

**COU/SE/16/012**



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**  
working together

# **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT**



**2015-2016**

# **St Edmundsbury Borough Council Annual Scrutiny Report 2015-2016**

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## Introduction



**Councillor Diane Hind**

**Chairman of the  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
2015-2016**



**Councillor Sarah Broughton**

**Chairman of the Performance and  
Audit Scrutiny Committee  
2015-2016**

Welcome to the Annual Report of the overview and scrutiny function at St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Scrutiny is central to the decision-making process of the Council, and this Annual Report sets out the work of the two scrutiny committees during 2015-2016. The report is not intended to cover all the work of the committees in great detail, but to present some examples of where and how scrutiny has contributed to change, challenge and service improvements, and to give you a flavour of the work undertaken.

2015-2016 was another busy year for the committee, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee carrying out several policy and scrutiny reviews. We also held informal joint scrutiny meetings with members of Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss key issues for West Suffolk.

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, in its eighth year of operation, continued to increase the scope of its internal and external audit monitoring role.

2015-2016 was also another strong year for external involvement in our scrutiny reviews, with representatives from partner organisations attending meetings or taking part in consultations to help the committees with their investigations.

We hope you find this Annual Report both informative and interesting, and that you will continue to follow the progress of the scrutiny function at St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

May 2016

## What does Scrutiny do?

The scrutiny function of this and other councils was introduced under the Local Government Act 2000, which required councils to set up new structures to replace the previous committee system. The aim of the Government's programme for modernising local government was for local people to know more about how their local council works and get more involved. As part of this, councils were required to establish at least one "overview and scrutiny committee" to monitor decisions made and, where appropriate, to advise the Council on matters of policy or service delivery.

St Edmundsbury has two such committees. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee looks back at how and why decisions were made, how services are functioning and where improvements can be made, but in its role as community leader also looks at wider issues. It also examines new and evolving policies.

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee has particular responsibility for monitoring the performance of services, as well as internal audit, risk management and procurement, and has responsibility for scrutinising the Council's budget, including any proposals for cost reductions.

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Responsibilities:

- Community leadership
- Reviews
- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Post implementation review
- Policy development and review
- External and joint scrutiny
- Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action
- Holding the Cabinet to account
- Holding Portfolio Members to account
- Scrutiny improvement

As the Council's critical friend, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds the Cabinet, full Council and staff to account by monitoring the decision making process and testing existing practices to check they are working properly. It can also call in Cabinet decisions to scrutinise them before they are put into practice. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to stand back from the decision making process, look at the outcomes for the people of St Edmundsbury and West Suffolk and contribute to ensuring improved performance.

The Committee also looks at the impact on the community of key plans and strategies within the Council's policy framework, investigating why things are as they are, researching options, challenging assumptions and suggesting improvements. When looking at a new policy, the Committee ensures it would contribute to the Council's priorities as set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016, and that any links to other Council policies demonstrate continuity. When reviewing existing policies, the Committee investigates how successful it has been, whether it achieved its objectives within budget and to timescale, and what needs to change. In all its policy development, the Committee aims to enhance services and make life better for people living and working in St Edmundsbury, as well as those visiting us.

The Committee has up to eight scheduled meetings per year.

## **Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

- Performance management
- Internal and external audit responsibilities
- Strategic risk management
- Revenue and Capital Budget monitoring and budget development
- Scrutiny of annual accounts
- Procurement

Scrutiny also has an important role to play in monitoring the performance of services. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee looks at how well the Council's services are performing by considering a range of information such as performance indicators and reports from external inspectors, and by monitoring action plans. It does not carry out reviews, but may recommend that a review is carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or another appropriate committee or working group where a need has been identified.

This Committee also leads on improvement planning and risk management, as well as monitoring the Council's budget, and approving the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the powers delegated to it under the Council's Constitution. It also leads on the development of a sustainable forward budget. In 2015-2016 it held five informal joint monitoring meetings with Forest Heath's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, plus a special individual meeting in September 2015 to consider the annual accounts.

## **How does Scrutiny work?**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a rolling work programme which prioritises the investigations it will carry out over the coming months. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee sets its work around the quarterly budget and corporate planning cycle. The committee gathers evidence from a variety of sources including the Council's own information, other local authorities, partner organisations, service users, expert witnesses or research carried out by the committees themselves.

Once they have their evidence the committees make their reports, complete with recommendations, usually to the Cabinet. The committees' work programmes include time to check progress on the actions that have been taken following acceptance of scrutiny reports.

### **Call-in**

Any decision by the Cabinet, or a key decision taken by an officer with delegated authority from the Cabinet, may be "called in" by at least five members of the Council, or the Leader of any political group on the Council which has five or more members (with the support of a further three members of that group).

Call-in is used where Councillors have evidence which suggests that a decision was not taken in accordance with the principles of good decision making set out in the Constitution, or in the context of the Council's policy or budget framework, and is only used in exceptional circumstances.

The Council sees an average of one call-in per year. However, none were considered during 2015-2016.

## **Councillor Call for Action**

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) came into force on 1 April 2009, which enables any Member of the Council to refer to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee any local government matter or any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward/division, within certain limitations. These limitations are set out in the Councillor Call for Action Protocol, which is available as part of the Council's Constitution, on our website.

## **Training and Development**

We recognise the importance of training and development for both Councillors and officers who support the scrutiny role at St Edmundsbury. Regular targeted training, both internally and externally, has facilitated the development of a successful scrutiny function

## **Meetings**

Meetings of both scrutiny committees are held in public (except when exempt or confidential material is being discussed), and in order to prevent whole meetings being taken up by a single topic, "Task and Finish" groups are often set up to carry out major reviews and report back to the main committee with their recommendations.

## **Engaging the Public and Stakeholders**

The scrutiny committees work hard to develop and improve the scrutiny process at St Edmundsbury, and continually aim to increase the involvement of stakeholders and public engagement. To this end committees often gather evidence with the involvement of external witnesses, and over the past year, in addition to targeted consultations carried out as part of reviews, the committees have formally invited several people to attend meetings and assist in investigations, including:

- Members from Forest Heath District Council
- Representatives from Ernst and Young (External Audit)

Organisations and individuals contacted as part of a review included:

- Members of the public
- Forest Heath District Council
- Streetkleen Bio Limited
- Christmas Market Forum Groups
- Car Park Forum Groups
- Suffolk County Council (Highways)
- Suffolk County Council (Finance)
- Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable and Local Policing Commander for the West

For further information or answers to any queries relating to the Council's scrutiny functions or activities, please contact Christine Brain, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) on (01638) 719729 or email [Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

## Review of Past Year Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Councillor Diane Hind**  
Committee Chairman

### **Committee Members**

Cllr Simon Brown  
Cllr Terry Buckle  
Cllr John Burns  
Cllr Patrick Chung  
Cllr Paula Fox  
Cllr Susan Glossop  
Cllr Wayne Hailstone  
Cllr Paul Hopfensperger  
The Late Cllr Tim Marks  
Cllr Richard Rout  
Cllr Angela Rushen  
Cllr Andrew Speed  
Cllr Clive Springett  
Cllr Jim Thorndyke  
Cllr Frank Warby

### **Substitute Members**

Cllr Tony Brown  
Cllr Sarah Stamp  
Cllr Peter Thompson  
Cllr Julia Wakelam  
Cllr Patsy Warby



**Councillor Jeremy Farthing**  
Committee Vice Chairman

### **Scrutiny Reviews completed during 2015-2016**

This section describes some of the key scrutiny topics covered during the year (June 2015 to April 2016), and their associated outcomes.

### **Informal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Meetings**

The Committee held one Informal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings during the year with Members of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable informal joint discussions to take place between the two authorities.

Following the informal joint discussions, the two Overview and Scrutiny Committee's then met separately and voted on the recommendations for consideration for each council's respective Cabinet.

### **Reviews carried out in Informal Joint Committee**

#### **Business Case for Establishing a Housing Development Company**

On 15 October 2015, discussions took place to enable members to scrutinise the business case for establishing a commercial company limited by shares for the purpose of developing housing, including homes for sale, private rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. The company would be wholly-owned by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (25%), Forest Heath District Council (25%) and Suffolk County Council (50%), and would provide a revenue income to all Councils.

Members scrutinised the business case in detail and asked a number of questions of the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing and the Head of Housing to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the company structure; why other alternative options had been rejected; the composition of the Board of Directors; the role of the Shareholder Advisory Group; why the company was being set up jointly with Suffolk County Council; the future potential for other organisations to be able to join the Housing Company; providing housing to support extended families; supporting people who wanted to build their own homes; the provision of 30% affordable housing; the risk of oversaturating the housing market and the future effect of devolution.

Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive each year the Housing Company's Annual Business and Delivery Plan for scrutiny, prior to it going to each full Council for approval. Discussions were also held on the proposed governance arrangements.

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that the business case be approved subject to an amendment clarifying the role of the independent directors.

### **Christmas Fayre Review**

This review was agreed by the Committee at its June 2015 meeting, following a request from officers for a review into the Christmas Fayre. The review looked at finance and resources; governance; information from consultation/focus groups and operational issues such as health and safety; parking; communications and marketing.

In November the Committee received a report from the Task and Finish Group, which summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a draft five-year operational plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Christmas Fayre Task and Finish Group. The report included the background to the review; the current position of the Christmas Fayre, statistics; venues and stalls; timings; health and safety; marketing; entertainment; employment; finance; Christmas Fayre Working Group's traffic management and car parks.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which responses were provided. In particular, discussions were held on stall holders; neutral cost; format of the market and transport.

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Christmas Fayre Review Report and the five-year operational plan be approved.

### **Car Park Review Group**

This review was agreed by the Committee at its July 2015 meeting, following a request from officers for a review of the car parks in the Borough. The review considered current performance including usage; location and condition of car parks; current levels of occupancy and future capacity projections; pay on exit/automated number plate recognition operation systems; car park tariffs for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, back by consultation and changes and amendments to the Traffic Road Order.



In November, the Committee received a report from the Task and Finish Group, which included the Group's conclusions and fifteen recommendations, which addressed the issue of capacity; service delivery and proposed investment in the delivery of the car parking service.

The Committee considered the report and the recommendations in detail and asked a number of questions. In particular discussions were held on the Parkway multi-storey; car park tariffs; Ram Meadow and pay-on-exit.

The Cabinet Member for Operations informed the Committee that the Task and Finish Group's recommendations were excellent. What needed to be addressed were future car parking demands and capacity and the forthcoming Bury St Edmunds Master Plan would help with the issues.

The Committee recommended to Cabinet that the fifteen recommendations of the Car Parking Task and Finish Group covering Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill be approved.

### **Follow-up reviews**

#### **Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds**

The Committee received on 22 July 2015, an update which reminded Members of a Councillor Call for Action request brought to the Committee on 3 March 2010, highlighting on-street parking problems in Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds. The solution provided at that time was to create additional off-street parking at the commercial premises or to create a full-length layby along Skyliner Way.

The update provided an analysis of the problem of vehicles parking in Skyliner Way and confirmed that the appropriate parking standards had been applied to the development in the area at the time permissions were granted. It was acknowledged that Skyliner Way was experiencing parking pressures but it was hoped that under the future development of the Eastern Relief Road this might provide an opportunity to improve off-street parking in the area.

The Committee, however, considered a proposal to create a layby in Skyliner Way to accommodate parked vehicles to alleviate the problems experienced by traffic in the area. At that time the Head of Planning and Growth highlighted a possible funding pot that could be bid into for such a project. The On-Street Parking Account, managed by Suffolk County Council (SCC), used income from on-street parking metres to provide improvements to Suffolk's traffic and transport problems. The report therefore recommended that the Head of Operations, on behalf of the Borough Council be asked to submit a bid of £25,000 towards the construction of a layby in Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds to the On-Street Parking Account to alleviate the present and future traffic issues in Skyliner Way. The closing date for submissions was 31 July 2015.

The Committee received on 13 January 2016, a verbal update on the unsuccessful bid application to the SCC Highway Authorities On-Street Parking Account. Members felt this should be looked at again and recommended that the Head of Planning and Growth be asked to report back on how the bid process worked; when the next bid process was open; and what alternative options were available to be presented to the Committee in April 2016.

At the April 2016 meeting the Head of Planning and Growth reported on the process and judging criteria by the Highways Team at SCC for schemes to receive financial support. The Skyliner Way scheme had been re-evaluated but was felt by SCC to be premature in the light of the recently approved Eastern Relief Road. On 20 April 2016 the Committee received an update on alternative funding options available to help pay for the proposed Skyliner Way layby project.

The Borough Council had identified funds from its own off-street parking budget that could be allocated to this project. In addition, the Head of Planning and Growth had asked the local County Councillor whether he would be willing to make a contribution from his Locality Budget to help deliver the layby. The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths had already agreed to send a letter to SCC expressing the councils concerns about the congestion in Skyliner Way and the need to address this before the completion of the Eastern Relief Road but also offer a funding solution which could be used to deliver the layby in Skyliner Way.

The Committee considered the report and supported the Leader of the Council making representations to County Councillor Finch, SCC Portfolio Holder for Highway, expressing concerns about delaying improvements to on-street parking issues in Skyliner Way. The Leader, in his letter to County Councillor Finch, would again offer the alternative funding package and express the urgency of the improvements to parking in Skyliner Way expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as far back as 2010.

### **Single-meeting reviews / presentation**

#### **Dog fouling in West Suffolk and follow-up presentation**

The Committee received on 22 July 2015 a report which provided an overview of dog fouling within West Suffolk. The report included information on the general issue of dog fouling (national and West Suffolk perspective); why it was difficult to fine offenders; current Council initiatives (proactive and reactive work); changes in legislation, such as the requirement for dogs to be micro-chipped by April 2016; and options and actions available to the Council to combat dog fouling.

The Committee considered the report and recommended that the Head of Operations investigate further the following initiatives to combat dog fouling in West Suffolk:

- i) Investigate introducing "Paws on Patrol" in West Suffolk;
- ii) Produce reporting guidance for staff;
- iii) Investigate a banner campaign for football pitches with Suffolk Football Association;
- iv) Launch a "Clean It Up" campaign in October 2015;
- v) Introduce Public Space Protection Orders for dog fouling offences across West Suffolk;
- vi) Consider a Fixed Penalty Notice reward scheme across West Suffolk for reported dog fouling offences; and
- vii) Introduce a publicity campaign by carrying out a survey to identify dog fouling hot spot areas in West Suffolk.

The Committee suggested inviting Streetkleen Bio Limited to a future meeting of the Committee to give a presentation on their PooPrints DNA programme.

In November 2015 the Committee received a presentation by Gary Downie (Managing Director) of Streetklean Bio Limited who had been invited to the meeting to give a short presentation outlining the PooPrints DNA Programme and to answer questions from the Committee. The presentation covered:

- What is PooPrint
- Rationale for Dog DNA Registration
- A blueprint of overall service
- Communication of the proposition
- Engaging with key stakeholders (RSPCA/Local authorities)
- Timeline and recommended next steps.

Members discussed the DNA registration process and costs. It was agreed that the DNA registration was a good idea, but it needed to be made compulsory as it was felt that irresponsible dog owners would not register their dog(s). Discussions were also held on the cost solution and sampling versus prosecutions.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Gary Downie for an informative presentation, and summarised that until Central Government helped by making it law for owners to DNA register their dogs, there were limitations with the scheme.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner – Suffolk Local Policing Review**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had been invited to the Committee's meeting on 9 March 2016 to give a presentation on the Suffolk Local Policing Review and to answer questions from the Committee. He was accompanied by Gareth Wilson (Chief Constable) and Supt. Andrew Manson (Local Policing Commander for the West).

The presentation set out the reasons for the Local Policing Review, which covered the following areas:

- Strategic direction and budget;
- Managing demand;
- Partnership working;
- Protecting victims and vulnerable people;
- Commission and grants;
- Innovation;
- Tackling new forms of crime; and
- Preventing and reducing crime.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions of the PCC, Chief Constable and the Local Policing Commander. In particular discussions were held on:

- (1) Police stations: The PCC reassured members that no police stations were closing. However, some of the front desks would be closed, but the buildings would still be occupied by police staff.
- (2) Police attendance at parish/town council meetings: Members were concerned that the police had stopped attending Parish/Town council and resident association meetings. The Chief Constable reassured members that the police would attend meetings, if there was an issue to resolve. He further explained that Parish/Town Councils would receive a police report setting out crime levels in the

area; what Parish/Town Councils had asked the police to do; and what had been done, and would including contact details.

- (3) Decriminalisation of parking: Work was underway with district, borough and county councils to transfer responsibility for parking enforcement to the local authority, to allow Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to spend more time on local problem solving.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner and his officers for an informative presentation.

### **External Joint Scrutiny**

In June 2015, a Member of the Committee was appointed to the **Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, which is responsible for the scrutiny of health provision across the County. Nominations to other joint county scrutiny committees are made by Annual Council alongside other outside bodies.

### **Cabinet Liaison**

The Committee discussed the **Cabinet's Decisions Plan** at each meeting, and requested further information or involvement as necessary.

### **Cabinet Members who attended Overview and Scrutiny in 2015-2016**

#### **Cabinet Member for Operations**

On 11 November 2015, the Cabinet Member for Operations was invited to the meeting to give an account of his portfolio responsibilities and to answer questions from the Committee. The presentation set out the areas of responsibility; structure; key facts; and current major projects.

The service area was split over three broad areas with split portfolio responsibility for the West Suffolk service with Forest Heath District Council; namely waste and street scene; property services, and leisure/cultural services.

A breakdown of operational costs was provided for waste and property only, and total operations including leisure for St Edmundsbury; Forest Heath and West Suffolk. A number of statistics and major projects covering waste and property services was also included.

In particular the Committee discussed in detail street lighting; waste transfer stations; A14 cleansing; CCTV; tree ownership and grass cutting.

#### **Cabinet Member for Leisure and Cultural Services**

On 13 January 2016, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture was invited to the meeting to give an account of her portfolio responsibilities and to answer questions from the Committee. The presentation set out the areas of responsibility; structure; key facts; and current major projects.

The service was split over four key areas of responsibility within the leisure and cultural portfolio, these being parks and services; sports; public halls and events and tourism and heritage service.

A breakdown of operation costs was provided for the leisure and cultural services in St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and West Suffolk. A number of key facts and major projects cover St Edmundsbury was also included.

In particular the Committee discussed in detail proms in park; play equipment; the Apex; Queen's Birthday; Haverhill Arts Centre and Bury Festival.

#### Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance

On 9 March 2016, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance was invited to the meeting to give an account of his portfolio responsibilities and to answer questions from the Committee. The presentation set out the overall areas of responsibility including (legal, elections and democratic services, finance and performance, ICT and human resources). Current priorities were also discussed along with ICT Plan; finance and performance challenges; Finance and Performance Plan; Human Resources challenges; Anglia Revenues Partnership Plan; future uncertainties and member development.

Members discussed the presentation in detail. In particular discussions were held on the future uncertainties regarding the Government legislation on the National Living Wage and its impact.

#### Cabinet Member for Families and Communities

On 20 April 2016, the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities was invited to the meeting to give an account of his portfolio responsibilities and to answer questions from the Committee. The presentation set out the broad areas of responsibility for (corporate policy; customer services; families and communities). The presentation also included facts; figures and priorities for the coming year, such as focusing on more on-line needs to make it easier for customers to access the council's services.

Members discussed the presentation in detail. In particular discussions were held on the percentage of on-line enquiries; automated calls; contact details on the website and social media.

#### **Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action**

This year no Councillor Call for Actions (CCfAs) were submitted, and there were also no call-ins.

#### **Other**

From June 2010, the Committee was given responsibility for scrutinising the Authority's use of its **surveillance powers** under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010, and received quarterly reports on the use of these powers. During 2015-2016, no such surveillance had been authorised.

From April 2016, the Committee was given responsibility for receiving quarterly reports on changes made to the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer under his delegated authority. The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service and relevant Portfolio Holder, has delegated authority to make minor amendments to the constitution arising from changes to legislation; changes to staffing structures or job descriptions or changes in terminology.

## Review of Past Year Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

 <p><b>Councillor Sarah Broughton</b> Committee Chairman</p>	<p><b>Committee Members</b> Cllr Carol Bull Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger Cllr Betty McLatchy Cllr David Nettleton Cllr Karen Richardson Cllr Barry Robbins Cllr Peter Thompson Cllr Paula Wade</p> <p><b>Substitute Members</b> Cllr John Burns Cllr Jeremy Farthing Cllr Diane Hind Cllr Ivor McLatchy Cllr David Roach</p>	 <p><b>Councillor Patricia Warby</b> Committee Vice-Chairman</p>
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This section describes some of the key scrutiny topics covered during the year (June 2015 to May 2016) by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, and their associated outcomes.

### **Joint working with Forest Heath District Council's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

During 2015-2016 the Committee held five informal joint meetings, at alternate venues with Forest Heath District Council's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. In September, the Committee met separately to scrutinise and approve the Council's 2014-2015 Annual Statement of Accounts.

### **Scrutiny of Budget Savings**

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee plays an integral role in delivering a sustainable budget for the Council. There were again significant levels of savings to be achieved, and the Committee scrutinised all proposals for growth and savings in the 2016-2017 budget before making recommendations to Cabinet.

This work commenced at its meeting on 23 September 2015, with a report setting out the context of the 2016-2017 budget and proposed budget saving targets for 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

The key strategy to deliver savings over the coming years is to expand the work on shared services with Forest Heath District Council to streamline supplies, services and income, together with a range of other local savings initiatives. Over several meetings, the Committee scrutinised a number of proposals for savings both through shared services and local savings, all of which were incorporated into the Budget and Council Tax Setting report considered by Cabinet on 9 February 2016.

## **Performance Management**

The Committee received on 4 June 2015, a report setting out the Council's new approach to performance management in 2015-2016 through the use of a recognised performance management tool, the **Balanced Scorecard**. The Balanced Scorecard report during the year, replaced a number of existing individual reports presented to the Committee, such as the quarterly **Key Performance Indicators**; quarterly **West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register** and the **Biannual Corporate Complaints and Compliments Digest**.

Additionally, at its 30 July 2015 meeting, the Committee received the **Annual Performance Report for The Apex**.

## **Audit Responsibilities**

The Committee scrutinised the work of the **Internal Audit Team** towards achieving the 2015-2016 audit plan, with updates during the year at which the results of completed audits were discussed. At its 4 June 2015 meeting, the Committee approved an **Internal Audit Plan for 2015-2016**.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require a **review of the effectiveness of internal audit** once a year. The review forms part of the review of the overall system of internal control required for the **Annual Governance Statement**. The Committee noted the report's conclusion, that internal audit was operating effectively and could be relied upon as a key source of evidence in the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council is required to produce and publish an **Annual Governance Statement (AGS)**, which covers six core governance principles, and is approved by the Committee, and signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer. The Annual Governance Statement had been prepared by the Officer Governance Group as a joint statement for St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council to reflect both councils working together and sharing services across West Suffolk. The Committee approved the AGS for signing by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

Various reports from **Ernst and Young (EY)** were considered over the year. In June 2015 the **External Audit Plan and Fees 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Indicative Fees** was received from EY which covered the work they planned to perform in order to provide the Council with an audit opinion on the Council's financial statements, and a statutory conclusion on its arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The report summarised EY's proposed audit approach and scope for the 2014-2015 audit along with the planned fees to complete the work for 2014-2015, and also included indicative fees for 2015-2016. At the same meeting the **Annual Certification Report 2013-2014** was considered, which summarised the results of the certification work which had been undertaken as part of the annual audit of grant claims to government departments.

In September 2015 EY presented the **2014-2015 ISA 260 Annual Governance Report** to the Committee, which set out the key messages arising from the audit of the Council's financial statements, and included an assessment of the Council's arrangements for securing value for money in its use of resources.



At the meeting held on 25 November 2015, EY presented the **2014-2015 Annual Audit Letter**, which confirmed the completion of the audit of the 2014-2015 financial statements.

On 25 May 2016, EY presented the **Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2014-2015**, which set out the results of the certification work which had been undertaken as part of the annual audit of grant claims to government departments.

### **Budget Monitoring**

**Budget Monitoring** reports were brought to the Committee quarterly, in order for it to flag up any areas of concern to the Cabinet. The Committee received the **Financial Outturn Report (Revenue and Capital) 2014-2015** at its meeting on 4 June 2015, following the 30 June deadline for production of the draft accounts for audit. The report included a financial commentary on the year, details of revenue and expenditure including budgeted and actual expenditure and an explanation of the main variances, and details of how services were paid for. Capital income and expenditure was also discussed, as well as reserves and treasury management. On 25 May 2016, the Committee received the **Financial Outturn Report (Revenue and Capital) 2015-2016**, which included a financial commentary for the year.

The Committee scrutinised and approved the Council's **2014-2015 Annual Statement of Accounts** at its meeting on 23 September 2015. At the same meeting it scrutinised the External Auditors **Draft 2014-2015 ISA 260 Annual Governance Report** to those charged with governance and recommended delegating the sign-off of this report, including approval of the Council's letter of representation, to the Chairman or the Vice Chairman of the Committee.

The **Treasury Management Sub-Committee** of three Members, who fulfil the enhanced monitoring and scrutiny requirements of treasury management, held three meetings during the financial year (July, November 2015 and January 2016), at which scrutiny of the **Investment Activity and Performance and Monitoring Reports (2015/2016)** the **Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2016-2017** and **Treasury Management Code of Practice** took place. Officers continue to find this specialised scrutiny of the Council's treasury management activity extremely useful, and value being able to obtain Members' views on this important area of work.

## Work Programmes for 2016-2017

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee carries out some of its work in "Task and Finish" groups, which undertake investigations and reviews and report back to the main Committee. This enables a greater number of Councillors to engage in scrutiny, as well as ensuring a Councillor lead on issues from the beginning of their review. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee works differently in that the bulk of its work is set around its quarterly budget and performance monitoring responsibilities.

The Committee has access to resources, to assist it in carrying out its work programme, which can be used, for example, in engaging specialist assistance, obtaining evidence, carrying out site visits, and paying for meeting accommodation, training and development.

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a rolling work programme, set a few meetings ahead, to enable it to be more reactive to changing priorities. In addition to any call-ins or Councillor Calls for Action which may arise, and additions to the rolling work programme through submitted work programme suggestions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the following issues during the year:

- Directed Surveillance (Quarterly updates)
- Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds, (Quarterly progress report)
- Annual Report 2016-2017
- Cabinet Decisions Plan

In addition to the above items, Extraordinary Informal Joint Scrutiny Sessions will be called, as necessary, with members of Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable common issues to be scrutinised jointly.

### Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will have the following responsibilities and will consider quarterly monitoring reports along these lines, jointly with Forest Heath District Council's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, as well as scrutinising the Council's annual accounts, and making recommendations on delivering a sustainable budget for 2017-2018.

- Performance Management (including West Suffolk Strategic Risk Management/Corporate Compliments and Complaints)
- Financial Performance (Revenue and Capital) monitoring and review
- Budget Monitoring and Budget Development
- 2015-2016 Statement of Accounts
- Internal and external audit
- Procurement
- Treasury Management

**For more information about how scrutiny works at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, please contact the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) on (01638) 719729.**



*St Edmundsbury*  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils  
  
**West Suffolk**  
working together

**Approved by Council: Insert date June 2016**

**For more information please contact the Democratic Services Officer  
(Scrutiny) on (01638) 719729 or email: [christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk)**