

Report Title:	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Annual Report 2020/21
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Bowden, Chairman of the Panel
Lead Officers:	David Scott Head of Communities
Meeting and Date:	Full Council June 2021

www.rbwm.gov.uk



REPORT SUMMARY

Part 9A B4 of the [council constitution](#) requires an Overview and Scrutiny Panel to report annually to full Council on '*its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate*'.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That full Council notes the annual report of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 I accept the comments made by my colleagues on the panel. However, no reference has been made to the extraordinary circumstances of the past year.
- a) Covid has impacted on all staff on who we rely on to produce reports, and answers to our questions.
 - b) Virtual meetings, never used in open council meetings before, required a completely different approach.
- 2.2 Regrettably on a few occasions, behaviour fell below the standards required in public life. The local press was able to capture this as a headline, without reporting the whole dialogue of the meeting.
- 2.3 On many occasions' long statements of a political nature prefaced a single question. This is contrary to the ethos and governance of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 2.4 When the public were invited to speak, which was welcome, again they used the platform to promote a cause, different to the agenda item.
- 2.5 I will strive to conduct the meeting in a manner akin to those in the parliamentary select committees.

3. TOPICS SCRUTINISED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

- 3.1 SERCO Performance Review
- 3.2 Reviewing the Budget Report
- 3.3 Thames Valley Police
- 3.4 SportsAble Annual Performance
- 3.5 Norden Farm Annual Performance
- 3.6 Performance Management Report
- 3.7 Braywick Leisure Centre
- 3.8 RBWM Allotments situation
- 3.9 District Enforcement
- 3.10 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report
- 3.11 Libraries, Museum and Tourist Office Report
- 3.12 The Old Court Annual Report
- 3.13 CAB
- 3.14 Plastic Free Windsor
- 3.15 Maidenhead Heritage Centre

4. CALL-INS CONSIDERED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

- 4.1 No Call-Ins had been received in the municipal year 2020/21.

5. RESIDENT SUGGESTIONS CONSIDERED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

- 5.1 Museum – The recommendation was that this topic is considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in light of the discussion on the issue scheduled for the November 2020 meeting. The Panel can then consider if any further scrutiny is required. This is still to be considered by the Panel.
- 5.2 Lights to be placed in Osgood Park – The recommendation was that this topic was considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Panel noted the report but takes no further action. This was considered at Panel on 3 November 2020.

6. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS ESTABLISHED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

6.1 No Task and Finish Groups established in the municipal year 2020/21.

7. PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVED WORKING METHODS

7.1 People should feel positive about attending a scrutiny panel and embrace the work that goes with it. Meetings should be shorter and more focussed asking quality questions to scrutinise item.

7.2 Prior to meetings, topics studied more and prepare quality questions to ask.

7.3 No more 'scrutiny in arrears'

Be more abreast of the wider picture and get ahead of decision making and help to shape the agreement not hear about it once everything is in place. The Panel should look at the Cabinet forward plan and have an overview before cabinet makes its decision. This would make for better decision-making and be less confrontational. Involve Scrutiny Panels at beginning of process.

7.4 Summarise main points and actions

It's not always clear that what we've discussed has been taken on board or will ultimately make a difference.

7.5 Invite relevant community groups, experts and residents

Spend more time understanding what the Panel would like to scrutinise and invite groups accordingly.

7.6 Treat external speakers and Panel members with respect and kindness

It can be an intimidating experience for residents to speak at the panel and we should be encouraging them. Both residents and Panel members should be allowed to speak without interruption. All residents be given their full time to speak with Officers and Panel Members waiting till the end.

7.7 More timely documents

At least a week in advance so we can properly scrutinise. Try and avoid 'to follow' reports.

7.8 Better quality documents

We keep having to ask for more information from officers. Until things have improved, perhaps we can agree in the meeting before what we'd like to see in the paper coming to the next meeting within the work programme agenda item. Officers to include all supporting documents to reports. Only Part II items to remain private.

7.9 More frequent meetings

Plan the municipal years meetings at the beginning of the year for better planning.

7.10 Set achievable, measurable goals

Make use of task and finish

- 7.11 **Better reflect the ethos of overview and scrutiny**, which is to be a ‘friendly critic’ of the administration. What added value do we currently provide through our meetings? The role of Cabinet members should be to clarify areas, that they are present at a meeting to answer questions and provide clarification, not to participate in discussion.
- 7.12 **Review of the budget process**
We should give feedback on what worked well and what could be improved whilst this is still fresh in our mind. By doing so the process will be better for next year. Keep the budget process meeting to only one item for better scrutiny.
- 7.13 In order to foster a more cohesive approach I would recommend that we circulate all members of the Panel with ideas/comments/suggestions.

8. THANKS

- 8.1 The Panel would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their involvement in the scrutiny process this year:
- Thames Valley Police
 - Braywick Leisure Centre Team – Kevin Mist
 - SportsAble
 - Officers that have attended to present reports
 - David Scott, Lead Officer
 - Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury Parish Council)
 - Members of the Public
 - Organisations such as The Old Court, Norden Farm, CAB, Plastic Free Windsor, Maidenhead Heritage Centre, SportsAble, SERCO and District Enforcement
 - Members of the Council

9. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

- 9.1 The Panel proposes to consider the following topic areas for scrutiny in the coming municipal year:

Topics already in progress/carried over from 2020/21:

- Compliments and Complaints Report – (June 2021)
- Norden Farm – update – (October 2021)
- The Old Court – update – (October 2021)
- Chief Constable Annual Presentation (October 2021)
- Performance Management Report - Quarterly
- Library Transformation – (June 2021)
- District Enforcement (June 2021)
- Maidenhead Golf Course update (June 2021)
- Alexandra Gardens Car Park update (June 2021)
- Budget

New topics:

- Transformation Strategy
- Recovery Strategy for Jobs and Employment
- Lesson learnt from SportsAble and Provision for disabled sports

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by one appendix:

- Work Programme

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type: For information	Urgency item? No	To Follow item? No
--	----------------------------	------------------------------