

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2019-20**

Contents

Foreword from the Chair	Page 3
Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019-20	Page 4
The Work of Overview and Scrutiny	Page 6
How Scrutiny works at Gloucester City Council	Page 7
The Committee 's Resources	Page 10
The Year in Scrutiny	Page 11
Budget Monitoring 2019-20	Page 18
Partners	Page 19
Key Priorities for 2019-20	Page 21
Members' Attendance Record	Page 22

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR



It has been another exciting and innovative year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the next year will be even more significant.

Over the last 12 months, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to impact on every one of the council's responsibilities and service areas. It has made significant recommendations to policy development, the vast majority of which have been agreed by Cabinet.

The Committee has performed its usual quarterly monitoring of council finances and performance, and continues to keep a close eye on these. Of particular interest to the Committee this year has been the Culture and

Leisure portfolio; events around the eventual insolvency of Marketing Gloucester Ltd (MGL) came before the committee on several occasions, and Members made a number of recommendations which will impact on our ongoing relationships and monitoring with partner organisations. The issue of MGL Ltd also resulted in the committee's first call-in in several years, an example of how this tool can be used as a useful last resort to give backbench Members an opportunity to have decisions made by the executive reconsidered.

Overview and Scrutiny also examined closely issues relating to housing, homelessness, and rough sleeping. In November, Members had a constructive look at the Supplementary Planning Documents for Matson and Podsmead. These regeneration schemes will have a huge impact not only on the lives of residents in these wards, but across the City. Later in November, the Committee questioned the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy, and Officers about the adoption of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, an issue close to the hearts of many residents. We re-visited this in February and will continue to monitor the Council's progress in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

The next year as the City emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic will be difficult. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be at the forefront ensuring that back-bench Members and the public can contribute to recovery planning and getting Gloucester back on its feet. We are already extremely fortunate to have an innovative system of scrutiny that has been recognised in leading the way both regionally and nationally. We always work successfully on a non-political cross-party basis, with an administration that is willing to listen and participate, and this is precisely the sort of working in partnership that will be needed over the coming months.

I, like a number of Members, was not expecting to be a Councillor, or indeed the Chair, for an additional year, but I am privileged to continue to have the opportunity to contribute to the Council and the City, and to lead this vital function.

Cllr. Tom Coole

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2019-20



Councillor Tom Coole

Chair



Councillor Emily Ryall

Vice-Chair



Councillor Andrew Lewis

Spokesperson



Councillor Gerald Dee



Councillor Collette Finnegan



Councillor Kate Haigh



Councillor Lee Hawthorne



Councillor Jeremy Hilton



Councillor Howard Hyman



Councillor Colin Organ



Councillor Sajid Patel



Councillor Terry Pullen



Councillor Kevin Stephens



Councillor Gordon Taylor



Councillor Paul Toleman



Councillor Pam Tracey



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 October 2019, the Committee called in a Cabinet decision regarding MGL Ltd and a special meeting was convened. Although a call-in of the decision was ultimately rejected in a vote by the Committee, the call-in process itself is a good example of the tools available to Scrutiny to influence decision-making.

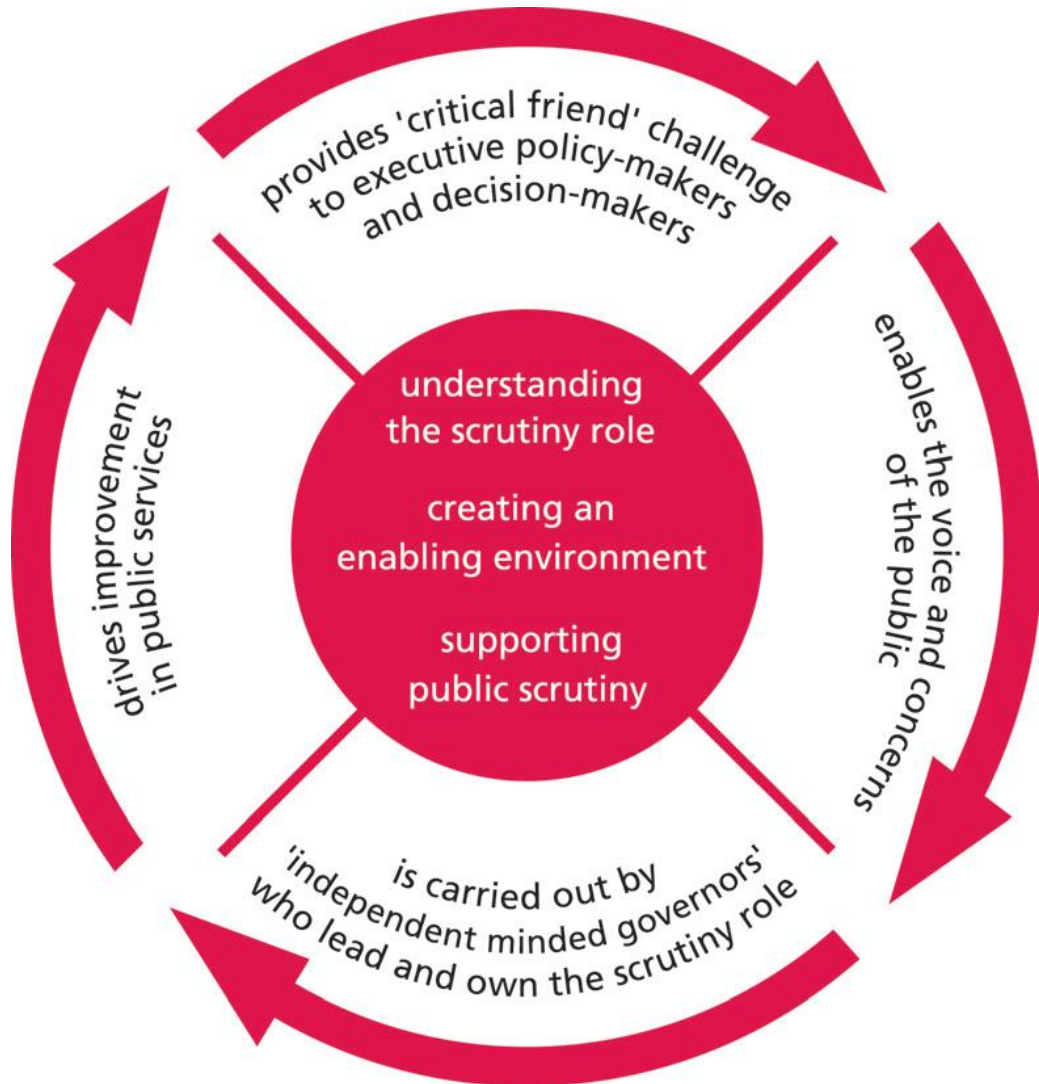
HOW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKS AT GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

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 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 14 meetings which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held during 2019-2020, a number of different topics were scrutinised. As shown in the table below:

Meeting	RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS
03 June 2019	
Annual Report on the Grant Funding Provided to the Voluntary Community Sector	RESOLVED: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Report.
Guildhall Development Plan	RESOLVED - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities	RESOLVED that: - The Chair would meet with Senior Management to discuss how to implement the guidance going forward.
01 July 2019	
Year End Performance Report 2018-19	<p>RESOLVED - that the report of year end Performance Monitoring 2018-19 be noted.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>At the meeting held on the 10th of July 2019, Cabinet referred to the “constructive feedback made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee” particularly around Key Performance Indicator CST2 (customer telephone waiting times). Cabinet outlined that issues raised were being addressed.</p> <p>Since then, in January 2020 a new contact centre was launched consisting of 5 unified contact centres (Customer services, Housing, Invoices, Benefits, and Council Tax/Business Rates). This has seen a reduction in the average call waiting times.</p>
Financial Outturn Report 2018-19	RESOLVED - that the Final Outturn Report 2018-19 be noted.

Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee	RESOLVED - that the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20-18-19 be received.
02 September 2019	
City Plan	<p>RECOMMENDED: The Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>In relation to Policy A2, would it be possible to further increase the affordable housing requirement beyond 25%?</i> 2. <i>Would it be possible to include information about climate change in the Vision Statement?</i> 3. <i>Would it be possible to include a specific policy on sustainable transport?</i> 4. <i>Is it possible to give Officers support for social rent?</i> 5. <i>Would it be possible to include a policy on homelessness within the vision statement?</i> 6. <i>Would it be possible to include a policy on Solar Panels?</i> 7. <i>Further clarification to be provided in Policy C7 particularly what exactly the 'mitigation measures' would entail</i> 8. <i>Would it be possible to include a policy on cellar extensions?</i> 9. <i>The policies on food and takeaway outlets are welcomed, would it also be possible to also include a policy on gambling houses?</i> 10. <i>Should we be trying to 'future proof' broadband provision to allow room for technological developments and define 'high speed' in Policy G5 – as an example could be that we set a minimum threshold for broadband speed in new developments.</i> 11. <i>Policy G3 which sets out that there will be electric charging points 2% of spaces within 100 or more car parking spaces might prove to be insufficient and restrictive in the future. It is suggested that we do not restrict ourselves by setting a 2% threshold.</i> 12. <i>Would it possible to also include guidelines on waste disposal within the policies on takeaway and food outlets?</i> 13. <i>Would it be possible to include within the City Plan that the design process would be decided by a Board? The intention is to avoid bad designs which would be detrimental to the city.</i> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>All of the recommendations made by the Committee were adopted by Cabinet at their meeting held on the 11th of September 2019.</p>

Universal Credit – GAP Meeting Update (Chair 's Update)	RESOLVED that: - The Committee NOTE the update.
Financial Monitoring Quarter 1 Report	RESOLVED: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Report.
30 September 2019	
Gloucester Community Building Collective	<p>RECOMMENDED: The Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Cabinet consider providing criteria for measuring how the Company meets its aims;</i> 2. <i>A further update on the Company's operations be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to the commencement of Phase 2;</i> 3. <i>A review is undertaken at the conclusion of Phase 1 to determine whether the Company had met its aims and, if it is determined that it had not, to cease operations;</i> 4. <i>To conduct a canvass of charitable organisations in the City and for Members to be asked to provide nominations for a particular charity to be the recipient of any assets in the event of the Company's dissolution;</i> 5. <i>Cabinet examine a performance management framework and commission an evaluation of impact study in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire.</i> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>In response, Cabinet adopted some of the recommendations and where a recommendation was not adopted, Cabinet provided an explanation. Please see below an extract of the minutes from Cabinet's meeting held on the 9th of October 2019:</p> <p><i>"In relation to recommendations 1 and 2 (criteria for measuring progress against the Company's aims and updating the Committee) she (Councillor Jennie Watkins) stated that these would be provided albeit with discussions around fair evaluation and quantitative versus qualitative data. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods advised that recommendations 3 and 5 (end of phase 1 review with option of ceasing operations and examination of a performance management framework with the commission of an impact study) would be too prescribed given the community-led and innovative nature of the</i></p>

	<i>company intended. Concerning recommendation 4 (canvass of charitable organisations to be nominated as recipient of assets) she confirmed that the Gloucester Round Table had been chosen as the best option after extensive consideration.”</i>
Waste and Recycling Proposals	RESOLVED: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
14 October 2019 (Special Call-In)	
Call-In of Cabinet Decision regarding Market Gloucester Ltd	<u>Resolved:</u> The call-in was rejected by the Committee. <u>Outcome:</u> Although a call-in of the decision was ultimately rejected in a vote by the Committee, the call-in process itself is a good example of the tools available to Scrutiny to influence decision-making. Moreover, this call-in was the first of three meetings held by the Committee in 2019/20 to look at MGL Ltd in more detail.
28 October 2019	
Aspire Trust Annual Update	RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Report.
Local Council Tax Support Scheme	RECOMMENDED: - The Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not accept the proposal of the minimum payment scheme. Cabinet is asked to reconsider the scheme and look at alternative options</i> 2. <i>Notwithstanding the recommendation above, if Cabinet decides to go ahead with the scheme, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that (a) introduction of the scheme is phased out over two years (b) all war pensions to be disregarded under the scheme.</i>

	<p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>The recommendations were considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on the 6th of November 2019. The minutes of this meeting outline that it was:</p> <p><i>“resolved that the changes recommended to the 2019/20 Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 be brought to a later meeting to allow careful reconsideration of the implications”</i></p>
Redevelopment of the Former Fleece Hotel Site	RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Report.
04 November 2019	
SPD Scrutiny	RESOLVED: - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Report.
25 November 2019	
Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	RESOLVED: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Social Enterprise Activity	<p>RECOMMENDED: that Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet that para 2.3 in the report be replaced with: <i>“To approve plans to explore a further trial of the scheme in Matson & Robinswood ward and any other community which comes forward”</i>.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>At a meeting held on the 4th of December 2019, one of Cabinet’s resolutions was as follows:</p> <p><i>“Plans to explore a further trial of the scheme in Matson & Robinswood ward and any other community which comes forward be approved”</i>.</p>
Financial Monitoring Quarter 2	RESOLVED that: - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
19 December 2019 (Special MGL Meeting)	
MGL Review (Special Meeting)	RESOLVED that: The Committee made 3 recommendations to Cabinet.

	<p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>At its meeting held on the 15th of January 2020, Cabinet resolved to welcome the review reports and some of the proposals aimed at ensuring “effective financial management, oversight and reporting”.</p>
	.
06 January 2020	
Waste and Street Scene Contract – Amey	<p>RESOLVED that: The Committee asked Cabinet to respond to follow up questions.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>Cabinet responded to the Committee ‘s questions.</p>
Performance and Monitoring Quarter 1 and 2	<p>RESOLVED that: The Committee asked Cabinet to respond to follow up questions.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>Cabinet responded to the Committee ‘s questions.</p>
03 February 2020	
Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy	RESOLVED: - that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Events and Festivals Plan	RESOLVED; - that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
10 March 2020 (Special MGL Meeting)	
Marketing Gloucester Review	<p>RECOMMENDED; - the Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) <i>Once the liquidation proceedings have been concluded, it is recommended that a report is brought before the Committee detailing how grant money was spent by MGL and accounted for.</i> 2.) <i>It is recommended that Cabinet reviews the Council ‘s whistleblowing procedure particularly in relation to Teckal companies.</i> 3.) <i>It is recommended that Cabinet reviews existing Service Level Agreements and performance</i>

management frameworks for existing contracts currently in place.

- 4.) It is recommended that Cabinet reviews the role of Councillors on the Boards of the Council's partner companies and organisations.*
- 5.) It is recommended that the report which is being prepared by Steve Brown is brought before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration prior to the report going to Cabinet. This report should also detail the Terms of Reference for the new Destination Management Organisation, if any, and the budget to be allocated for this.*
- 6.) It is recommended that when the Council enters into any arrangement with partner organisations there are access to information policies between the organisation and the Council*
- 7.) It is recommended that when the Council enters into any such future arrangements there are clear guidelines and expectations for reporting to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.*

Outcome

All seven recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure 's "Report into the Future Marketing of Gloucester" which is due to be considered before the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 6th of July 2020 outlines proposals for how the seven recommendations can be implemented.

BUDGET MONITORING 2019-2020

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

In December 2019, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members presented to the Committee the overall draft Money Plan as well the 2020/2021 budget proposal. Additionally, each of the Cabinet Members presented their individual portfolios, highlighting anticipated budget pressures, budget savings and any changes to the portfolio. Below are some of the key observations.

Key Observations:

- Local authorities continue to face a tough financial outlook and second-tier authorities such as Gloucester City Council may be particularly affected.
- Although savings of £170,000 had been made in 2019/20, there were no proposed savings for 2020/21.
- The Property Investment Strategy would provide an increased income. The aim of this strategy enables the delivery of Council services, economic growth, unlocking both regeneration and housing opportunities in the City whilst also delivering income. It would provide a measure of financial independence which would enable the Council to focus on its priorities.
- The transformation programme required the Council to draw on earmarked reserves during 2019/20, however it was noted that the proposed plan identifies the need to build up on these reserves to protect the Council in the future.

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

PARTNERS

As in previous years, the Committee met with the Council 's partners. 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.

Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust:



In October 2019, the Committee welcomed the CEO and Chair of Aspire Trust. The CEO pointed to the difficult financial backdrop against which Aspire was operating, particularly as management fees from the City Council had been cut. Despite this, the organisation has remained solvent and has tried to maintain operational efficiency. The organisation's community programmes are particularly noteworthy, and the Committee looks forward to welcoming the Aspire Trust again in 2020-21.

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

Amey:

In January 2020, the Committee welcomed both the Head of Commercial and the Operations Manager at Amey. Given the prior dispute between Amey and the City Council, it was important for the Committee to examine the basis of the Council 's dispute resolution with Amey. As a part of this, the Committee considered aspects of the Deed of Settlement, Release and Variance. This meeting was a good example of scrutiny of not only the Council itself but also a partner organisation. This type of scrutiny is highlighted as good practise in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 's Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities.¹



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

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-and-combined-authorities>

Gloucester Community Building Collective



In September 2019, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods laid out the plans to establish this Community Interest Company to build on the community building activities which are already prevalent in the City. Here, the Committee was able to make a number of recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

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

Gloucester Advice Partnership

The Chair attended the Gloucester Advice Partnership Meeting on the 30th of July 2019 to follow up on the implementation of Universal Credit in the City with representatives from partner organisations. This has been a topic of interest for the Committee since the roll out of Universal Credit in February 2018. In January 2018, the Committee held a special meeting to consider the City Council 's preparedness for the roll out of universal credit. This meeting was also attended by partner organisations who gave evidence at the meeting. This is a good example of the Committee engaging with partner organisations on the issues that affect residents' daily lives. It also highlights the importance of ongoing scrutiny and reviews on key issues.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2020-2021

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. Gloucester (Covid-19) Recovery Plan

As the Local Government Association (LGA) has put it, "there is not a single area of local government that is not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic".² Thus, a key priority for the Committee will be working with Cabinet, particularly the new Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery, and Officers to work on the City's recovery plan from the effects of the pandemic. As a "critical friend", the Committee can provide another perspective on the proposals from the Gloucester Recovery Plan, and facilitate public involvement in recovery planning before more final proposals are presented to Cabinet and Council.

2. Partner Organisations and Teckal Companies

In 2019/20 there were some good examples of scrutiny of the Council's partner organisation, Teckal companies, and "following the Council pound". The Committee plans to carry on with this work and to follow up on some of lines of enquiry from the previous year. The committee will use lessons learned from Marketing Gloucester LTD to explore how best to maintain and monitor the City Council's relationships with these organisations.

3. Cultural Portfolio

The City Council will be making changes to the delivery model for Place Marketing in the City. The Committee will be actively involved in considering any proposed changes and looking at ways to add value to the process, with a particular interest in the new model for the City's Destination Management Organisation (DMO). We will continue to pursue any actions that may arise from last year's investigations.

4. Executive/Scrutiny Portfolio

The committee will draw on the Statutory Guidance issued by MHCLG last year to develop a protocol for relationships with the executive, to further underpin the importance of the Scrutiny function into the future.

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/coronavirus-information-councils>

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2019-2020

Nature of Meeting	Date of Meeting
Ordinary Business	3 June 2019
Ordinary Business	1 July 2019
Ordinary Business	2 September 2019
Ordinary Business	30 September 2019
Special Meeting (Call-In)	14 October 2019
Ordinary Business	28 October 2019
Special Meeting (Matson and Podsmead Estate Regeneration)	04 November 2019
Ordinary Business	25 November 2019
Ordinary Business	02 December 2019
Special Meeting (MGL Review)	19 December 2019
Ordinary Business	06 January 2020
Ordinary Business	03 February 2020
Ordinary Business	02 March 2020
Special Meeting (MGL Review)	10 March 2020

Name of Councillor	Meetings Attended (Max: 14)
Councillor Tom Coole (Chair)	13
Councillor Emily Ryall (Vice-Chair)	14
Councillor Andy Lewis	12
Councillor Gerald Dee	11
Councillor Collette Finnegan	9
Councillor Kate Haigh	10
Councillor Lee Hawthorne	1 of 3 possible meetings
Councillor Jeremy Hilton	12
Councillor Howard Hyman	9
Councillor Colin Organ	9
Councillor Sajid Patel	8 out of 10 possible meetings
Councillor Terry Pullen	11
Councillor Kevin Stephens	13
Councillor Gordon Taylor	13
Councillor Paul Toleman	11
Councillor Pam Tracey	7 out of 8 possible meetings
Councillor Clive Walford	13
Councillor Declan Wilson	12
Councillor Said Hansdot (as a substitute)	3
Councillor Jan Lugg (as a substitute)	3
Councillor David Norman MBE (as a substitute)	1