12 July 2021 13 September 15 November 17 January 2022 14 March</p> <p>Commencing at 6pm</p>
8.	<p><b>Potential Work Programming Process for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees</b> (Pages 13 - 18)</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group to consider the proposals for the Scrutiny Work Programming process and timetable for 2021/2022</p>

Catherine Whitehead  
Proper Officer  
9 June 2021

**Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group Members:**

Councillor Dermot Bambridge	Councillor Karen Cooper
Councillor Jo Gilford	Councillor Rosie Herring
Councillor Sam Rumens	Councillor Danielle Stone

**Information about this Agenda**

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) prior to the start of the meeting.

**Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

## **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

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### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager via the following:

Tel: 01604 837408

Email: [tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council  
The Guildhall  
Guildhall Road  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

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**Extract - Constitution – West Northamptonshire Council**

**7.2 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**

**1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

1.4 A Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group, composed of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, shall be responsible for approving the work programmes prepared by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

**4 Policy review and development**

4.1 Notwithstanding any policy review matters set out in the work programme of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the procedure set out within the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, Overview and Scrutiny has a key role in policy and budget development.

4.2 The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider any matter referred to it by the Leader/Cabinet in accordance with those procedures and, having considered the matter, shall report to the Leader/Cabinet with comments and/or proposals. In the case of cross-cutting matters, the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group may recommend a particular Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers such matters.

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Item no:

6

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING GROUP**

**17 JUNE 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>West Northamptonshire Council Scrutiny Committees Remits</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager,</b> <a href="mailto:James.edmunds@westnorthants.gov.uk">James.edmunds@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

<b>Contributors/Checkers/Approvers</b>		
<b>MO</b>	<b>Catherine Whitehead</b>	<b>9 June 20201</b>
<b>S151</b>	<b>Martin Henry</b>	<b>7 June 2021</b>

**List of Appendices**

**None**

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 The report sets out proposed remits for West Northamptonshire Council's Overview and Scrutiny committees for consideration and approval by the Co-ordinating Group.

**2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Constitution specifies that the Council will have 3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees – the Corporate, People and Place Scrutiny Committees – together with a Co-ordinating Group made up of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. Arrangements for the remits for the 3 Scrutiny Committees need to take place and these can be determined by the Co-ordinating Group. This report is intended to support consideration of this matter by the Co-ordinating Group and to present a proposal for its agreement.

**3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group:
- a) Agrees the proposed remits for the Corporate, People and Place Scrutiny Committees set out at paragraph 5.1 of this report;

- b) Agrees that the Co-ordinating Group may consider and recommend which Scrutiny Committee is best-placed to deal with any cross-cutting matters that may arise.

### 3.2 Reason for Recommendation(s)

- 3.2.1 The recommendations are intended to enable the WNC Overview and Scrutiny Function to carry out its role effectively and to make best use of its resources by establishing a workable division of potential focus areas between the 3 Scrutiny Committees.

## 4. Report Background

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- 4.1 Local government Overview and Scrutiny is based on provisions in relevant legislation, principally the Local Government Act 2000 and the National Health Service Act 2006. Whilst this legislation sets out specific functions and powers for Overview and Scrutiny it does not prescribe how the function should be organised by individual local authorities. This is largely a matter of local choice, informed by factors such as councillors' views about the organisational model that works best for their authority or guidance on good practice from relevant bodies such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Common organisational models for Overview and Scrutiny used by different authorities include a single committee that appoints sub groups to carry out in-depth scrutiny work or a varying number of 'thematic' scrutiny committees (which may also appoint sub groups). The remits for 'thematic' scrutiny committees are – again – a matter of local choice and might consist of logical groupings of service areas, match an authority's Cabinet portfolios or departmental structure, or be based on a range of other factors.
- 4.2 WNC has adopted an Overview and Scrutiny structure including 3 'thematic' Scrutiny Committees. These will need to carry out the following core functions of Overview and Scrutiny:
- Holding the Executive to account
  - Policy development and review
  - Performance monitoring
  - Scrutiny of agencies external to WNC
- 4.3 In addition, the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) will need to enable WNC to carry out scrutiny of some services or functions that is identified specifically in different legislation:
- Scrutiny of the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area (NHS Act 2006 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)
  - Scrutiny of decisions and actions taken by organisations making up Community Safety Partnerships in connection with their responsibility for developing and implementing a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (Police and Justice Act 2006)
  - Scrutiny of flood risk management functions by a lead local flood authority (Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011)
- 4.4 In practice, the statutory health scrutiny function is the most prominent of these areas.

## 5. Issues and Choices

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- 5.1 The Co-ordinating Group is invited to consider the following proposed remits for each of WNC's Scrutiny committees:



<b>Corporate Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>People Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b>
Finance and resources	Adult care, public health and wellbeing	Built and natural environment
Corporate services	Housing and communities	Transport and highways
Shared services under the WNC and NNC Shared Services Joint Committee (the WNC Constitution assigns this focus area to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee or equivalent at each authority).	Statutory health scrutiny	Community safety and regulatory services (including statutory crime and disorder scrutiny)
Corporate strategy and priorities	Children, families and education	Economic development, regeneration and growth
		Statutory scrutiny of flood risk management

- 5.1 These remits are broadly reflective of WNC’s directorate structure and Executive portfolios, without matching them exactly in order to recognise the potential for changes in these areas over time. The proposed remits are considered to represent a straightforward approach that is appropriate at this stage in the life of the WNC Overview and Scrutiny Function. They also seek to establish logical groupings of focus areas for each Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 It is emphasised that the proposed remits are intended to provide parameters within which each Scrutiny Committee will work, not a list of areas that should all be covered during a given period. The Scrutiny Committees will need to prioritise what they do within their respective remits.
- 5.3 It is also recognised that the arrangement proposed means that potential focus areas may come within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee. As an example, housing could be scrutinised as an issue affecting wellbeing or as an aspect of local development. Similarly, but more functionally, the Overview and Scrutiny Function may need to determine whether finance scrutiny is carried out solely by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee or forms some part of ‘service-focused’ scrutiny by the other two committees.
- 5.4 In practice it is likely that any organisational model for Overview and Scrutiny that uses multiple committees will involve the need to consider how best to deal with cross-cutting issues at some point. It is proposed that the Co-ordinating Group will be able to assist in ensuring that a productive approach is taken at WNC. The Co-ordinating Group will be in a position to consider any cases where crossover between the 3 Scrutiny Committees’ remits means that there is a choice about how a particular piece of work is done and to recommend the final approach. The Co-ordinating Group is asked to agree that it will carry out this role. This reflects its responsibility for approving Scrutiny Committee work programmes. The WNC Constitution also already states in relation to matters referred to Overview and Scrutiny under the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules that: “In the case of cross-cutting matters, the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group may recommend a particular Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers such matters.”

5.5 It is open to the Co-ordinating Group to amend the proposed remits presented in this report as it considers necessary when identifying its final preferred arrangements. The remits that are ultimately set should support the aim of enabling the Overview and Scrutiny Function to carry out its role as effectively as possible.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

6.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals. WNC has agreed its overall Overview and Scrutiny committee structure and Scrutiny Committee member have been appointed. This report concerns arrangements to be made within these parameters.

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 The approach adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group must reflect the statutory duties relating to local authority Overview and Scrutiny, referred to in section 4 of the report above, and the requirements of the WNC Constitution. It is considered that the proposal set out in this report achieves this.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 The proposed remits for the 3 Scrutiny Committees set out in this report have been identified in the context of the establishment of WNC as a new authority. Therefore, whilst this report is intended to present a proposal that is informed and workable there is the potential for issues or challenges to arise when the final agreed version is put into practice. This is likely to be the case with any arrangement of remits adopted by WNC at the start of its life. This risk is also mitigated by the ability of the Overview and Scrutiny function to monitor its own operation and effectiveness and to consider any improvements that may seem necessary in light of experience.

### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 The overall Overview and Scrutiny committee structure for WNC was subject to consultation with the West Northamptonshire Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Governance Task and Finish Group during the development of the WNC Constitution in 2020/21.

6.4.2 The Monitoring Officer and Assistant Chief Executive (who is the Statutory Scrutiny Officer for WNC) have been consulted on the proposed remits for the Scrutiny Committees presented in this report ahead of the Co-ordinating Group meeting.

### **6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 This report is being presented to the current meeting to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group to consider and determine the final remits for the 3 Scrutiny Committees.

### **6.6 Climate Impact**

6.6.1 There are no immediate climate implications arising from the proposals.

6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 There are no immediate community implications arising from the proposals. The work of the Scrutiny Committees will deal with issues affecting communities living or working in West Northamptonshire and may cover issues with specific implications in areas such as equalities or community cohesion.

**4 Background Papers**

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None

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**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING GROUP**

**17 JUNE 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Potential work programming process for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager, <a href="mailto:tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk">tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk</a> 01604 837408</b>

<b>Contributors/Checkers/Approvers</b>		
<b>MO</b>	Catherine Whitehead	9 June 2021
<b>S151</b>	Martin Henry	7 June 2021

**List of Appendices**

None

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the Scrutiny Work Programming process and timetable for 2021/2022.

**2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 Effective work programming establishes directed scrutiny of issues of local importance and ensures that Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference
- 2.2 Work Programming is the planning stage. Potential topics for scrutiny are identified for the year. These will be investigated either at a Committee meeting or through time limited Task and Finish Groups. It is typical for a long list to be drawn up initially that is reduced to a short list before a final work programme is approved.
- 2.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) states that an effective work programme is central to effective scrutiny. Therefore, a good Scrutiny Work Programme ensures that the Committees are focussing on priority issues, making best use of both time and resources. The

designing of a Work Programme for Scrutiny can promote public participation, transparency and demonstrate good governance.

- 2.4 The Coordinating Scrutiny Group will approve the Work Programmes for the three Scrutiny Committees.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the proposals contained within this report as set out at paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 and agrees the Scrutiny work programming process and timetable for 2021/2022.

#### **3.2 Reason for Recommendations**

- 3.2.1 One of Overview and Scrutiny's key roles is to undertake focussed work programming in order that it is ensured that Scrutiny contributes actively to the Council's objectives.
- 3.2.2 Each of the three Scrutiny Committees should have a Work Programme for the year, every year. This report sets out examples of best practice of how this could be achieved for the Committee's consideration, comment and approval.

#### **3.3 Option one**

- 3.3.1 A Work Programming event is scheduled for the summer 2021 that will engage all Scrutiny, other non-Executive Councillors and Cabinet Members in the format of an interactive workshop.
- 3.3.2 Prior to the event a short questionnaire could be devised asking just one question "what do you want overview and scrutiny to investigate over the next 12 months." It could be produced via an online survey, such as *SurveyMonkey* and shared by the communications team through the Council's various social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This would encourage public participation in the work programming process. This method has been used by a Local Authority previously and around 50 suggestions for potential scrutiny were received each; many of which have influenced the Work Programme. The suggestions would be summarised in table format for consideration by non-Executives.
- 3.3.3 Cabinet Members could be invited to the beginning of the event and each Cabinet Member would speak of their priorities for the year. From this, ideas for pre-decision scrutiny could be proposed for inclusion within the work programmes of each Scrutiny Committee. Pre-decision scrutiny is an important part of the Scrutiny function as it investigates a planned decision shortly before it is to be made by Cabinet; or it can carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the planned decision several months before it is considered by Cabinet. Pre-decision scrutiny is recognised as an effective means of scrutiny. Non-executive Councillors would have the opportunity to ask questions of the Cabinet Members at the event. Following Cabinet's presentations, they would leave the event; taking no part in further discussions being held by non-Executives regarding the drawing together of potential work programmes.

- 3.3.4 Executive Directors and Assistant Directors could be invited to attend the event and would offer advice on suggestions for potential Scrutiny review; for example, whether the issue was already being looked at within the service area, such information is important as to avoid duplication.
- 3.3.5 The Work Programming event could be set out in three separate groups of non-Executives, each group led by a Chair of the Scrutiny Committees. Each group would be asked to identify up to six key topics (a long list) for each of the Scrutiny Committees to include within its annual work programme. The Groups could consider the suggestions proposed by the public, suggestions put forward by Cabinet for both scrutiny review and pre-decision scrutiny and suggestions that non-Executives have themselves.
- 3.3.6 The groups would be given up to 60 minutes to suggest a long list of potential Scrutiny reviews and pre-decision scrutiny. The Chairs of the Groups would report back their individual Group's suggestion. A long list of topics would then be produced which would be considered by the Co-Ordinating Scrutiny Group; who would propose a short list of suggestions for each Scrutiny Committee to consider and them formally approve its work programme for 2021/2022.
- 3.3.7 The Work Programmes could comprise:
- Pre decision scrutiny topics
  - In depth Scrutiny Reviews, to be undertaken by time limited Task and Finish Groups set up by the Scrutiny Committees. The Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups would provide a short progress report to each meeting of the parent Scrutiny Committee.
  - Inquiry Days for short, sharp scrutiny reviews
  - Performance monitoring
- 3.3.8 The Work Programme should retain flexibility so that urgent items could be incorporated within the year as required.
- 3.3.9 Each Scrutiny Committee would monitor its Work Programme at each meeting.
- 3.3.10 Option one would allow for public participation in the work programming process and would give every Councillor the opportunity to be involved in the process.

### **3.4 Option 2**

- 3.4.1 A further option could follow a similar format to option 1, as above, but each Committee could hold a separate work programming event. This option would be more time consuming and could impact on time and resources.

### **3.5 Option 3**

- 3.5.1 The Scrutiny Committees could meet informally to discuss topics for inclusion within its work programme for the year. The Chair would then formally report back the suggestions to a meeting of the Co-Ordinating Scrutiny Group and the work programme would be formally

approved. This option would involve only Members of the Committee and could be seen to have limited other non-Executive involvement.

#### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Centre for Public Scrutiny and Governance advocates that scrutiny committees should agree a work programme at the start of each Municipal year; in order that issues can be scheduled for consideration and reports produced in a timely manner.
- 4.2 The Work Programming should consider the four core functions of scrutiny:
- Holding the Executive to account
  - Policy development and review (often carried out in the format of Task and Finish Group or Inquiry Days)
  - Performance monitoring and
  - External Scrutiny (agencies external to the Council)
- 4.3 It could also consider:
- The corporate priorities of the Council
  - Views of other Councillors, not a member of a Scrutiny Committee
  - Best practice in terms of the process for work programming
- 4.4 There is no set method of work programming for Scrutiny; each Local Authority devises its own methodology. However, the role of scrutiny should be focussed, and the work programming should be prioritised rigorously. It is usual for the work programme to be delivered by a combination of Committee work and Task and Finish Groups that could include committee reports by officers and external representatives, standing committee agenda items such as performance monitoring, scrutiny reviews. Evidence gathering could include consultations, workshops, evidence gathering sessions and site visits.
- 4.5.1 There is a need for flexibility within each Committee's work programme to allow for new topics to be included that could emerge during the year.
- 4.5.2 The Council's constitution states that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consult with other parts of the Council as appropriate, including the Cabinet, on the preparation of any work programme.

#### **5 Issues and Choices**

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- 5.5 The Committee is asked to consider the options for potential work programming as set out in paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of this report and agree the work programming process for the Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2021/2022. The Coordinating Scrutiny Group is responsible for approving the work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees.



## **6 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.5 Resources and Financial**

**6.5.1** There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.6 Legal**

**6.6.1** Overview and Scrutiny operates within the provisions as set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It has had specific powers relating to health services since 2001 and the crime and disorder since 2006.

**6.6.2** As set out in Part 7, paragraph 7.1.3 of the constitution “The Overview and Scrutiny function will develop a work plan as well as supporting policy development, providing pre-decision scrutiny where appropriate, holding decision-makers to account and exercising the formal call-in of executive decisions to review any concerns about the making of the decision.”

**6.6.3** Part 7.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules states:

1.2 the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consult with other parts of the Council as appropriate, including the Cabinet, on the preparation of any work programme.

1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will take into account any views expressed following consultation under Rule 1.2 above in drawing up any work programme. They should take into account the resources, both Officer and financial, available to support its proposals.

### **6.7 Risk**

**6.7.1** To comply with the requirements of the Council’s Constitution, the work programmes of the three Scrutiny Committees must be formally approved by the Co-Ordinating Scrutiny Group.

**6.7.2** Scrutiny is essential to good governance and enables the voice and concerns of residents and communities to be heard and provides challenge and accountability.

### **6.8 Consultation**

**6.8.1** The various options as proposed at paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 include the opportunity for non-Executives, Cabinet, the public and officers to be involved in the Work Programme process.

**6.8.2** Each meeting of the Scrutiny Committees will include the work programme as an agenda item, providing Members to comment on and input to the Committees work programme further.

## **6.9 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

**6.9.1** Any comments received by Members of the co-ordinating Scrutiny Group will be included in the final report regarding the Work Programme.

### **6.10 Climate Impact**

**6.10.1** There are no immediate climate impact implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.11 Community Impact**

**6.11.1** Scrutiny work will need to assess the implications of any recommendations made, including equalities and community cohesion implications.

## **7 Background Papers**

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None