

Scrutiny Committee Annual Report to Council - 2019/20

Remit of the Scrutiny Committee

1. As per Appendix C of the Council's constitution, "Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules":

1.1 The Council is required by Law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. The Scrutiny Committee contribute to the Council's Performance and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions.

1.2 The Scrutiny Committee allows a wider involvement in Council business by involving non-councillors from the wider public section, voluntary groups and community groups to help them in their work. They may make reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

1.3 The Scrutiny Committee also monitors the decisions of the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee can "call-in" a decision of the Cabinet which has been made but not yet implemented. They may recommend that the Cabinet reconsider their decision. They may also be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions.

1.4 Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. The Scrutiny Committee should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.

"The Scrutiny Committee will comprise a permanent Chairman and Vice Chairman, and 9 other elected Members that follow the political proportionality of the Council. No Members of the Committee may be members of the Cabinet, their deputies or members of any of the Cabinet Advisory Committees."

General Approach

2. Throughout the course of 2019/20, the Scrutiny Committee has drawn up and followed a work plan that has focussed on four key areas. These are:

- **Inviting Cabinet Portfolio Holders** to each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, on a rotational basis, to discuss particular areas of focus/challenge and concerns members may have;
- **Inviting a number of external representatives** to attend Scrutiny Committee to discuss particular areas of concern and their activities within the district;
- **Setting up In-Depth Scrutiny working groups** as task and finish groups to investigate particular areas in detail, reporting back to the Committee so that recommendations can be agreed and reported to Cabinet;

- **Reviewing performance of services** in relation to agreed performance indicators, in particular focusing on red flag indicators. These are discussed at meetings, with explanations being provided by Officers. Matters of serious concern are referred to the Portfolio Holder/ Cabinet as appropriate.

3. This approach has ensured that the Committee has scrutinised both the work of SDC and other public bodies across the district, per the Committee’s above terms of reference.

Work Covered – 2019/2020

4. Based on the above approach, the following is a summary of work carried out during 2019/20 by the Scrutiny Committee.

Portfolio Holders

5. Portfolio Holders were asked to provide an update on recent work and future challenges to the relevant meeting, and were subsequently asked a number of questions by Members of the Committee regarding specific challenges, their approach and views. Portfolio holders attended as follows:

| Scrutiny Committee | Portfolio Holder | Area of Committee Focus |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| July 2019 | Cllr Margot McArthur Cleaner and Greener | CCTV LED Smart Lighting Recycling Fly tipping Electric vehicles |
| July 2019 | Cllr Peter Fleming Improvement and Innovation | Sevenoaks Town Car park Property Investment Strategy Swanley Leisure Centre Edenbridge Leisure Centre |
| November 2019 | Cllr Matthew Dickins Finance and Investment | Budget setting Net Zero Electric vehicles Brexit impacts |
| January 2020 | Cllr Robert Piper Housing and Health | Affordable Housing Homelessness |
| March 2020 | Cllr Dyball People and Places | TBC |
| March 2020 | Cllr Thornton Development and Conservation | TBC |

External Invitees

July 2019

6. Representatives from Sencio Sevenoaks Community Leisure (Jane Parish – CEO, Davina Miller – Marketing Manager, Paul Jobling – Business and Sales Manager) gave a presentation on their strategic and financial objectives.
7. Members of the Committee then asked a number of questions relating to areas including:
 - Membership levels
 - Marketing approach and budget
 - Financial performance
 - Development based on the loan from the Council

January 2020

8. Chief Inspector Jon Kirby, Sevenoaks District Commander of Kent Police was in attendance. He gave an overview of the levels of crime within the District and information regarding call handling figures to 101 and 999.
9. Members of the Committee then asked a number of questions relating to areas including:
 - Crime levels
 - Staffing resources for the District area
 - CCTV
 - Modern Slavery
10. Following concerns expressed at the July 2019 meeting, Jane Parish, CEO Sencio Leisure returned to the Committee. Members discussed a confidential report regarding the recent financial analysis of Sencio, which allayed a number of the concerns raised.

In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group

11. At its November 2019 meeting, an in-depth scrutiny working group was formed to look at matters relating to the CCTV service to evaluate the effectiveness of the CCTV service in supporting the Community Safety theme within the Council Plan and its privacy impacts.
12. A final report would be brought to the Summer 2020 meeting.

Other

13. The Chairman would like to thank his Vice Chairman, other committee Members and Officers for the work they have put in over the year.

Councillor Cameron Brown
Chairman - Scrutiny Committee
31 March 2020