

# Central Bedfordshire Council

Council

19 July 2018

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## Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (2017/18)

Report of: Cllr David McVicar, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel,  
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### This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key

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#### Purpose of this report

To summarise the activities undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny in the municipal year 2017/18 and outline the activity anticipated in 2018/19.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Council is asked to note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny annual report for the municipal year 2017/18.**

#### Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. The attached report has been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel (OSCP) Members for presentation to Full Council.

#### Background

2. Part 3C of the Council's Constitution requires that the OSCP "report annually to Full Council on the workings of the overview and scrutiny function and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
3. The report reflects the outcomes of the overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) during the 2017/18 municipal year in addition to outlining the activity that we currently envisage being undertaken throughout 2018/19.

## **Activity during 2017/18**

4. During 2017/18 the OSCs have been able to further reduce the total number of items that were presented to committee, giving Members an opportunity to focus on adding value to a smaller number of items. They have also been able to increase involvement in meetings through invitations to residents, partners or experts to engage in specific pieces of work. Webcasts have also provided the opportunity to enhance transparency in the decision-making process by providing the opportunity for people to watch meetings remotely at their convenience.
5. Members have also focused on enhancing the amount of policy development activity and whilst there is a desire to do more policy development work this has increased significantly over the previous year.
6. The OSC process has been able to facilitate two detailed enquiries this year, relating to pupil attainment and the integration of health and social care. Members have provided very positive feedback on their experiences in taking part in these enquiries and continue to suggest that the most valuable work or overview and scrutiny is undertaken in these detailed reviews of a particular topic.

## **Priorities for 2018/19**

7. Whilst the OSCs have made progress in relation to their previous priorities the OSCP has continued to take opportunities to review good practice and the outcomes of relevant reviews at a national level to inform ways of working in Central Bedfordshire.
8. As detailed in the appendix the OSCP will focus on a number of key areas including: -
  - a. Greater focus on scrutinising the delivery of the larger MTFP efficiencies and early thinking on next year's MTFP and budget
  - b. Engagement with residents, external experts and partners in a managed way
  - c. A strategic approach to prioritising and selecting appropriate topics
  - d. Robust and strategic questioning of topics
  - e. Increasing the number of items received that are proposed by non-Executive members and residents
  - f. Undertaking more policy development activity
  - g. Addressing the balance of formal and informal activity.

## **Council Priorities**

9. The work programmes of the OSCs contribute indirectly to each of the Council priorities. Whilst there are no implications arising directly from this report the implications of proposals are detailed in full in each report submitted to Committee.

## **Legal Implications**

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report, all recommendations can be managed within existing budgets.

## **Equalities Implications**

12. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
13. OSCs provide a valuable contribution to meeting this duty by; providing a forum for discussion in which the public and partners can ask questions and contribute to the decision-making process; and reviewing performance and tracking the progress of recommendations as well as encouraging the use of best practice and research from elsewhere.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

14. The Council is asked to note the report and its contents.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (2017/18)

## **Background Papers**

The Minutes of all OSC meetings can be viewed online at the following link: -  
<http://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/committees-meetings-agendas/landing.aspx>

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