

Corporate Overview Group

Chair's Foreword

This annual report summarises the main work undertaken by the Corporate Overview Group 2023/24 focusing on the impact of scrutiny. The Corporate Overview Group oversees the Council's other scrutiny group work programmes based on concerns highlighted by quarterly financial and performance monitoring reports, as well as items on the Cabinet Forward Plan and priorities within the Corporate Strategy.

The Corporate Overview Group have ensured that the executive be held to account by approving topics to be discussed at scrutiny groups. Additionally, the Group have scrutinised financial and performance management reports on a quarterly basis to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

Councillor Tina Combellack Chair



What we are responsible for?

The Corporate Overview Group responsibilities include:

- Implementing identified improvements to scrutiny including training of scrutiny members, construction of new work programmes and reporting methods.
- Creating and receiving feedback on work programmes for the Growth and Development, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Groups based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Investment Strategy and Transformation Plan.
- Scrutinising financial and performance management reports on a quarterly basis to ensure the smooth running of the Council and delegate any necessary investigations into concerning elements of these reports to the most appropriate scrutiny group via their work programme.
- Reviewing reports in respect of health and safety, diversity and customer feedback to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties.

Our work this year

During this year, the Group considered many service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- Consideration of Scrutiny Work Programmes at each meeting
- Finance and Performance Management at each meeting
- Health and Safety Annual Report
- Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022/23
- Corporate Strategy.

Consideration of Scrutiny Work Programmes

In line with the Terms of Reference, at every meeting the Group's members considered topics for scrutiny that had been put forward by Councillors and Officers. Following discussion, the following items were added to the work programmes of scrutiny groups for the year 2023/24:

- Public Protection in respect of Smoke Control Areas in the Borough
- Review of the Growth Boards
- Use of Community Facilities
- Review of Canal and River Trust Partnership Funding
- Parking provision funded by Rushcliffe – to be placed on the scrutiny work programme for two years' time
- Infrastructure Delivery
- Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium
- Connectivity and Communications
- Accessible Housing.

The Group agreed that training or provision of information would be more appropriate methods of gaining a better understanding in relation to items for 'Retrospective Planning Applications' and 'To clarify and review Rushcliffe's local offer for care leavers' in the first instances.

The Group agreed that information about 'Councillor diversity, recruitment and allowances' was already covered by other Council Groups and that the item in relation to 'Local Power Generation' would not move forward to scrutiny as there were other avenues to be pursued.

The Group agreed that it would be more appropriate for the item on 'Housing density in new housing sites' to be taken forward through the LDF Group.

The Group agreed that questions in relation to 'Sustainable Drainage Systems on New Estates' be put to the relevant Director in the first instance.

In relation to 'Management of open spaces within new developments' and 'Management Charges Actions Review' matrices, the Group asked for these to feed into the Open Spaces document being prepared by Officers and for a progress report be brought to the Corporate Overview Group in September 2024.

The development and improvement of scrutiny continues with those submitting a scrutiny matrix now being invited to attend the Corporate Overview Group meeting to present their proposed topic to the Group in person.

Quarterly Finance and Performance Management

A report focusing on the Council's finances and performance was delivered at each meeting by officers. Officers provided a summary of the key points in the meeting and the Group was able to discuss any concerns. Over the course of this year, the following issues have been discussed:

- Impacts from changes in interest rates on costs, investment balances and underspend
- The value of the Council's Multi Asset investments (pooled funds)
- Delivery of targeted events and health and sports development programme across the Borough
- Performance in relation to householder planning applications and planning enforcement inspections
- Gypsy and traveller sites within the Borough
- S106 and CIL funding from developer contributions and plans for spending this in the Council budget
- West Bridgford Special Expenses
- Performance of Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium
- Monies allocated to provide affordable housing
- Underspend for the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Expenditure of the funds for Homes for Ukraine and Homelessness
- How Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) and Local Authority Delivery Grant (LAD3) monies were used
- Reporting on usage of community facilities
- Customer Services response to telephone and email enquiries.

Health and Safety Annual Report

The Strategic HR Manager presented the Health and Safety Annual Report which summarised the Council's occupational health and safety performance during the period 1 April 2022 to end March 2023, including health and safety policies, procedures and activities which have taken place during this period. The report also set out the training programmes delivered, provided numerical and statistical data and the proposed health and safety objectives for the year.

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- health and safety audit of Streetwise and asked how soon the follow up work within the action plan would be completed
- reporting of accidents at play parks and in particular open space areas of new housing estates
- whether the Council provides training for residents and staff at Rushcliffe Borough sites in using defibrillators

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2024:
Consider the detailed information contained within the annual Health and Safety Report	<p>Due to the increased risk profile a decision has been made to recruit permanently into the Corporate H&S Advisor role with the post being filled from 1 April 2024. This will ensure sufficient resource is in place</p> <p>Significant progression has been made in relation to completing the objectives set for 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy reviews are ongoing, not all reviews completed in the year but are prioritised for Qtr 1 of 2024/25 - H&S audits – areas completed include pesticide use, vehicle movement at Bingham Depot, Fountain Court, Rushcliffe Country Park - Significant level of support given to Streetwise including training, risk assessments, tree team, land drainage - Inspection at Rushcliffe Oaks completed - DSE e-learning moved to Certification <p>A variety of workplace health initiatives have been delivered throughout the year</p>
Note the change to the health and safety risk profile as a result of both Streetwise coming back in-house and the opening of Rushcliffe Oaks	
Note the significant progress made against the health and safety goals and objectives previously agreed by Corporate Overview Group for the financial year 2022/23	
Endorse the proposed health and safety objectives for 2023/24 as set out in the report	

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022/23

The Service Manager Corporate Services presented the Annual Customer Feedback Report for 2022/23 which provided information about complaints and compliments received by the Council about the services that it delivered. The Service Manager Corporate Services summarised that there were no matters which caused alarm and that the overall picture was one of steadiness and stability.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2024:
Scrutinise and, subject to any comment, accept the report as a true record of customer feedback in 2022/23	The Group said the data showed that performance was excellent. No action was necessary as a result of this report

Corporate Strategy

The Service Manager Corporate Services presented the Corporate Strategy Report and explained that a very draft form of the Strategy had been brought to a previous Corporate Overview Group meeting which had been updated following public consultation and consultation with Councillors. Feedback from the Group would be submitted to Cabinet before the report moved to be presented at Council.

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- the Council's five Leisure Centres
- terminology in the document in relation to delivery and measurement of some targets
- wording in the document to reflect that the actions of Council had led to an increased benefit for residents
- updating wording for the two recommendations (as below).

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2024:
Consider the draft Corporate Strategy for 2024-2027	The Group asked that Cabinet reflect on the wording for the delivery and measurement of the various targets
Endorse the design of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and forwarded it to Cabinet for consideration and reflection upon the wording	The Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 November 2024. It was adopted by Council at its meeting on 7 December 2024, which requested scrutiny to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and its action plan over the next four years

Member Panels

The Group did not establish any Member Panels this year.

Call-ins

The Group did not discuss any call-ins this year.

Looking forward to the year ahead

Following a busy year for the Council's scrutiny functions, all members of Corporate Overview Group are looking forward to developing comprehensive work programmes for the scrutiny groups in 2024/25.