

# **Council**

**24<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

## **Report of the Chair**

### **Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

#### **Exempt Information**

None.

#### **Purpose**

To provide full Council with an overview of the work and activities undertaken by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee during the year 2021/22. The draft Annual Report was received by the Committee at its final meeting in the last municipal year and any updates agreed by the Chair following that meeting.

#### **Executive Summary**

This report covers the following:

- Chair's overview
- Working Groups
- Recommendations made in the year to Cabinet
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Membership and Attendance
- Training & Effectiveness
- Work Plan
- Resource implications

#### **Recommendations**

Council is requested to:

- Note the Annual Report of the Committee.

#### **Chair's Overview**

The Committee met six times in the 2021/22 municipal year, two of the scheduled meetings (14 July 2021 and 9 December 2021) were not required as the business due to be considered at those meetings was not ready for presentation.

These meetings have all been in person for councillors, officers and guests, as the regulations in place during the 2020/21 municipal year were not extended.

The work ethic and input from committee members has been excellent and that is reflected in the breadth of items considered this year.

In terms of the work of the Committee during 2021/22 municipal year, this has included:

#### **1. Policy Development and /or Review**

This is where the Committee has contributed to the Council's policy development processes and / or where the Committee has considered the implementation of policies and feeding back scrutiny views to Cabinet.

1. State of Tamworth Debate. Following the full Council debate, the Committee considered whether any of the discussion points raised at the State of Tamworth Debate held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 should be developed into further work plan items. The Committee agreed that most items would be covered through the Reset & Recovery Programme and /or the Quarterly performance Reports which were received regularly.

## **2. Monitoring (scrutiny)**

This is where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance and progress. In particular the Terms of Reference for this Committee set out the specific areas for scrutiny which include scrutiny of the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and scrutiny of the performance and functions of other public bodies, statutory undertakers or other such organisations who provide or facilitate the provision of public services within the Borough. To assist in the achievement of this the Committee's remit includes scrutinising matters related to:

- (a) Forward Plan
- (b) Quarterly performance reports
- (c) Corporate plan
- (d) Major Council led projects
- (e) Investment strategy
- (f) HRA function
- (g) Bi-annually review and scrutinise matters relating to the Local Authority Trading Company's activities and performance.

Over the year 2021/22, there has been regular review of the Forward Plan at all meetings to identify areas which would either require pre decision scrutiny and /or post implementation scrutiny.

During this year the Committee's Work Plan was used to track progress on scrutiny of matters identified via the Forward Plan. Examples of areas which were identified for the Committee's scrutiny, as a result of regular Forward Plan consideration were:

- Staffordshire Leaders Board

The Committee had also during the year considered the Quarterly Performance Reports. The Committee had received the relevant quarter's draft report and the meetings had normally been attended by senior Officers and/or the Leader. This consideration had been prior to Cabinet's receipt of the report and had enabled the Committee's comments, where relevant, to be taken on board prior to Cabinet's consideration. Further details are given below.

The Committee confirmed that it had reviewed and considered the Cabinet and Council Decisions made between March 2020 and April 2021.

In terms of major Council led projects, details of these were included in the Quarterly Performance Reports and progress was tracked by the Committee through the regular receipt of these reports.

#### Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs)

The Committee has received, and scrutinised, each quarter's performance report prior to Cabinet review and approval.

Following the Committee's consideration, any areas where further clarification from the committee were sought or areas to which the Committee considered Cabinet's attention should be drawn were included in the revised version of the QPR report submitted to Cabinet.

The following areas received scrutiny through the regular receipt of the QPR reports:

- Corporate Capital Strategy
- The Future High Street Fund
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Customer Portal (see further details below)
- Gungate project
- Net Zero Carbon project
- Recovery & Reset (see further details below)

During consideration of the QPRs, this resulted in areas for this Committee's further consideration being identified and in this municipal year that led to agenda items on Disabled Facilities Grant Funding being added to the August 2021 meeting.

Further information on the Council's treasury management and investment process was requested and circulated and a treasury management seminar for all members was held in February 2022

The Committee considered in further depth the following items:

1. Disabled Facilities Grant Funding

Following consideration of the QPR Report Q4 (2020/21) the Committee requested a briefing on the funding received in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants which was brought to the Committee to its 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021 Committee meeting.

Following consideration, the Committee made a recommendation to cabinet, which is detailed below.

2. Update on Implementation of Housing Repairs Contract

The Assistant Director, Assets provided an overview of the new contract which had been implemented on 1 April 2020 following a full formal tender process, which included an update on the impact of the pandemic and the prioritisation of urgent repairs at that point, and feedback on the decision to bring the call

centre activities back in-house. An overview of the satisfaction levels and complaints and their causes was provided.

3. Members' proposal to consider a memorial / reflection area within the Borough  
The Assistant Director, Operations and the Operations Manager attended the meeting to present possible option for a reflection / memorial area. This report followed consideration by this Committee and recommendations to Cabinet and full council in 2020/21 municipal year.

The Committee considered the options presented and following discussion, they proposed no further action at this time.

4. Recovery & Reset  
At the 1 February 2022, the Committee received an update on the Recovery & Reset programme aims and the proposed oversight by the three scrutiny committees and the Audit & Governance Committee of the programme and feedback was sought on the arrangements which would be fed into the overall Programme Board.

It was planned that this Committee would be briefed on the overall the programme management. The Committee was updated on the report due to be considered by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 which would set out recommendations on next steps. An overview of the Service Re-design work stream and Finance work stream was provided.

5. Post Implementation Review – My Tamworth Portal  
The Committee received an update which highlighted the current position of the My Tamworth Customer Portal, and provided a review of the project including the costs, difficulties encountered, outcomes to date and the future project plan.

The Committee considered the challenges faced by this project and made recommendations to Cabinet following consideration of the lessons learnt from this project. The Committee agreed that it would retain this item on its work plan for a future review.

6. Asset Management Strategy  
The Committee received an update on the Asset Management work completed to date and was provided with information on the next steps of the work.

Condition surveys of both Council Housing stock and non-housing properties had been completed and gap analysis of our existing approach had been undertaken to support the updating of the Asset Management Strategy.

The Committee agreed to retain this item on its work plan.

7. Solway (Tamworth) Limited  
The Committee received an update, following the exclusion of the press and the public, from the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration. Following which it was agreed that the Chief

Executive would take forward the recommendations contained within the report to Cabinet or Council (as appropriate) taking into account the comments made by the Committee.

### 3. Call-in

This is where a decision of the Executive has been called in to be considered by a scrutiny committee, after a Cabinet decision has been made but ahead of its implementation, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

No decisions have been called in to date.

### Working Groups

No use was made of working groups this year.

### Recommendations made to and Responses received from Cabinet

Recommendations were made to Cabinet on the following Reports and Cabinet's response is highlighted:

Scrutiny meeting item	Cabinet Response
Disabled Facilities Grant Funding – 24 August 2021 meeting – the Committee made a recommendation to Cabinet that Cabinet raise the issue with Staffordshire County Council through Staffordshire County Councillors	Cabinet agreed to raise the issue regarding Disabled Facilities Grant funding with Staffordshire County Council through County Councillors – 30 September 2021 Cabinet meeting
Post Implementation Review – My Tamworth Portal – 1 February 2022 meeting – the Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Audit & Governance Committee be requested to look at the tendering process used by the Council with a particular regard to the scoring mechanism process and that it report back to Cabinet on its findings.	Cabinet agreed that the Audit & Governance Committee be requested to look at the tendering process used by the Council with a particular regard of the scoring mechanism process and that it report back to Cabinet or Corporate Scrutiny on its findings – 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2022

### Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee Terms of Reference are set out in Article 6 in the Constitution which can be accessed [here](#).

The Primary Scope, the General Role and the Specific functions detailed there have been largely achieved through the Committee's work this year.

### Members and Members Attendance

The following sets out the membership and attendance of members at the 6 Committee meetings during 2021/22. Please note that Councillor J Harper ceased to be a member of the Committee and Councillor J Jones was appointed to the Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and their attendance is shown out of the number of meetings they were eligible to attend.

Member	Number of meetings attended
Thomas Jay (Chair)	5 out of 6
Steve Pritchard (Vice-Chair)	4 out of 6
John Chesworth	5 out of 6
Andrew Cooper	4 out of 6
Richard Ford	5 out of 6
Simon Goodall	5 out of 6
John Harper (member to 28.02.22)	5 out of 5
Jason Jones (member from 28.02.22)	0 out of 1
Simon People	6 out of 6
Roy Rogers	5 out of 6

### **Training and Effectiveness**

The Committee members received details on training modules on Scrutiny and Events offered by the Local Government Association.

MembersZone contains links to external training courses available. MembersZone also provides details of the in-house induction and training events run and organised by council officers throughout the year which include overviews from each Executive Director of their directorates and key projects.

No specific in-house scrutiny training was delivered this year as an all Councillor scrutiny training event had been delivered in November 2020.

### **Work Plan - Items identified for next municipal year**

The existing Committee Work Plan is as available at Appendix 1.

### **Resource Implications**

None to note.

### **Report Author**

Councillor T Jay  
Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Committee’s Work Plan

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### Corporate Scrutiny Work Plan

<b>Work Plan</b>		
<b>TARGET MEETING DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>MEETING WHEN ITEM ADDED TO WORK PLAN</b>
<b>Dates to be agreed</b>		
June 2022	Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report	
August 2022	Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Report	
November 2022	Quarter 2 2022/23 Performance Report	
February 2022	Quarter 3 2022/23 Performance Report	
<b>Dates to be agreed</b>		
TBC	Update on corporate prioritisation	August 2020
July 2022 (tbc)	Market Contract – post implementation review	November 2021
TBC	Parking Toolkit review – working group to be formed (Cllr S Goodall)	October 2019
Bi-annual updates (March & September)	Solway Trading Company Update	December 2019
TBC	Gungate Masterplan	January 2020
TBC	Joint Waste contract update	June 2021
TBC	Reset & Recovery Workstreams	November 2021
TBC	Investment Review	November 2021
TBC	Staffordshire Leaders Board	February 2022
May / June 2022 (tbc)	Asset Management Strategy	February 2022

<b>Upcoming Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>
<p>PROVISIONAL DATES</p> <p>22 June 2022</p> <p>28 July 2022</p> <p>16 August 2022</p> <p>6 October 2022</p> <p>17 November 2022</p>

8 December 2022

8 February 2023

9 March 2023