

**ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
2018-19**





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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR



Overview and Scrutiny is a vital part of the democratic process for any local authority, and where party politics has no place. It's imperative that Members of all parties work together to ensure that the administration can deliver its plans in the best way for our residents.

Gloucester has a history of effective and efficient Scrutiny, and this year the committee has continued its innovative approach.

Members started the year with a well attended Member Development Session led by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

At this session, Members (both those on the Committee and those who were not) engaged in constructive discussion and sharing of ideas as to how to take scrutiny forward. What also came out of the session was reinforcing the idea that scrutiny is for all Members and that everyone has a role to play in the Committee's work – whether contributing to policy discussions, agenda setting or attending as a Ward Member with a particular interest in a specific policy area.

Members from across the Council have acted as a critical friend to the Cabinet, in the true spirit of scrutiny, and have been able to add value to the administration's policies. It is particularly pleasing to have developed a good working relationship between the Committee and the Cabinet, both collectively and with individual portfolio holders.

Scrutiny has had a number of significant achievements during the last civic year; the committee held a special session to examine Service Transformation and the relocation of both the Council's offices and reception. We have also looked at the important work that our partners such as, Aspire and the Culture Trust do in partnership with the City Council, for the residents of Gloucester.

The Committee has looked constructively at proposals from Cabinet and made valuable contributions- the committee's recommendation to locate Tourist Information spaces at the Museum and the Guildhall was a particular highlight, as were the recommendations related to the adoption of a Public Spaces Protection Order. New policy has also been examined with the Committee making a valuable contribution to accessing the private rented sector for temporary and permanent accommodation. The Cabinet accepted recommendations that providing free information and advice in respect of tenancy management be compulsory for those letting out private accommodation. In respect of tenant advice during any regeneration of Podsmead and Matson, Cabinet also accepted the recommendation that provision for independent advice be urgently examined once funding for the tenancy advisory service ceases.

We are fortunate in Gloucester to have an administration and cabinet that is open minded and receptive to Overview and Scrutiny's resolutions. I am looking forward to

another year, working together with all members, to deliver the very best for every resident.

There have been achievements, but there is more that Scrutiny can do for the City Council. I hope that going forward, we will be able to further draw on external witnesses (both from partners and residents themselves) to add value to the reports we hear. I'm also looking forward to a year in which Scrutiny takes more of a role in developing policy and improves the services we deliver.

Given the financial challenges ahead, it is absolutely vital that Scrutiny continues to play its part in delivering innovative and people powered local services.

Councillor Tom Coole

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

Young Councillor Of the Year

MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2018-19



Councillor Tom Coole

Chair



Councillor Emily Ryall

Vice-Chair



Councillor Lee Hawthorne

Spokesperson



Councillor Gerald Dee



Councillor Collette Finnegan



Councillor Kate Haigh



Councillor Neil Hampson



Councillor Jeremy Hilton



Councillor Andrew Lewis



Councillor Steve Morgan



Councillor Terry Pullen



Councillor Gordon Taylor



Councillor Paul Toleman



Councillor Clive Walford



Councillor Declan Wilson

THE WORK OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Overview and Scrutiny work is Councillor led. In addition to Councillors leading on which subjects they wish to consider in depth through Task and Finish Groups they also set their own work programme which is populated with topics selected from the Cabinet's Forward Plan, matters relating to the Council's priorities and challenges, and issues of importance to local residents. They identify who they want to hear from to inform their work and decide who should attend meetings to present the information. Meetings are held monthly. The agenda usually comprises no more than 3-4 substantive items to enable meaningful and constructive debate on matters.

What Overview and Scrutiny does not do

Overview and Scrutiny does not get involved in minor matters or individual concerns which are not of wider community significance. These need to be addressed through the appropriate service unit, Ward Councillor, or the Portfolio Holder responsible for the issue. Overview and Scrutiny does not deal with individual complaints as these should be addressed through the Council's Complaints Procedure.

'Call In' Meetings

The Council's Constitution sets out the rights of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to 'call in' a Cabinet decision if they feel it has not been made in accordance with decision-making principles set out in Article 12 of the Constitution. The 'call in' procedure may result in the convening of a special meeting to consider the matter unless the next programmed meeting falls within the deadlines set in the Council's Constitution.

In 2018-19 the 'call in' procedure was not exercised.

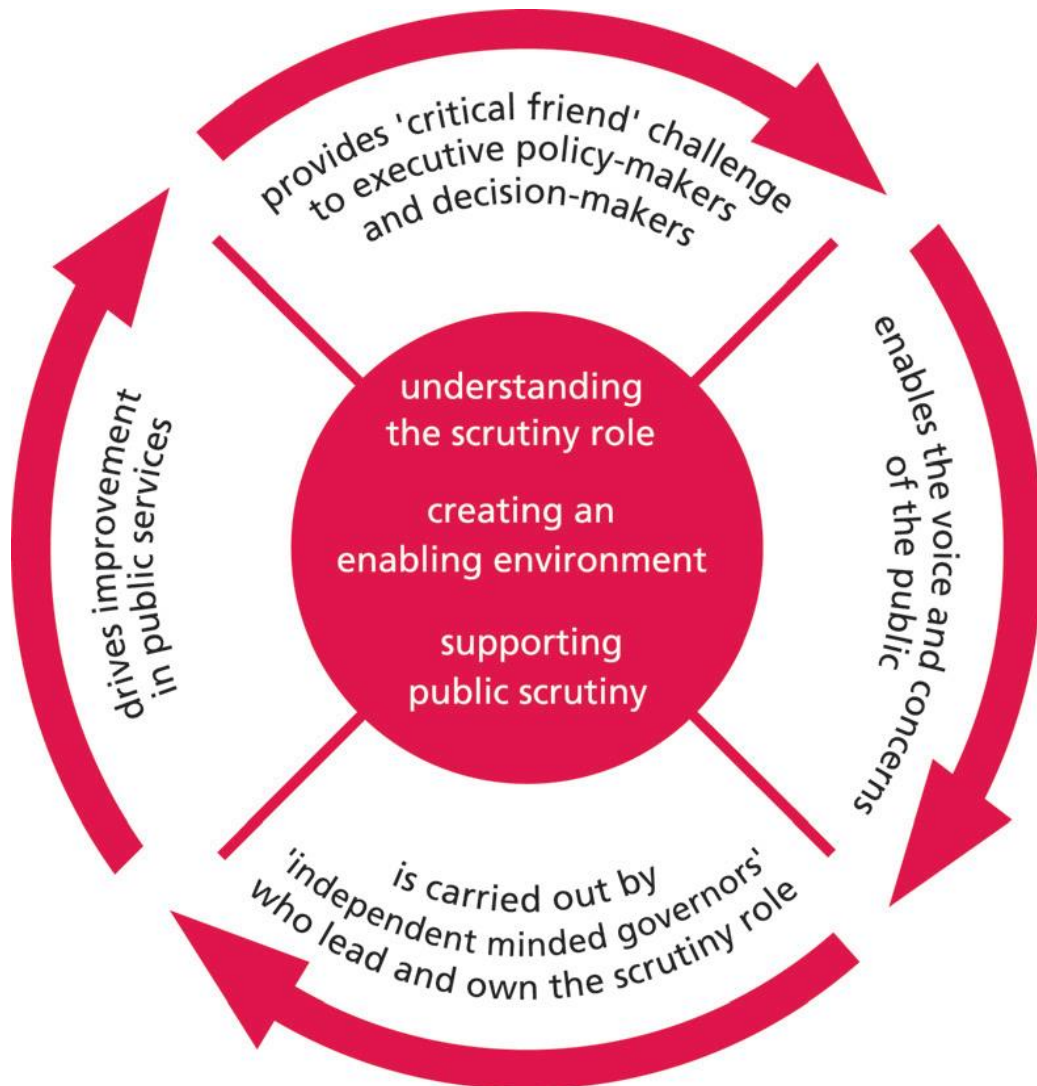
HOW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKS AT GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

The Council's Constitution sets out that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will: -

- (a) co-ordinate, champion and lead on the scrutiny of Council and Executive decisions;
- (b) have all of the functions, powers and duties conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000(as amended);
- (c) have all the powers and functions, powers and duties conferred by Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and to act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee;
- (d) determine the allocation of work in the event that the scope of the subject matter of a scrutiny study or investigation overlaps the role of more than one Task and Finish Group;
- (e) review the operation of the scrutiny process and work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups and inform and advise Council in relation to priorities and the allocation of resources;
- (f) oversee and review the resources, support, training and development of Overview and Scrutiny Members;
- (g) develop a positive "critical friend" approach to the role of scrutiny of the Council and Community issues;
- (h) provide and co-ordinate the input to an annual report to Full Council on such issues or topics as the Committee sees fit;
- (i) give consideration to the management of matters called in for review under paragraph 14 of the Overview & Scrutiny Rules;
- (j) give consideration to matters referred to it by the Councillors' Call for Action;
- (k) review and scrutinise the work of the Executive;
- (l) review and scrutinise the content of the Forward Plan;
- (m) review and scrutinise the policies and proposed policies of the Council;
- (n) consider any matters which affect the authority, the City of Gloucester (or part of it) or its inhabitants (or some of them).



Successful scrutiny is a central element of the Council's aims and objectives and a key part of the democratic process. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets in public to fulfil its role of holding the Cabinet to account against the background of the administration's stated purpose, aims and objectives. However, the guiding principle for its work is that it should make a *proactive* and *positive* contribution to the development of policy and the discharge of the Council's function.



THE COMMITTEE'S RESOURCES

Officer Support and Professional Advice

Support is provided by Democratic and Electoral Services Officers under the direction of the Democratic and Electoral Team Leader and the Policy and Governance Manager. The Committee is grateful for all of their support throughout the year.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer works closely with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Spokesperson of the Committee and takes a proactive role in managing the Committee's work programme.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is regarded as a focal reference point for professional advice, case studies and tips for best practice.

Budget

The Committee does not have its own dedicated budget and its work is funded from the Democratic and Electoral Services team's budget.

THE YEAR IN SCRUTINY

Over the twelve meetings which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held during 2018-2019, a number of different topics were scrutinised. As shown in the table below:

| | RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS |
|--|---|
| 04 June 2018 | |
| 2017-18 Financial Outturn Report | RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO CABINET –That the proposals for the TIC move be brought before the Committee and that the report be noted. |
| 2017-18 Year End Performance Report | RESOLVED - That the Committee note the Year End Performance Report. |
| Gloucester Culture Trust Annual Report | RESOLVED: - That the Committee note the contents of the Culture Trust Annual Report. |
| 02 July 2018 | |
| Public Space Protection Order Consultation Report and Proposal | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND (1) That the Cabinet reconsider providing for Aggressive Charity Collection, Littering and Nuisance and anti-social behaviour within the PSPO and (2) That the efficacy of the PSPO be reviewed in one year's time including as much data as possible from partner organisations and, based on evidence gathered as part of the review, that scope be permitted to add/or remove provisions contained within the PSPO. |
| Shire Hall Accommodation Move | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND that all councillors receive a briefing on the design and operating methods to be employed in the new Customer Contact Centre at 92-96 Westgate Street once the details had been finalised. |
| 03 September 2018 | |
| Social Impact Bond- Midterm Update | RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report. |
| Service Transformation | RESOLVED –: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND to Cabinet that customers |

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| | who interact with Council services be surveyed on their preferred methods of using services. |
| Performance Monitoring Quarter 1 | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report. |
| Financial Monitoring Quarter 1 Report | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report. |
| 01 October 2018 | |
| Plans for Accommodation Move | RESOLVED: - That the presentation be noted and that more detailed plans be presented to the Committee when available |
| 29 October 2018 | |
| New Rough Sleeper Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report. |
| Tourist Information Centre Service Development | RESOLVED:- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND to Cabinet that further consideration be given to the option of providing two tourist information spaces at the Guildhall and the Museum of Gloucester with a report being compiled AND a separate report be compiled in due course providing the Committee with information on how the tourist information facility (or facilities) will be designed and outfitted and what prior consultation would be undertaken with relevant user groups and clients. |
| 26 November 2018 | |
| Money Plan 2019-24 & Budget Proposals 2019/20 | RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report. |
| 03 December 2018 | |
| Community Building in Gloucester | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny note the report subject to the following recommendations: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND (1) A piece of work be undertaken similar to that done by Exeter or Wigan (whose schemes are noted in the report) on what input the community can have on community building and (2) Organise a Member Development session to explore Asset Based |

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| | Community Development and Community Building more fully and that endeavours are made for it to include all Members. |
| Accessing the private rented sector for temporary and permanent accommodation | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report subject to the following recommendations: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND that (1) With reference to paragraph 3.7 of the report that point (5) – ‘Optional - Offer a free property inspection so we can make sure your property complies with rental regulations, such as health and safety; the availability of free advice and information relating to tenancy management or maintaining the property in compliance with regulations’ be amended to replace ‘Optional’ with ‘Compulsory’; (2) That the optional materials cited at points 6, 7 and 8 of paragraph 3.7 be provided as a matter of course; (3) That, upon the expiration of the ‘bridging period’ (paras 3.5 and 3.7), efforts are undertaken to ascertain whether the tenant has remained in the property and; (4) That during a review in twelve months’ time, both landlords and tenants are consulted on the operation and delivery of the scheme. |
| Financial Monitoring Quarter 2 Report | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny note the report. |
| 07 January 2019 | |
| Aspire Trust: Annual Report | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report. |
| Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report. |
| 28 January 2019 | |
| Festival and Events Programme | RESOLVED that: - (1) The total costs of events included in the report be included in the report to Cabinet; (2) A full suite of events be circulated and; (3) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report |
| Tourist Information Centre Relocation | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report. |
| 25 February 2019 | |

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| Financial Monitoring Quarter 3 Report | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report. |
| Public Consultation for Draft Supplementary Planning Documents for Podsmead and Matson Estates Regeneration | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND that Cabinet urgently examine provision for independent advice once funding for the tenancy advisory service ceases. |
| Rough Sleeping Briefing | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the briefing. |
| 12 March 2019 | |
| Reception Plans | A number of recommendations were made to Cabinet, some of which were incorporated into the final plans. This includes the addition of seating with armrests and back support, as opposed to modular seating. Measures were also agreed to further improve residents' confidentiality and to install a hearing loop. |
| 25 March 2019 | |
| Discretionary Housing Payments | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND that (1) Para 2.2 be amended to have the policy operative from 4th April 2019; (2) War Pensions to be disregarded in their entirety for the purposes of calculating income for DHPs; (3) Cabinet be requested to consider disregarding War Pensions in their entirety for the purposes of calculating income for House Benefit;(4) To clarify the appeals process in the policy; (5) If on first application it is apparent that the individual's circumstances are not likely to change within the 13 week period, a longer period will be awarded subject to an annual review; (6)Where residents have ineligible services charges that cannot be covered by the scheme and which may make residents at risk of eviction, the Council assist them in accessing services to manage their finances. |
| Information Technology Outsourcing (ITO) Contract | RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report |
| 29 April 2019 Cancelled | |

BUDGET MONITORING 2018 - 2019

Budget monitoring is now entrenched in the Overview and Scrutiny process here at the Council. As well as quarterly financial monitoring, an annual money plan and budget proposal meeting with the Cabinet is a key feature of the work programme.

In November 2018, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members presented to the Committee the overall draft Money Plan as well the 2019/2020 budget proposal. Additionally, each of the Cabinet Members presented their individual portfolio, highlighting anticipated budget pressures, budget savings and any changes to the portfolio. Below are some of the key observations.

Key Observations:

- Stretched public finances means that there is continued pressure on Council budgets. This will continue to provide a challenge in the years to come.
- Difficult decisions had to be made in order to make savings. In total, savings of £250,000 had been made during the course of the year, adding to the £10 million savings of previous years.
- The transformation programme required drawing of funds from earmarked reserves. These would need to be built up again to provide a buffer in the future.
- The Council, as with other local authorities faces an uncertain financial future. In 2020, the Government will undertake a Fair Funding Review which could have an impact on the way the Council provides services. Moreover, the potential resetting of business base rate guidelines in 2020-21 adds to the uncertainty.

The full agenda and minutes can be accessed [here](#).

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

High Strength Alcohol Group

The result of the 2016 public consultation led to the creation of a Task and Finish Group on the Sales of High Strength Alcohol and Street Drinking. Specifically, the group was concerned with sales of alcohol with a strength of 6.5% vol or higher. As a result of the group's findings, a number of recommendations were made to Cabinet, all of which were accepted:

In partnership with the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, there could be a Voluntary Code of Practice initiative where off licences commit to not selling high strength alcohol products. As noted in this report, there is no current legislation in place for enforcement action to take place

To share the report with the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board to inform its discussions on the refresh of the Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

To share this report with the Director of Public Health for Gloucestershire and the Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities

To ask the Gloucester City Council representative on the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee to share the Group's report with the committee to inform the committee's work planning activity

Where a fresh planning or licensing application is received in respect of a proposed premises in an identified 'cluster' area, those relevant Committees to consider placing restrictions on those licences if approved

Where clusters of off licences are associated with clusters of ASB, particularly related to alcohol consumption, licensing enforcement team to work with those retailers to reduce the strength of the products available in that location and to consider not selling the lowest priced high strength products

2018-19

In February 2019, we carried out another consultation, asking Residents to submit their ideas for consideration. The feedback has been insightful, ranging from becoming a cleaner city, building affordable homes, to becoming a 'Digitally Smart City'. The submissions will inform the creation of new Task and Finish groups.

PARTNERS

As in previous years, the Committee met with the Council 's partners. Importantly, these meetings ensure an ongoing dialogue between the City Council and partner organisations, working together on how to best serve the City of Gloucester. This is perhaps more important now more than ever, as organisations continue to face financial pressure and limited resources.

Gloucester Culture Trust:

For the first time, the Committee met with the Director of Gloucester Culture Trust, alongside the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, and the Head of Culture and Trading Services. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the Trust 's initial report, and these meetings will become an annual feature of the work programme.



The Trust outlined its overarching aim which is to provide strategic guidance for culture throughout the City as set out in the Cultural Vision and Strategy. Moreover, it highlighted plans to bid for City of Culture 2025. Finally, it presented some of its achievements to date which include:

- A successful partnership between Gloucester and the Roundhouse
- The Kings Quarter Regeneration Project
- A number of events and festivals, including Gloucester History Festival

The full agenda and minutes can be accessed [here](#).

Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust:

In January 2019, the Committee welcomed the CEO and Chair of Aspire Trust. The Trust is a particularly noteworthy example of an organisation which has remained successful. 10 years after operating, it has remained solvent, even after facing a reduction in funding from the City Council. In part, this success can be attributed to the Trust 's ability to remain agile, for example, a partnership with the University of Gloucestershire which has worked very well. Lastly, it was encouraging to hear that the Trust remained committed to its charitable aims. In the last year, they have worked with organisations such as Age UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, as well as working with asylum seekers in Gloucester. The Committee looks forward to meeting with the Trust again in the next year. *The full agenda and minutes can be accessed [here](#).*



Community Advisory Group:



Earlier this year, the Committee held a [meeting](#) with members of the Matson and Podsmead Advisory Group, Gloucester City Homes. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the regeneration plans for Matson and Podsmead. Engaging with stakeholders to garner their views is critical in the overview and scrutiny process.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2020

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to grow and develop in its role of holding the authority 's decision makers to account. It has identified the following key priorities for the year ahead:

1. Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

In May 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published this guidance to reflect the way in which overview and scrutiny has evolved in the present day. Councils “must have regard to” the guidance when conducting its overview and scrutiny functions, in other words, it must be followed, unless there is a clear reason to depart from this. In particular, it focuses on scrutiny of ‘external bodies’, access to information, and scrutiny of the financial resilience and sustainability of councils. The Chair will be meeting with Officers to discuss how the City Council can implement the guidance.

2. Climate Change

The Committee looks forward to receiving the Climate Change Report in March 2020, and thus allowing the Committee to scrutinise the City Council ‘s climate change strategy.

3. Task and Finish Group

Following a public consultation for ideas in February 2019, the Committee looks forward to setting up Task and Finish groups to consider some of the matters raised by residents.

4. Universal Credit

Last year, the Committee met with partner organisations to discuss the implementation of Universal Credit in the city. A year on, the Committee will be reviewing the impact of Universal Credit with partner organisations.

5. Cultural Portfolio

The City Council is currently making changes to improve the city ‘s cultural portfolio and has proposed to bid for the City of Culture 2025. The Committee will be actively involved in considering any proposed changes and looking at ways to add value to the process.

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2018-2019

| Nature of Meeting | Date of Meeting |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Ordinary Business | 4 June 2018 |
| Ordinary Business | 2 July 2018 |
| Ordinary Business | 3 September 2018 |
| Ordinary Business | 1 October 2018 |

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| Ordinary Business | 29 October 2018 |
| Budget Proposals and Consultation | 26 November 2018 |
| Ordinary Business | 3 December 2018 |
| Ordinary Business | 7 January 2019 |
| Ordinary Business | 28 January 2019 |
| Ordinary Business | 25 February 2019 |
| Reception Plans | 12 March 2019 |
| Ordinary Business | 25 March 2019 |
| Ordinary Business (Cancelled) | 29 April 2019 |

| Name of Councillor | Meetings Attended (Max: 12) |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Councillor Tom Coole (Chair) | 10 |
| Councillor Emily Ryall (Vice-Chair) | 10 |
| Councillor Lee Hawthorne | 10 |
| Councillor Gerald Dee | 11 |
| Councillor Collette Finnegan | 5 |
| Councillor Kate Haigh | 10 |
| Councillor Neil Hampson | 9 |
| Councillor Jeremy Hilton | 10 |
| Councillor Andy Lewis | 9 |
| Councillor Steve Morgan | 11 |
| Councillor Terry Pullen | 10 |
| Councillor Gordon Taylor | 11 |
| Councillor Paul Toleman | 8 |
| Councillor Clive Walford | 10 |
| Councillor Declan Wilson | 10 |
| Councillor David Brown (as a substitute) | 1 |
| Councillor Andrew Gravells (as a substitute) | 1 |
| Councillor Nigel Hanman (as a substitute) | 1 |
| Councillor Jan Lugg (as a substitute) | 2 |
| Councillor David Norman MBE (as a substitute) | 1 |
| Councillor Kevin Stephens (as a substitute) | 2 |