

Item No. 3.4	Classification: Open	Date: 21 May 2022	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021-22	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Overview and Scrutiny Committee	

Foreword - Councillor Ian Wingfield, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In line with the Council's Constitution, I present this report to the annual meeting of Council Assembly.

It has been another busy year for the scrutiny function, looking at important issues such as regeneration, the provision of SEND, community safety, issues relating to the climate emergency, impact of Brexit and the pandemic on the health and social care workforce, domestic abuse in families, new council homes on existing estates, and the private rented sector, amongst other things. It is hoped that the recommendations arising from these scrutiny reviews are welcomed and adopted by the Cabinet.

Progress is being made, but there is still scope for much more to be achieved with the scrutiny function. In 2022/23, the council will be seeking to enlist the assistance of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to provide us with a health check on our scrutiny function and where improvements can be made. There will be member inductions taking place in June which will provide new members with insight into local authority scrutiny, and returning members with the opportunity to reflect on how our scrutiny has been functioning in the last few years. Further training for scrutiny members on key questioning skills will be provided later in the year.

There will also be a focus on how scrutiny can better support the cabinet in policy development / pre-decision scrutiny, along with a consideration of the 'call-in' process to see whether our current rules require review. The council will also be looking at how scrutiny can improve consultation procedures with the public.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank cabinet members, senior officers, partners, other agencies and the public for attending meeting after meeting. Your contributions to the scrutiny process have been invaluable and has enabled overview and scrutiny committee and the commissions to obtain a greater understanding of the issues we have been looking at. I would also like to express thanks to my scrutiny colleagues who have always asked interesting and searching questions of a high standard throughout the year.

I recommend this report to Council Assembly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That council assembly note the scrutiny activity for the 2021/22 municipal year as detailed in paragraphs 8 – 44 of the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The council's scrutiny function provides a critical challenge to delivery of public services in Southwark through power to make inquiry into matters of local concern. The scrutiny function is undertaken by the council's overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions and can take a number of forms including.
 - Reviews into individual topics
 - 'Call in' – scrutiny of executive decisions taken before they are implemented
 - Call to account of officers on receipt of a petition of 500 or more signatures from the general public
 - Interviews with individual cabinet members and senior officers.
3. The overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions have specific functions in respect of policy development and review, health and wellbeing, scrutiny of decisions and performance of the council in relation to policy objectives. The committee and its commission may make recommendations to the cabinet and/or council assembly arising from the outcome of a scrutiny process.
4. The scrutiny function is significant and wide ranging – detail of its specific functions and terms of reference are set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
5. Section 2, Article 5 of the Council Constitution requires overview and scrutiny committee to report annually to council assembly on the workings of the overall scrutiny function. The committee may make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Section 6.1(h) of the overview and scrutiny committee procedure rules (terms of reference) requires overview and scrutiny committee to report annually to all councilors on the previous year's scrutiny activity. This report sets out the activity of the overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions for the 2021/22 year.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Activity of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its commissions

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership: Councillors Ian Wingfield (Chair), Victor Chamberlain (Vice-Chair), Humaira Ali, Anood Al-Samerai (May – October) Peter Babudu, Jack Buck, Gavin Edwards, Sarah King, Margy Newens, Maria Linforth-Hall (October – May), Victoria Olisa, Leanne Werner

Co-opted Members: Martin Brecknell, Marcin Jagodzinski, Mannah Kargbo, Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer

(Reserves: Councillors Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE, Tom Flynn, Eleanor Kerslake, Sunny Lambe, Richard Livingstone, Hamish McCallum, Adele Morris, David Noakes, Sandra Rhule, Michael Situ, Cleo Soanes)

6. The overview and scrutiny committee established four scrutiny commissions for the 2021/22 municipal year:
 - Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
 - Environment Scrutiny Commission
 - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission
 - Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission
7. Both the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission, and the Environment Scrutiny Commission were established as roving scrutiny commissions with the capacity to look into matters that came up throughout the year that were not specifically within the remit of a particular commission.

Activity

8. The overview and scrutiny committee's main topic of focus this year was *Regeneration in the Borough of Southwark (continued from the 2020/21 year)*.
9. In addition to the main topic of focus the committee scrutinised the Community Safety Partnership Activity and progress against the partnership plan, received briefings from the cabinet member for Transport, Parks and Sport in connection with the Re-opening of Rye Lane to buses and the various Street Space trials, received performance monitoring information in connection with the delivery of the Borough Plan, heard from Extinction Rebellion Southwark in connection with Southwark's Climate Strategy and Action Plan. The committee also received briefings on the 2020/21 annual workforce report, the Technology and Digital Service Digital Inclusion Strategy 2022 – 2025, and Expenditure of Local Funds (the various grant funding streams available for individuals, community and voluntary

groups and local businesses can bid into).

10. Throughout the year, the committee held interviews with or heard from Cabinet Members Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council, Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness, Councillor Helen Dennis, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development, Councillor Rebecca Lury, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Democracy, Councillor Catherine Rose, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parks and Sport, and Councillor Radha Burgess, Deputy Cabinet Member for Clean Air and Active Travel.
11. The committee also held interviews with the Southwark Borough Commanders for the Police and Fire Services.
12. The overview and scrutiny committee held its annual budget scrutiny meeting which involved interviews with cabinet member portfolio holders and chief officers on the proposed council budget for 2022/23.
13. There were no call-ins during 2021/22.
14. The overview and scrutiny committee met nine times – its first meeting of the new municipal year held in May 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (overview and scrutiny committee)

Scrutiny Commissions

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Peter Babudu (Chair), William Hougbo, (Vice-Chair), Radha Burgess, Karl Eastham, Eleanor Kerlake, Nick Johnson, Michael Situ

Co-opted members (Education)

Martin Brecknell, Marcin Jagodzinski, Mannah Kargbo, Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer

(Reserves: Councillors Humaira Ali, Anood Al-Samerai, Maggie Browning, James Coldwell, Sirajul Islam, Richard Leeming, James McAsh)

15. The education and local economy scrutiny commission's main topic of focus for 2021/22 was *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision*.
16. The commission received evidence from parents, teachers and practicing coordinators of children with special educational needs and disabilities. The commission also received briefings from officers on the matter of

SEND.

17. Following the evidence gathering sessions held throughout the course of the year, the commission formulated its recommendations for consideration by cabinet. The recommendations are available online in draft form and are available to [view here \(see item 7\)](#). The final version of the recommendations and accompanying report are due to be submitted to cabinet for consideration in June 2022.
18. In addition to the main topic of focus, the commission also reviewed matters under the theme 'Future of Work and Enterprise in Southwark', hearing from GoodPeople, Social Investment Business, the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Businesses and Town Centres, the Head of Economy, and received a briefing on the Southwark Skills Strategy and Delivery Plan.
19. Under the theme 'Future of Children's Education and Youth Provision in Southwark' for which the SEND scrutiny review formed part, the commission also received briefings on the Youth New Deal and Youth Services, and Pupil place numbers in primary schools.
20. The commission also received updates on the implementation of recommendations arising from the previous year's scrutiny reviews into *Exclusions and Alternative Provision*, and *Procurement: Accessibility and Social Value* as well as a report on *Revitalising Southwark's Town Centres & High Streets* which had formed part of the commission's scrutiny review in 2020/21 and a briefing on the *Ethnic Minority Pay Gap*.
21. Informed by the briefings received from cabinet members and officers, the commission made a number of recommendations on the ethnic minority pay gap, procurement, and Southwark Pioneers Fund. The draft recommendations are available to [view here \(see item 8\)](#).
22. The commission also held an interview with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education.
23. The commission met five times - its first meeting held in July 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission)

Environment Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Margy Newens (Chair), Adele Morris (Vice-Chair), James Coldwell, Tom Flynn, Graham Neale, Leo Pollak, Leanne Werner

Co-opted members

Jon Bootland

(Reserves: Councillors Peter Babudu, Jack Buck, Richard Leeming, Victoria Mills, Damian O'Brien, Dan Whitehead)

24. The environment scrutiny commission's main topic of focus for 2021/22 was *Energy*.
25. The commission received evidence from Energy Sparks (a charity which provides an online energy analysis tool and an energy education programme), SE24 (a community energy initiative), council officers (on food waste collections from households, and district heating networks). The commission also facilitated a roundtable discussion with various stakeholders, landlords and developers to discuss sustainable development, retrofitting existing homes and renewable energy generation. In addition the commission received briefings from representatives of South East London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) and officers on the current provision of heat to Southwark, the potential to expand heat networks, and the management of air quality; Retrofit Action for Tomorrow (RAFT) on their retrofitting work; and IRT Surveys on their work with social housing providers on making homes more eco-friendly.
26. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission formulated its report and made a number of recommendations. A copy of the commission's draft report is available to [view here \(see item 7\)](#).
27. Throughout the 2021/22 year the commission also received briefings on the Climate Change Strategy, Implementation of a local Urban Greening Factor and, progress relating to recommendations from the Air Quality scrutiny review.
28. The commission met five times – its first meeting held in July 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Environment Scrutiny Commission)

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Victoria Olisa (Chair), David Noakes (Vice-Chair), Dora Dixon-Fyle, Maria Linforth-Hall, Sandra Rhule, Charlie Smith, Bill Williams

(Reserves: Councillors Sunil Chopra, Nick Dolezal, Renata Hamvas, Eliza Mann, Jane Salmon, Martin Seaton, Kath Whittam)

29. The health and social care scrutiny commission's main topics of focus for 2021/22 was *Health and Social Care Workforce (Impact of Brexit and the pandemic)*, and *Domestic Abuse in Families*.
30. In respect of Health and Social Care Workforce, the commission heard from the Director of Commissioning and representatives of Guy's and St Thomas, and King's Foundation Trusts, and the CCG on the impact of Brexit and the pandemic, including proposed mandatory vaccination, on the health and social care workforce. The commission concluded that the evidence received so far indicated that Brexit was not a significant issue at the moment, and the government withdrew the proposed mandatory vaccinations for COVID 19 during the course of the review, but suggested that the review be carried over into the following year to examine further evidence from the unions and human resources on the impact of the pandemic on wellbeing and retention.
31. The commission undertook a scrutiny review of Domestic Abuse in Families, hearing from community safety officers, children's services (Family / Early Help), YUVA Project, Probation Services, the Police (public protection), Solace, Bede House (StarFish Domestic Abuse Project), Su Mano Amiga, and the cabinet member leads for community safety and domestic abuse. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission formulated its report and made a number of recommendations. A copy of the commission's draft report is available to [view here \(see item 10\)](#).
32. Throughout 2021/22 the health and social care scrutiny commission reviewed a number of different issues. The commission received briefings from Guy's, and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust representatives on their Trust recovery plans, in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic. Received a briefing from the Metropolitan Police Service on the arrangements for safeguarding children and adults in Southwark, and held an interview with the Chair of the Safeguarding Board. The commission also received a presentation updating on the development of the South East London Integrated Care System (SEL ICS). Received a presentation from the CCG in respect of GP Appointments. The commission also received presentations on Long Covid, and an update on CAMHS race equality work, following up on a on review on inequalities in mental health provision for young people

33. The commission also held interviews with the cabinet member for health and wellbeing, and the cabinet member for children, young people and education.
34. The commission met five times - its first meeting held in July 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission)

Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Gavin Edwards (Chair), Damien O'Brien (Vice-Chair), Renata , Jon Hartley, Sunny Lambe, Richard Livingstone, Jane Salmon

Co-opted members

Bassey Bassey – Southwark TMO Committee
Cris Claridge – Tenants Forum
Ina Negoita – Homeowners Forum

(Reserves: Councillors Victor Chamberlain, Nick Dolezal, Karl Eastham, Hamish McCallum, Victoria Olisa, Andy Simmons, Bill Williams)

35. The housing and community engagement scrutiny commission's main topic of focus for 2021/22 were *New Council Homes on Existing Estates*, *Estates*, and *Private Rented Sector*.
36. New Council Homes on Existing Estates – The commission received evidence relating to two case studies, Brenchley Gardens SE15, and Kingston Estate, SE17, hearing from officers, residents and the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness.
37. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission formulated its recommendations. A copy of the commission's draft recommendations are available to [view here \(see item 6\)](#).
38. Private Rented Sector – The commission interviewed the cabinet member for a Safer, Cleaner Borough in connection with private rented housing and also received a briefing from council officers on driving up standards for the private rented sector.
39. Following the evidence gathering session, the commission formulated its recommendations. A copy of the commission's draft recommendations are available to [view here \(see item 7\)](#).
40. Throughout the year, the commission also received a number of one off reports/briefings on Progress on Building New Council Homes, Council Plan on Building Zero Carbon Houses, Policy and Practice on mutual

exchange housing options, Impact of Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill upon the HRA and leaseholders, Noise and Nuisance in Southwark, Southwark Repairs Service Performance, .

41. The commission met six times - its first meeting held in July 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission)

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC)

42. There is provision in the constitution for the council to form a joint health overview and scrutiny committee (JHOSC) with other local authorities to consider a consultation on a proposal for substantial development of or variation to the health service affecting each council's area. Detailed below are the current JHOSCs that relate to Southwark.

Our Healthier South East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

43. Southwark is part of the 'Our Healthier South East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee', which consists of councillor representatives from Bexley, Bromley, Lambeth, Lewisham, Royal Borough of Greenwich and Southwark. The JHOSC role is to scrutinise health services across South East London, in particular the proposals and consultation processes of the NHS Our Healthier South East London programme to ensure that improved, safe and sustainable health services are delivered across the region.
44. The JHOSC is currently administered by Bromley Council. The JHOSC, only met once in 2021/22, an informal virtual meeting held in June 2021.

[Link to agenda and minutes](#) (Our Healthier South East London JHOSC)

Scrutiny activity for 2022/23

45. The overview and scrutiny committee did not give an indication of the areas the committee and its commissions should focus on in 2022/23 municipal year. It will be for the overview and scrutiny committee to agree the 2022/23 work programmes for the committee and commissions.

Resource implications

Support to the scrutiny function

46. The scrutiny function is supported by the scrutiny team, which sits within the Finance and Governance Department under the direct responsibility of the Director of Law and Governance. The team currently consists of the head of scrutiny, and two full time scrutiny officers.

47. Additional resources to further support the scrutiny function are under consideration.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=308		
Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=550		
Environment scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=517		
Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=519		
Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=551		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Functions and Terms of Reference (Extract from the council constitution)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Member	Cllr Ian Wingfield, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Lead Officer	Doreen Forrester-Brown, Director of Law and Governance	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	13 May 2022	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	13 May 2022	