

Item No. 3.4	Classification: Open	Date: 20 May 2023	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022-23	
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.

The new municipal term has brought new issues as well as new members to OSC. We started with the Central London Bus review and ended with a review of the decision-making process over Maydeu House. We also called in the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CGS) to review the Southwark scrutiny process and we will be considering their recommendations at our next meeting. All our discussions have resulted in timely and relevant recommendations that I am pleased to say the Cabinet has accepted in their entirety. As ever the Budget discussions took up a vast bulk of our work and especially so given the extra financial challenges we were presented with this year, but also the Cost-of-Living Crisis affecting so many of our residents. We also focused on the performance of the Council's Delivery Plan and the Climate Emergency Plan performance against its SMART targets.

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.

The recommendations of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny will allow the Council the opportunity to improve our scrutiny function, where improvements can be made. A key element will be the 'balancing' role of scrutiny with Cabinet and taking a more pro-active role in supporting policy development / pre-decision scrutiny, along with a consideration of changes to the 'call-in' process. The council will also be looking at how scrutiny can increase the involvement of the public and community organisations.

I recommend this report to Council Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That council assembly note the scrutiny activity for the 2022/23 municipal year as detailed in paragraphs 6 – 50 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 the 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 2022/23 year.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Activity of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its commissions

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership: Councillors Ian Wingfield (Chair), Irina von Wiese (Vice-Chair), Suzanne Abachor, Victor Chamberlain, Ellie Cumbo, Jon Hartley, Laura Johnson, Sunny Lambe, Margy Newens, Jason Ochere, Leo Pollak

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

(Reserves: Councillors Rachel Bentley, Sam Dalton, Sam Foster, Esme Hicks, Emily Hickson, Sarah King, Richard Leeming, Graham Neale, Sandra Rhule, Michael Situ, Cleo Soanes)

6. The overview and scrutiny committee established four scrutiny commissions for the 2022/23 municipal year:
 - Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission
 - Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission
 - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission
 - Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

Activity

7. The overview and scrutiny committee's main area of focus this year was the Cost of Living Crisis.
8. The committee scrutinised the proposals of Transport for London in respect of the Central London Bus Review, received briefings from the cabinet member for Communities, Equalities and Finance on the council's response to the Cost of Living Crisis, and also heard from partner agencies and the voluntary sector in respect of this matter. Heard from the chief executive and officers on the council delivery plan 2022 – 2026, and Climate Emergency Plan in relation to performance against SMART targets.
9. The committee also received briefings on the latest position in respect of the council's digital strategy and customer access, support provided to Southwark LGBTQ+ communities, and an update on the implementation of the council's Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.
10. 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 2023/24.

11. The committee considered one call-in during the 2022/23 year, which related to Abbeyfield Estate (Maydew House).
12. The overview and scrutiny committee met nine times – its first meeting of the new municipal year held in May 2022.

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

Scrutiny Commissions

Education and Local Economy Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Jason Ochere (Chair), Rachel Bentley, (Vice-Chair), Chloe Tomlinson, Joseph Vambe, Cassandra Brown, Renata Hamvas, David Watson

Co-opted members (Education)

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

(Reserves: Councillors Maggie Browning, Bethan Roberts, Laura Johnson, Victoria Mills, Sunny Lambe, Victor Chamberlain, Irina Von Wiese)

13. The education and local economy scrutiny commission's main areas of focus for 2022/23 were *mitigating falling pupil numbers in schools*, and *impact of the cost of living crisis on businesses*.
14. Mitigating falling pupil numbers - throughout the year the commission received various briefings and reports and heard from council officers, the cabinet member for Children, Young People and Schools, head teachers, the Director of Education for the Church of England Diocese, a GLA representative in relation to the School Rolls projections service and the National Association of Head Teachers.
15. Impact of the cost of living crisis on businesses - throughout the year the commission received various briefings and reports and heard from council officers, local businesses, several Business Improvement Districts, Black Business Network, the chief executive of Renaisi (the leading accountable body for the Local Access Partnership) and East Street Market traders.
16. Following the evidence gathering sessions the commission formulated its draft recommendations for consideration by cabinet. The recommendations are available online in draft form and are available to [view here - see item 8](#). The final version of the recommendations and accompanying reports are due to be submitted to cabinet for consideration in June 2023.

17. In addition to the main areas of focus, the commission also received information on the Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership and held interviews with the cabinet member for Children, Young People and Schools and the cabinet member for Jobs, Business and Town Centres in respect of matters within their portfolio responsibility.
18. The commission met six times - its first meeting held in July 2022.

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

Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Margy Newens (Chair), Graham Neale (Vice-Chair), Ketzia Harper, Emily Hickson, Sarah King, Reginald Popoola, David Watson

Co-opted Members (Environment)

Shalaka Laxman, Lydia Marsden

(Reserves: Councillors John Batteson, Rachel Bentley, Gavin Edwards, Natasha Ennin, Renata Hamvas, Adam Hood, Kimberly McIntosh)

19. The environment scrutiny commission's main areas of focus for 2022/23 was *Climate Emergency Finance*, *Sustainable Freight*, and *Resident Participation Framework*.
20. Climate Emergency Finance - the commission heard from the co-founder of Abundance, in relation to Community Municipal Bonds, Local Climate Bonds and Climate Emergency transition, the Head of Partnerships, and Programme Director on Green Finance, the Director of 3Ci on pathways to net zero, and briefings from council officers.
21. Sustainable Freight - throughout the year, the commission received various briefings and reports and heard from council officers, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks, Streets and Clean Air, the managing director of Peddle My Wheels, in connection with the OurBike scheme.
22. Resident Participation Framework - the commission heard from 'We Walworth' in relation a model for thriving neighbourhoods, council officers on the climate emergency citizens jury, with a focus on the community engagement process, the Resident Involvement Manager, the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Diversity, Chairs of the Tenants Forum and Home Owner Forum.

Other areas

23. The commission also undertook a mini review into streamlining planning applications for retrofit and renewable energy, hearing from various council officers. The commission made a number of recommendations to cabinet.
24. The commission also received a briefing from council officers and the cabinet member for communities, equalities and finance on progress relating to the Pension Fund divestment to make the council's pension fund zero carbon by 2030, and external representatives on the Carbon Tracker Initiative, around Pension Fund Divestment & Energy Transition.
25. The commission held interviews with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development, and Cabinet Member for Leisure Parks, Streets and Clean Air on various matters contained within their portfolio responsibility.
26. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission formulated its recommendations and draft reports. A copy of the commission's draft report is available to [view here - see items 6, 7 and 8](#). Final versions of the commission's reports are due to be submitted to cabinet for consideration in June 2023.
27. The commission met five times – its first meeting held in July 2022.

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

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Suzanne Abachor (Chair), Maria Linforth-Hall (Vice-Chair), Naima Ali, Sam Dalton, Esme Dobson, Hamish McCallum, Charlie Smith

(Reserves: Councillors Victor Chamberlain, Sabina Emmanuel, Natasha Ennin, Barrie Hargrove, Emily Hickson, David Watson, Kath Whittam)

28. The health and social care scrutiny commission's main areas of focus for 2022/23 were *Care Contributions* and *Access to Medical Appointments*.
29. Care Contributions - the commission received briefings and information relating to care charges. The commission heard from the Director of Adult Social Care, Carers, and the Southwark Disablement Association.
30. Access to Medical Appointments - throughout the year the commission received reports and briefings on issues relating to medical appointments. The commission heard from the NHS Chief Operating Officer for Partnership Southwark, Directors of the North and South Southwark

Primary Care Networks in respect of GP Appointments, Healthwatch Southwark, SLaM Advisory group, Partnership Southwark Project Manager, Live Well Mental Health Clinical & Care Professional leads, CCPL advisory Group.

31. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission is due to finalise report recommendations and draft reports at its meeting on 16 May 2023. A copy of the commission's draft reports are available to [view here - see items 8 and 9](#). Final versions of the commission's reports are due to be submitted to cabinet for consideration in June 2023.

Other areas

32. The commission received briefings and presentations relating to the new Integrated Care System (ICS), Partnership Southwark, Covid 19 and Flu Vaccinations, Health and Social Care Workforce, the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board annual report, the Southwark Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Queen's Oak nursing home and Annual Care Home report.
33. The commission also held interviews with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing in respect of areas within her portfolio responsibility.
34. The commission met six times - its first meeting held in July 2022.

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

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

Membership: Councillors Ellie Cumbo (Chair), Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair), Sam Foster, Barrie Hargrove, Esme Hicks, Portia Mwangangye, Emily Tester

Co-opted members

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

(Reserves: Councillors Sam Dalton, Ketzia Harper, Adam Hood, Hamish McCallum, Kimberly McIntosh, Leo Pollak, Joseph Vambe)

35. The housing and community safety scrutiny commission's main areas of focus for 2022/23 were *Housing Repairs Service, Council Leaseholders, Empty Homes, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse*.

Housing

36. The Scrutiny commission looked at ongoing issues residents were facing with the repairs services; reviewed the council's transparency and access for the audit of account of repair works in respect of council leaseholders and reviewed progress on reducing empty homes within the borough.

Community Safety

37. The commission reviewed council service providers, MET Police and local partners progress on matters pertaining to community safety with a focus on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Hate Crime (gender-related) and Domestic Abuse within the borough.
38. Housing Repairs Service – Throughout the year the commission received various briefings and reports from the cabinet member for council homes and homelessness and council officers,
39. Council Leaseholder Charges – The commission heard from the Chief Executive of the Leaseholders Association of Southwark, and the Chair of the Homeowners Area Forum on the impact of the cost of living crisis on leaseholders.
40. Empty Homes – The commission received a report from council officers on progress on empty homes, and heard from the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness.
41. Violence Against Women and Girls, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse – Throughout the year the commission received various briefings and reports and heard from the Chief Inspector in charge of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
42. Following the evidence gathering sessions, the commission formulated its draft recommendations. A copy of the commission's draft recommendations are available to [view here - see item 7](#) . Final versions of the commission's report and recommendations are due to be submitted to cabinet for consideration in June 2023.

Other areas

43. The commission received reports on housing allocation statistics and overcrowding, and council support for resident-led housing meetings.
44. The commission held interviews with the Borough Fire Commander for the Southwark Fire Brigade on key fire safety issues, and the Borough Police Commander for Southwark in relation to trust and visibility of policing in the community. The commission also held interviews with the Cabinet Member for Council Homes and Homelessness, and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety in respect of areas within their portfolio responsibility.

45. The commission met five times - its first meeting held in July 2022.

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

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC)

46. 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.

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

47. Southwark is part of the '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 work of the South East London Integrated Care Board to ensure that improved, safe and sustainable health services are delivered across the region.
48. The JHOSC is currently administered by Bromley Council. The JHOSC has held one informal meeting.

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

Southwark Scrutiny Improvement Review

49. As indicated in the previous year's annual report, the council enlisted the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to undertake a scrutiny improvement review of the council's scrutiny function. A copy of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny review findings can be viewed [here](#). The overview and scrutiny committee is due to consider which recommendations the council should adopt at its meeting in June 2023.

Scrutiny activity for 2023/24

50. 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 2023/24 work programmes for the committee and commissions.

Resource implications

Support to the scrutiny function

51. The scrutiny function is supported by the scrutiny team, which sits within the Governance and Assurance Department under the direct responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive for Governance and Assurance. The team currently consists of the head of scrutiny, and two full time scrutiny officers.
52. 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 and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514
https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=606		
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 Safety Scrutiny Commission Agenda and Minutes	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva 020 7525 0496
https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=605		

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, Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	12 May 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	12 May 2023	