

Council – 8 July 2024

Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023/24

Service: Legal and Democratic Services

Wards: All

1. Summary of report

This is the annual report to the Council outlining the work of the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2023/24 municipal year.

The report provides an analysis of the work undertaken by the Committees during this period.

A copy of the annual report is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendations

That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make, the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24 be noted.

3. Resource and legal considerations

Scrutiny is a key aspect of the governance framework and an integral part of how the Council makes effective decisions. Good scrutiny can help to inform policy making and help ensure that decisions taken by the Cabinet are effectively considered prior to implementation. The role of Scrutiny is defined in Article 6 of Walsall Council's Constitution.

4. Council Plan Priorities

This report reflects the Council Plan priority on *Internal Focus – Council services and customer focussed, effective, efficient and equitable* as reflection and evaluation on the previous year's scrutiny work enables lessons to be learned and taken forward.

Further to this the report is structured around the Council's five Council Plan priorities to demonstrate how scrutiny committees have contributed to the achievement of the organisations strategic plan.

5. Risk Management

The role of scrutiny is fundamental in ensuring that the most effective and informed decisions are taken whilst delivering value for money for residents.

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the overview and scrutiny committees, which helps to achieve these objectives.

Asking Members to recognise and review past achievements and consider the potential items to scrutinise helps to ensure that the overview and scrutiny committees focus their attention on the main issues that have strategic relevance and importance to the council as a whole. Incorporating an effective scoping process enables a risk-based approach to be taken in the development of potential work programmes; focussing on the key issues that affect the performance of the Council, impact on service delivery or potentially result in service delivery that does not meet resident expectation or offer value for money. The Council's priorities and pledges are all considered when looking at potential work programmes for the following year and frequent performance monitoring reports are presented to individual overview and scrutiny committees.

6. Financial implications

Overview and scrutiny committees continually monitor the financial position of the Council and undertake an annual scrutiny process of draft budgets. There are no direct financial implications from this report.

7. Legal implications

Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution requires overview and scrutiny committees to report annually to the Council on their working and to make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods, if appropriate.

8. Property implications

There are no direct property implications from this report.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

Work and reviews undertaken by overview and scrutiny committees seeks to have a positive impact on resident's health and wellbeing through influencing the service provision of the Council and its partners. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications from this report.

10. Staffing implications

There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

11. Reducing inequality

This report details all of the work that has been done across the whole Borough. Scrutiny Members represent a number of wards across the Borough and actively work with residents to best represent their views at overview and scrutiny committees. This helps to ensure the delivery of the Council equality duties through promoting a thorough understanding of the needs of our diverse communities and supports the delivery of the Council's vision that: *Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised.*

12. Consultation

Individual committees have sought expert opinion and views from witnesses, where appropriate, to ensure that a balanced perspective is provided against any of the work topics under consideration. Evidence has been brought to the committees by officers, members of the public, officers from other authorities, partners and independent experts.

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