

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022-23

Contents

- Section 1 Foreword from the Chair
- Section 2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members 2022-23
- Section 3 The Year in Scrutiny
- Section 4 Budget Scrutiny
- Section 5 Scrutiny Highlights
- Section 6 Priorities for 2023-24
- Section 7 Members' Attendance Record

Section 1 - Foreword from the Chair



It has been another busy and interesting year for Overview and Scrutiny, the Committee it is my great pleasure and privilege to chair.

A look through this report will show you the range and depth of what we have looked at, with everything from Homes for Ukraine, Purple Flag status, heritage and monuments, healthcare, flytipping and fines, and Gloucestershire Airport on the agenda, to name just a few.

We have sought, as ever, to be a critical friend to the administration, challenging and probing reports and questioning the Cabinet Members presenting them. That we have done so in a

respectful and collegiate manner is a source of great pride to me, and I believe it is no coincidence that our recommendations to Cabinet are nearly always accepted.

The meetings continue to run well, with the update items on actions from previous meetings and updates on prior notices of motion still proving useful. We are seeking to tweak the agenda order for future meetings in order to make planning the work programme more effective. Suggestions from Members have led to productive discussions and reports being added to the agenda, including meetings on the council's Here to Help reporting facility, regeneration, housing and transport issues.

Also, following the recommendation of the Corporate Peer Challenge Panel for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have an annual work programme session, we will be looking to implement this in the forthcoming year, allowing the Committee to be more proactive with our work programme and move more into policy development.

As ever, budgetary scrutiny is a large part of our work, whether at the dedicated annual Budget Scrutiny meeting or in the regular monitoring reports we receive. Challenges to the council's financial and operational situations have continued to arise from the national pandemic recovery and economic downturn, as well as the ramifications of the cyber incident of December 2021. With recent revelations on this front, no doubt the Committee will continue to play an important role in this process in the year ahead. I have no doubt that as well as continuing to provide a constructive challenge to the executive, we will also keep helping the council save money and streamline services.

The Committee have utilised a wide range of tools this year and held every type of meeting: eleven ordinary meetings, two special meetings and the Budget session. We also ran two important Task and Finish groups, one on engagement with young people and the other on damp and mould in Gloucester's rented accommodation. These brought out some serious

and useful recommendations to Cabinet and will help to improve people's lives in the city, which is what we're here to do.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their hard work this year. I could not have done it without the support and wise council of Vice-Chair, Councillor Terry Pullen, and Spokesperson, Councillor Andrew Durdey. Lauren Richards is a superb support to the Committee and, as ever, has helped me a great deal. Thank you too to the officers, Cabinet Members and others who have attended Scrutiny to give evidence or take questions.

Please enjoy this report of our activity for the year and don't hesitate to ask me any questions you may have.

Schastin Fill.

Section 2 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members 2022-23



Councillor Sebastian Field Chair



Councillor Lyn Ackroyd



Councillor Paula Dee



Councillor Terry Pullen Vice-Chair



Councillor Lorraine Campbell



Councillor Sylvia Evans



Councillor Andrew Durdey Spokesperson



Councillor Linda Castle



Councillor Andrew Gravells



Councillor Jeremy Hilton



Councillor Justin Hudson



Councillor Jaro Kubaszczyk



Councillor Sarah Sawyer



Councillor Rebecca Trimnell



Councillor Declan Wilson



Councillor Shamsuz Zaman

Section 3 - The Year in Scrutiny

- 3.1 During the civic year of 2022-23, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 11 ordinary meetings, a designated annual Budget meeting and 2 Special Meetings. The Budget meeting was held on 5th December 2022, and a special 'Transport Scrutiny' session was held on Monday 13th March 2023 with Senior Directors and Officers from the Transport and Local Major Projects Teams at Gloucestershire County Council. The Committee also considered a Call-In request from the Liberal Democrat Group on 9th May 2023
- 3.2 The range of items and issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are set out in the table below:

Meeting	Recommendations and Actions
Monday 6 th June 2022	
Performance Monitoring Year End Report 2021-22	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report
Adoption of a Local List of Heritage Assets for Gloucester	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDS that:
	 An updated Local List of heritage assets be circulated to all Councillors ahead of the final report reaching Cabinet, to provide Members with an opportunity to submit their views and identify any minor errors before approval.
	OUTCOME:
	*This recommendation was accepted by Cabinet on 15 th June 2022. All Councillors were given the opportunity to submit comments ahead of the revised report being considered by Cabinet on 13 th July 2022.
Monday 4 th July 2022	
Homes for Ukraine – Gloucester Housing Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.

ICT Recovery Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Monday 5 th September 2022	
Performance Monitoring Quarter 1 Report 2022/23	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Community Safety Partnership and Activity Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Report of the Historic Places Panel Following its Visit to Gloucester	 RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDS that: 1) Cabinet accepts the recommendation of the Historic Places Panel to consider employing an in-house urban designer to augment the council's capacity in offering development advice. 2) Cabinet revisits the proposal for design coding to be progressed on a site-by- site basis, and accepts the recommendation of the Historic Places Panel to produce design codes at a more strategic level. OUTCOME: *This recommendation was accepted by Cabinet on 14th September 2022 and Officers were asked to give consideration to these proposals.
Monday 3 rd October 2022	
Environmental Crime Enforcement Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Monday 31 st October 2022	
2021-22 Financial Outturn Report	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Green Travel Plan Progress Report 2021-22 and Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report
	ACTION:

	*This agenda item led to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approaching colleagues in Gloucestershire County Council, and a 'Transport Scrutiny Session' was held with senior County Council Officers in March 2023.
Task and Finish Group Report – Engagement with Young People	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee APPROVE the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Engagement with Young People for consideration by Cabinet, subject to the following amendments:
	 Amending the wording of the recommendation to develop a 'child- friendly' guide on the roles and responsibilities of Gloucester City Council to 'guide suitable for young people'
	 Amending the wording of the recommendation of the Task and Finish Group to reconvene in 12 months' time to 6 months' time.
	 Adding the following additional recommendation:
	'It is recommended that all City Council reports pertaining to the Planning and Climate Change service areas include an additional section outlining how the council has engaged with young people in respect of the proposed decision'
	OUTCOME:
	*Cabinet accepted 10 out of the 12 recommendations in full, and partially accepted the remaining 2 recommendations on 11 th January 2023.
Monday 28 th November 2022	
Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 Report 2022/23	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report

Affordable Homes Delivery – Update on Performance	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Leisure and Cultural Options Appraisal Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Transfer of Sites in Podsmead to Enable the Regeneration of the Estate	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Monday 5 th December 2022 (Budget)	
Draft Money Plan 2023-28 & Budget Proposals for 2023/24	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Monday 9 th January 2023	
Car Parking – Tariff Increase Report	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDED that:
	 Additional narrative be added to future quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports on car parking usage and income performance following the proposed car park tariff increase.
	OUTCOME:
	*This recommendation was accepted by Cabinet on 11 th January 2023.
Annual Report for Energy Costs and Energy Reduction Projects	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Gloucester City Plan 2022-24 Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Gloucestershire Airport Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the presentation as per the exempt minutes.
Task and Finish Group Discussion	RESOLVED –
	1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish a Task and Finish Group to investigate mould and damp issues in Gloucester's Social Housing.

	2) That the proposed membership of the
	Task and Finish Group be approved.
	OUTCOME:
	*At the time of writing, the Task and Finish Group had concluded their enquiry and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group for consideration by Cabinet. The Task and Finish Group also amended the title of the project by extending the scope to consider private rented accommodation as well as social housing.
Monday 30 th January 2023	
Endorsement of a Five-Year Vision for Gloucester City Centre	RESOLVED – That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Gloucester City Commission to Review Race	RESOLVED – That the Overview and
Relations – Year One Update	Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Purple Flag Briefing	RESOLVED – That the Overview and
	Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Monday 27 th February 2023	
Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 Report 2022/23	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Gloucester Covid-19 Memorial Progress Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Gloucester Monuments Review	RESOLVED – That the Overview and
Implementation Update	Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Cultural Strategy Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Monday 13 th March 2023 (Special Meeting)	
Transport in Gloucestershire – Transport	RESOLVED – That the Overview and
Scrutiny Session	Scrutiny Committee NOTE the presentation.
Monday 27 th March 2023	

Integrated Care System Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the presentation.
Annual Equality Diversity and Inclusion Report	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Overview of Here to Help Facility	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Monday 24 th April 2023	
Meeting Webcasting Update	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the update.
Response to Corporate Peer Challenge	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Sports and Physical Activity Strategy	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee NOTE the report.
Task and Finish Group Discussion (Revised Membership)	RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee APPROVE the revised membership of the Task and Finish Group.
Tuesday 9 th May 2023 (Special Meeting for Call-In)	
Call-In of Cabinet Decision Regarding Nominations to the Gloucester City Homes Board	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the request for a Call-In of the Cabinet decision. A motion to refer the decision for further consideration was put to a vote and lost, and the Call-In was ended.

Section 4 - Budget Scrutiny 2022-23

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme includes a designated Budget meeting where Members receive presentations from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members on each of their individual portfolios, highlighting anticipated budget pressures, savings, and future priorities.
- 4.2 The cyber incident suffered by the Council in December 2021 continued to have an impact on the ability to routinely produce quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports throughout 2022-23. Therefore, the Budget meeting on 5th December 2022 was particularly important for Members to understand the impact that the cyber incident, rising cost of living and the Covid-19 pandemic were having on the council's finances. All were significant themes in the council's Draft Money Plan and Budget Proposals for 2023-24, and high inflation in particular was a challenge across all portfolio areas.

4.3 Key Observations:

- The financial outlook for Local Government continued to be challenging and uncertain, with high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis placing pressure on the council's revenue budgets. At the time of the Budget meeting, no new funding for Local Government in the Local Government Finance Settlement was expected. The Draft Money Plan had been produced on this basis and it was confirmed during the full Council budget meeting on 23rd February 2023 that the settlement was in line with expectations. In relation to interest rate pressures, Members were advised that forecasts from the Treasury anticipated that borrowing costs would return to a more sustainable level in 2024.
- Financial pressures of note in the Performance and Resources portfolio included IT Hosting Costs of £120k to cover additional costs of updating and moving IT infrastructure to cloud hosted versions of some of the council's software packages. Members were also informed that the council was experiencing further cost pressures of £300k as a result of an increase in utilities prices across the council's operations. Cost savings in this portfolio area of £240k and £135k were identified through the insourcing of the Revenues and Benefits and ICT Services respectively.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members were also advised that 2022 had also been a challenging year for the Cultural and Leisure portfolio, with the lengthy Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, inflation and cost-of-living pressures impacting on the spending patterns of the public. Members were assured that the Culture team would continue to monitor and apply for various Arts Sector funding sources, and would continue to implement ways of increasing the profitability of the Council's commercial activity in this area.

4.4 Outcome:

• The Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided that going forward, future Budget meetings will take place in January rather than December. It was felt that this would give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Draft Money Plan and Budget Proposals with any amendments following the Local Government Finance Settlement published annually in mid-December. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee believe that this amendment will make Budget scrutiny more effective.

Section 5 - Scrutiny Highlights

- 5.1 Over the course of the year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee closely monitored the Council Forward Plan and considered a range of items across all Cabinet Portfolio areas. As well as scrutinising upcoming Cabinet reports and decisions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested updates and briefings on issues of interest to Members from Cabinet Members, City Council Officers and external partner organisations. The cyber incident of December 2021 continued to have an impact on council services over 2022-23 and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee retained a keen interest in how the recovery progressed.
- 5.2 The action point agenda item, which provides the Committee with written updates and answers to points of clarification during Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, continued to be a useful way of monitoring follow-up queries. Some of the updates provided in the action point item also inspired more formal Overview and Scrutiny Committee work, such as a briefing on the development of a Covid-19 Memorial from the Leader of the Council, and a meeting webcasting update from the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources and the council's Program Manager.
- 5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also received an update on the implementation of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme back in July 2022 from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy. Key issues of interest for Members included council resources in delivering the scheme, challenges with rematching families and safety requirements for lone female guests.
- 5.4 A summary of some of the key highlights and achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is set out below.

Task and Finish Groups

5.5 2022-23 saw the completion of two Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Groups. Following a notice of motion proposed at the full Council meeting in January 2022, the Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to consider how the council engaged with young people. Working with Lead Officers across 5 service areas which Task and Finish Group Members identified as areas which particularly affect young people, the Task and Finish Group considered how the council could improve how it involved young people in decisions about Gloucester. The Group included cross-party Members both on and outside of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 5.6 On completion of the project, the Task and Finish Group on Engagement with Young people made 12 recommendations to Cabinet, including council-wide recommendations and service-specific recommendations. On 11th January 2023, 10 of the 12 recommendations were fully accepted by Cabinet and 2 were partially accepted. The Council now has a designated Youth Engagement Lead Officer to work with voluntary and community sector partners and council services to improve their involvement and create opportunities for the voices of younger residents to be heard.
- 5.7 In January 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to look into the scale of damp and mould in Gloucester's rented accommodation. At the time of writing, the Task and Finish Group have completed their enquiry, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have approved the recommendations to go forward to Cabinet for consideration. This Task and Finish Group project consisted of evidence sessions with local Registered Social Housing Providers, voluntary advice agencies and the council's Private Sector Housing Team to help Members understand the scale of the issue, resolution and redress options for residents, and how the City Council can assist residents struggling with damp and mould growth in their homes. The recommendations of this Task and Finish Group are due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2023.

Gloucestershire Airport Update

5.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were keen to maintain regular contact with Gloucestershire Airport and invited the Managing Director and Chairman to return and provide the Committee with an update on the main projects, low carbon and net zero strategies and the airport's finances. Committee Members were particularly interested in Gloucestershire Airport's performance, gross profit and movements and green initiatives. In respect of future work, the Committee have requested that the Managing Director and Chairman attend a special Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting later in 2023 to provide Members with a briefing on Gloucestershire Airport's 10-year masterplan.

> Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations and Gloucester Monuments Review – Year One Update

5.9 As identified as priorities for 2022-23 in the previous Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Committee received 'year one' update reports on the

implementation of the recommendations of the Gloucester Commission to Review Race Relations and the Gloucester City Monuments Review. Reports were produced in response to formal recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee back in January 2022 that an update be provided to the Committee in 12 months' time.

- 5.10 On Monday 30th January 2023, the Committee considered an update report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Race Relations Commission. Members were particularly interested in the terms of reference of the new legacy institution the Gloucestershire Race Equality Action Group (GREAG), staffing appointments for GREAG and funding.
- 5.11 On 27th February 2023, the Committee received a detailed update from the Leader of the Council and City Archaeologist on the progress made by the City Council in implementing the recommendations of the Gloucester City Monuments Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were pleased to see that progress had been made in implementing these recommendations.

Purple Flag Briefing

- 5.12 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a briefing from the Cabinet Member for Communities on the process of achieving Purple Flag status and preparations to renew Gloucester's Purple Flag status for 2023. The Committee also invited the Chair of the Purple Flag Working Group to attend the meeting on 30th January 2023. Purple Flag is an international award aimed at raising standards and broaden the appeal of town and city centres during the evening and night-time. Purple Flag status is a recognition that a town or city provide a good range of dining, entertainment, and culture, alongside promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local residents.
- 5.13 Safety for women and girls continues to be an area of interest for Overview and Scrutiny Members and they were also interested in the assessment process and partnership working with stakeholders. Gloucester was subsequently awarded its sixth consecutive Purple Flag award in May 2023.

Transport in Gloucestershire

5.14 A Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on 13th March
 2023 with senior Officers in Gloucestershire County Council from the Transport
 Planning and Local Major Projects teams. The Transport Scrutiny Session with

Gloucestershire County Council colleagues stemmed from the Committee's consideration of the City Council's Green Travel Plan Progress Report 2021-22, as highways and transport infrastructure are responsibilities of the County Council.

- 5.15 The Committee questioned the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure and the Transport Planning Team Manager for Gloucestershire County Council about upcoming projects, policy direction, net zero targets and proposals to help Gloucestershire achieve this target. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members were also particularly interested in ambitions to deliver an integrated Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system.
- 5.16 Members also received a bus service update from the Transport Operations Manager, outlining the current position on bus service delivery and ongoing challenges and pressures in the driving industry. The Local Major Projects Team Leader concluded the session by delivering a presentation on the delivery of cycling infrastructure in Gloucester and the wider county.

Integrated <u>Care</u> System Update

- 5.17 During the meeting on 27th March 2023, the Committee received a presentation from the Integrated Care Board Chief Executive on the One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS). Members were provided with an overview of how the ICS worked on an operational level, the vision for health and care in Gloucestershire and key priorities and transformation initiatives.
- 5.18 Overview and Scrutiny Members questioned the ICS Chief Executive on executive decision making within the ICS, initiatives such as 'Heat on Prescription', local challenges around telephone appointments and IT systems and how Councillors might be able to assist with these challenges.

Overview of Here to Help Facility

5.19 Following a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an item was added to the agenda of the meeting on Monday 27th March on the Here to Help reporting facility, which residents and Councillors can use to report issues online. The Director of Communities and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources delivered a presentation on the Here to Help facility, including an update on the transformation process and the impact of the cyber incident, and an overview of the online reporting tools and how residents were using them.

Call-In Request

- 5.20 A Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was called on Tuesday 9th May in response to a 'Call-In' request on a Cabinet Decision pertaining to nominations to the Gloucester City Homes Board. The Call-In meeting was attended by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy as well as the Chief Executive of Gloucester City Homes, who assisted with Members questions.
- 5.21 Although the Call-In was put to a vote and lost, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy committed to ensuring all future wording in the report summaries accurately reflected the content of the report. The report also went on to be debated at the Annual Council meeting on 22nd May 2023.

Section 6 - Priorities for 2023-24

- 6.1 Over the next year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee plan to further increase their role in the council's policy development. On 24th April 2023, the Committee considered the report resulting from the Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in November 2022. The report acknowledged the constructive and mutually respectful relationship between Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however one of the recommendations from the Peer Team was for the Committee to consider an annual work programming session to develop a longer-term work programme. It was felt that this would offer the opportunity for more Members to undertake policy development roles and encourage a selection of topics that will add value to residents of Gloucester.
- 6.2 The Committee were very supportive of the recommendation and arrangements will be made over the coming months for an annual work programming session with Committee Members and senior City Council Officers to identify key themes and areas of interest which the Committee will monitor over the course of the year.
- 6.3 Other priorities include ongoing dialogue with Gloucestershire Airport and a followup Special Meeting with the Managing Director and Chairman outlining the airport's 10-Year Masterplan. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also plan to seek a meeting with senior Directors of Gloucester City Homes to request an update on housing provision and regeneration plans in Gloucester.

Section 7 - Members' Attendance Record

Nature of Meeting	Meeting Date
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 6 th June 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 4 th July 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 5 th September 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 3 rd October 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 31 st November 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 28 th November 2022
Budget	Monday 5 th December 2022
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 9 th January 2023
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 30 th January 2023
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 27 th February 2023
Special Meeting (Transport Scrutiny Session)	Monday 13 th March 2023
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 27 th March 2023
Ordinary Meeting	Monday 24 th April 2023
Special Meeting (Call-In)	Monday 9 th May 2023

Name of Councillor	Meetings Attended (Max:14)
Councillor Sebastian Field (Chair)	11
Councillor Terry Pullen (Vice-Chair)	10

9
12
9 (out of 9 possible meetings)
9
13
14
11
14
8
10
12
2 (out of 2 possible meetings)
14
4