

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JULY 2021

Report Title	Remit of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the remit for the People Overview and Scrutiny committee as approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Constitution specifies that the Council will have 3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees – the Corporate, People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees – together with an Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group made up of the Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. Arrangements for the remits of the three Scrutiny Committees were determined by the Co-ordinating Group.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, at its meeting on 17 June 2021, approved the remits for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Approves the remit for the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out at paragraph 5.1 of this report;
- b) Notes that the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group may consider and recommend which Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or Overview and Scrutiny Committees, are best-placed to deal with any cross-cutting matters that may arise.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations

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 three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

4. Report Background

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 subgroups 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' Overview and 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 Overview and 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

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group considered and approved remits for each of the three Overview and Scrutiny committees. These are detailed below. The remit for the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is highlighted:

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
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

5.2 The remit for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is 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.

5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group recognised that the remits for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee means that potential focus areas may come within the remit of more than one Committee. For example, housing could be scrutinised as an issue affecting wellbeing or as an aspect of local development.

5.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group considered potential cross-cutting matters that may arise and agreed that it would consider and agree which Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) is best placed to deal with any cross-cutting matters. 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.” The Coordinating Group agreed, at its recent meeting, that cross cutting matters could come under the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee members have been appointed. This report details the remit for the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The approach adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group reflects the statutory duties relating to local authority Overview and Scrutiny and the requirements of the WNC Constitution. It is considered that the remits of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee achieve this.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 The remits for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees set out in this report have been identified in the context of the establishment of WNC as a new authority. 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 has been consulted on the proposed remit for this Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented in this report ahead of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group meeting that was held on 17 June 2021.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group considered the remits for the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees at its meeting on 17 June 2021. The Coordinating Group determined the final remits for the three Committees.

6.5.2 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive and approve its remit at its inaugural meeting.

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 Overview and 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

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group – 17 June 2021