

# Cheltenham Borough Council

## Council – 16 December 2024

### Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report April 2023- March 2024

---

**Accountable member:**

Councillor Tabi Joy, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Accountable officer:**

Claire Hughes, Director of Governance and Customer Services

**Ward(s) affected:**

n/a

---

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive summary:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) manages and coordinates scrutiny at the council, with scrutiny task groups carrying out especially detailed work and reporting back to the main committee.

Under these arrangements, O&S produces an annual report for Council and this is contained in Appendix 2. This report sets out the achievements of scrutiny between August 2023 and August 2024, including the outcomes of scrutiny task groups and a look at what comes next.

O&S endorsed the annual report at their meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and welcomes the opportunity for Council to debate this report and give its views on the success or otherwise of the scrutiny arrangements.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny 2023-24 is noted.
-

## 1. Implications

### 1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

There are no direct financial or property implications arising from this report. The annual budget proposals and the scrutiny of financial performance and other budgetary issues are reviewed throughout the year by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, as detailed in the section on Task Groups in the annual Scrutiny report. Likewise, treasury management activity is scrutinised by the Treasury Management Panel and any significant asset management decisions are first presented to the Asset Management Working Group.

**Signed off by:** Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets [gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### 1.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications with regard to this report.

**1.3 Signed off by:** One Legal; [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

### 1.4 Environmental and climate change implications

There are no environmental or climate change implications to this report.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, [maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### 1.5 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

### 1.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

See screening template Appendix ii.

---

#### Report author:

Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader

#### Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening
- iii. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

## Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	If any scrutiny arrangements are not supported by a change in culture across Members and officers they may not be successful in delivering the outcomes required	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	3	9	Reduce	Ensure the opportunity is taken to review scrutiny arrangements and enhance them where necessary.	Member training was held in June 2024.
	If the council cannot dedicate resources to support the scrutiny process then the O&S process will not be fully effective.	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	2	6	Accept	Optimise the use of existing resources within the scrutiny arrangements.	It is acknowledged that facilitation support from Democratic Services for scrutiny task groups is important and all task groups have been supported.

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
								Resources are limited across the council so Members will need to carefully prioritise all scrutiny task group reviews to ensure they make optimum use of the resources available.
	If the task groups operate outside of the democratic process, then scrutiny could become disjointed and progress difficult to control and track.	Director of Governance and Customer Services	3	2	6	Accept	Guidance to officers supporting task groups on keeping documentation and reporting back to Dem Services.	See note above. In the past, task groups facilitated by officers outside of democratic services have on occasion been less well documented and more difficult to

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
								track progress of. A scrutiny guide was produced and officers are encouraged to adopt standard procedures and good practice. All task groups in the last 12 months have been supported by Democratic Services.
	If members do not put themselves forward for task groups the workload could be unevenly shared across members and be a source of potential conflict or	Group Leaders	3	3	9	Reduce	Group Leaders to manage, monitor and encourage participation.  Utilise Members' skills.	Two task groups were established during 23 -24 and this provided an opportunity to introduce Members, who had not

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	result in task groups not having the right skill mix.							previously participated in a review, to how task groups operate. It is hoped that other members will put themselves forward should a topic of interest arise.
	If scrutiny does not have any dedicated budget it will be difficult to promote public involvement and engagement	Council	2	3	6	Accept		Scrutiny does not have a dedicated budget but this has not been a significant issue to date, with budget having been allocated to member training this year. It could become an issue

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
								if O&S wanted to buy in some outside expertise at any point.
	If O&S does not take an active role in the major change programmes it may lose its opportunity to influence the scrutiny arrangements in any new proposed ways of working	Chair of O&S	3	2	6	Accept	O&S to include scrutiny of change programmes in its workplan and ensure it is consulted on any future scrutiny arrangements.	Member seminars continue to be held at appropriate times and the relevant Cabinet Members have been invited to discuss particular programmes and projects as necessary and additional information can be requested.
	If scrutiny is not carrying out the full	Democratic	3	2	6	Accept	Ensure new Member and	Member training was undertaken

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score  (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner
	extent of its role i.e. pre and post decision scrutiny and overview, there is a risk of a democratic deficit.	Services					officer induction cover the role of scrutiny.	in June as part of the 2024 new member induction after the May elections.



## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening )

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Bev Thomas	Service Area:
Title: Dem Services Team Leader	Date of assessment: 13/11/24
Signature:	

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function
----------

If other, please specify: annual report

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

--	--

Is this new or existing?

**Already exists and is being reviewed**

**Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project**

--	--

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	To report to Council on the activities of Overview and Scrutiny for 2023-2024
Objectives:	To enable Members to understand the role of scrutiny and assess whether it is meeting its objectives

Outcomes:	To add value to the council’s programme of work
Benefits:	Cross party working

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	<b>No</b>
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	<b>Unsure</b>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	<b>No</b>
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	