

Report Title:	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Annual Report 2021/22
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Member Reporting:	Councillor Bowden, Chairman of the Panel
Lead Officers:	Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place, David Scott, Head of Communities
Meeting and Date:	Full Council – July 2022

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 Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Again, a difficult year within Covid restrictions. Most meetings were virtual, and or including online participants. This has restricted work programmes, and task and finish groups were not appropriate.

3. TOPICS SCRUTINISED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

- 3.1 Embedding Community Response
- 3.2 Library Transformation
- 3.3 Budget 2021/2022
- 3.4 District Enforcement
- 3.5 Thames Valley Police
- 3.6 Performance Management
- 3.7 Compliments and Complaints Annual Report
- 3.8 Maidenhead Heritage Centre
- 3.9 Performance of the Tivoli Contract for Grounds Maintenance
- 3.10 Allotments

4. CALL-INS CONSIDERED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

- 4.1 Battlemead Common

5. RESIDENT SUGGESTIONS CONSIDERED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

- 5.1 Parking on Footpaths and verges – The recommendation was that this topic was considered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the

Panel noted the report and agreed to consider the issue again after three months. This was considered at Panel on 9 November 2021 and the Panel received an update at the meeting on 12 April 2022 which stated that there had been no change on the bill to ban footway parking nationally.

6. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS ESTABLISHED DURING THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

6.1 No Task and Finish Groups established in the municipal year 2021/22.

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

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

7.8 Set achievable, measurable goals. Make use of task and finish.

7.9 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.

7.10 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. This was dropped this year, but it's not clear why. We absolutely should be scrutinising the impact of budget proposals on our communities.

- 7.11 In order to foster a more cohesive approach I would recommend that we circulate all members of the Panel with ideas/comments/suggestions.
- 7.12 We will have had seven meetings in 2021/2022 (nine in the year 2021) but achieved very little. There needs to be a genuine appetite for scrutiny from all members of the panel, if it is to be successful, and that means being a 'friendly critic' of the administration, not backing them up at all times.
- 7.13 Speed up the process to get work items onto the work programme. Climate Change was requested in June 2021 by Cllr Price, a scoping document has been produced by Cllr del Campo but as yet, nothing has happened. Similarly, Cllr Del Campo repeatedly asked for updates from Norden Farm and Old Court before the February budget meeting but while nobody said no, it hasn't happened either.
- 7.14 Prioritise work items of most importance, such as Climate Change, and do them well, but don't lose sight of other matters. Briefing notes seem to be a good way to achieve this, but they seem to have been quietly shelved.
- 7.15 Add to the agenda of every meeting, "Actions and matters arising". We do these when prompted by panel members, but it should be a routine part of every meeting.
- 7.16 Scrutinise quarterly performance sooner — the new performance portal should assist with this. There doesn't seem to be much value in the performance reports at the moment though as they are so out of date.
- 7.17 Explore whether Parish Councillor Pat McDonald can be loaned an iPad to allow him to join meetings, or invite him to send a substitute.

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
 - District Enforcement
 - Tivoli
 - Maidenhead Heritage Centre
 - David Scott, Lead Officer
 - Shilpa Manek, Clerk
 - Andrew Durrant, Executive Head of Service
 - All other officers who have attended to present reports or helped with the smooth running of meetings.
 - Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury Parish Council)
 - Members of the Public
 - Members of the Council

9. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

- 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 2021/22:

- Norden Farm and Old Court
- Maidenhead Heritage Centre
- Tivoli update
- SERCO update

New topics:

- Climate Change
- Foodshare Windsor and Maidenhead
- Community Facilities Review
- Community Safety Partnership
- Boulters Lock car park
- Waste Management Strategy

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	No

Report Author: Councillor Bowden, Chair of the Communities O&S Panel
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