

The background of the cover features a pair of glasses with a magnifying glass effect. The lenses are positioned over a document with a grid pattern. The top lens is tilted upwards, and the bottom lens is larger and more prominent. The overall color scheme is dark with highlights on the glasses and the document.

Report of the
Overview & Scrutiny
Committee

Annual Report
2016/2017



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/2017

A Message from Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This Annual Report is a summary of just some of the work Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) has done this year, what has worked well and what issues we need to concentrate more on next year.

It has been another extremely busy year for O&S with four comprehensive reviews being undertaken:

- Museum Trust (Pre Decision Scrutiny)
- Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

The O&S Committee set up a Working Group that undertook a short, sharp review - NBC Owned Street Lighting. This Working Group completed its findings early in the Municipal Year 2016/2017 and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is monitoring the impact of the accepted recommendations.

The O&S Committee also set up a Working Group - Re-provision of the Environmental Services Contract.

Overview and Scrutiny work is member-led and evidence-based. It is vital that the work of scrutiny adds value and improvement and I feel the conclusions and recommendations from the in-depth Reviews undertaken this year have really demonstrated that. The findings of the Review – Museum Trust (Pre Decision Scrutiny) has been considered by Cabinet and its response will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the summer 2017. The other three Scrutiny Panels have completed their reviews and the findings will be presented to Cabinet early in the Municipal year 2017/2018.

Again this year, we asked the citizens of Northampton to suggest topics for Scrutiny reviews. There were approximately fifty five suggestions from the public. Councillors carefully considered the suggestions at a workshop held in April 2017. From these ideas, Cabinet's priorities for the year and suggestions put forward by Councillors, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved its Work Programme 2017/2018 at its May 2017 meeting.

The Committee scrutinised the Council's budget proposals by delegating work to its Reporting and Monitoring Working Group who identified three budget proposals for the Committee to scrutinise in-depth. This Working Group will continue to meet during the Municipal year 2017/2018.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in and have supported Scrutiny over the past year. In particular, I would like to thank my colleagues who chaired the Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups last year. These achievements are recognised in this report. I would also like to convey my thanks to the many witnesses and the three Co-Optees that have contributed to scrutiny's work this year. Their participation brings knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm to the work of Scrutiny.

Instead of a complete commentary of all that O&S has achieved over the year this Annual Report provides a summary of the key highlights of the work O&S has been engaged in during 2016/2017. I hope it reflects what I feel has been a very productive year in Overview and Scrutiny. I do hope that you find this report informative and interesting.



Councillor Jamie Lane
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Achievements

How was this impact made during 2016 - 2017?

The Scrutiny Panels carry out in-depth Scrutiny reviews, whilst the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee concentrates on strategic issues, including holding the Cabinet to account, performance management and scrutiny of crime and disorder. This structure attracts increased public participation and the involvement of non-Executives in Scrutiny reviews.

Involvement of Non- Executives (not Scrutiny Members) in Overview and Scrutiny

The O&S structure enables non-Executives, who are not members of the O&S Committee, to be fully involved in the O&S process.

All of the four Scrutiny Panels this year had non-Executive Councillors who were not O&S Councillors as members of the Panels.

Key Example: The Scrutiny Panel that investigated how it could be ensured Northampton Borough Council (NBC) plays an active role in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was made up of ten non-Executives, of which four were not O&S Councillors, demonstrating involvement of non-Executives in the O&S process.

Co Optees to Scrutiny Panels

Two of the Scrutiny Panels – Homeless (Pre Decision Scrutiny) and Emissions Strategy (Action Plan) benefitted from the expertise and knowledge of co optees. A representative from Homeless Link sat on the Scrutiny Panel (Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny)) and representatives from community groups sat on the Scrutiny Panel (Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)).

“I really enjoyed the experience of getting involved with the scrutiny review into homelessness. Having worked in the sector for a number of years it was really positive to see a Local Authority co-opt somebody external onto the Panel to provide their views and support the process. The panel itself was very well managed with the information provided by both the Local Authority and partners allowing suitable debate and challenge. I hope that moving forward the recommendations are fully adopted, scrutinised and create even wider partnership working in Northampton at a really crucial time for homelessness prevention.”

Pete Smith
Head of Partnerships
Homeless Link

“I have enjoyed very much my time being co-opted on to the Overview & Scrutiny panel 4 -Emissions Strategy. The facility to be co-opted is very important for community groups, as it gives them a direct input into local authority policy, thus giving them and their wider community a voice within the corridors of decision making. Community members bring their concerns to us in meetings or directly

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from impromptu meetings in the street and here it is being relayed directly into a meeting which will form the authority strategy. This importance of this conduit cannot be overstated.

The whole process has been very informative and also gives us a better understanding of local government, and how it works, again this is important because we can then relay that information back the other way to community members.

I particularly enjoyed the testimony of the expert witnesses and the ability to ask questions to them directly which is a very valuable experience in itself, as normally community groups would never get an audience with people like this, as communication would be confined to e-mail alone, with its obvious limitations.

I do hope our contribution has been of use to the panel, and we look forward to being included again if required in the future, but moreover I hope it gives the panel the confidence and encouragement to invite other community groups to shape local authority decision making, by inviting them along.”

Graham Croucher
Chair, St James Residents' Association

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

Key Example: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny is an example of excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners.

The scrutiny of crime and disorder was formalised in 2010, putting in place clear working arrangements between the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Committee. A bi-annual report from the CSP informs the O&S Committee of work undertaken; non-Executives decide whether further review or scrutiny is required. This report focuses on the levels of performance in the light of reduced resources, if so what measures have been taken to meet any shortfall in performance. This demonstrates excellent working relationships between non-Executives and partners.

It is important that the issues that most effect our communities are explored and addressed. The work of Overview & Scrutiny ensures that focus is kept on key areas of concern, supporting and informing the work of Community Safety.’

Debbie Ferguson
Community Safety Partnership Manager

The O&S Committee has also looked at:

- Unitary Status
- Sheltered Housing Update
- Emissions Strategy, including hotspots
- Drugs - The Law, Prevention and General information
- Customer Services
- Cemeteries
- Sustainable Play Equipment

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Performance Management Scrutiny

A process enabling the Committee to identify key performance measures earlier on was introduced in 2013/14. The Committee informs the Chair prior to a meeting of the O&S Committee of performance measures that it feels warrant future scrutiny.

The scrutiny of specifically identified measures is included on the agenda of meetings of the O&S Committee. This results in measures being reviewed on an exception basis with relevant Cabinet Members being called to present information to the Committee. Cabinet Members are scrutinised on performance, the causes of underperformance and the corrective actions being taken. Active debate is undertaken and support and challenge is offered to the recommendations being made to deliver service improvements.

Key example: Performance management scrutiny of:-

- Council Tax arrears

Critical Friend to Cabinet

Call-In

At Northampton call-in is used sparingly. During 2016/2017 there were two Call-In Hearings. One of the Call Ins was upheld and the other fell.

Following one of the Call-In Hearings, the Working Group – Re-Provision of the Environmental Services Contract commenced its Scrutiny activity.

Influencing Policy Development

Four in-depth Scrutiny reviews were undertaken during 2016/2017:

- Museum Trust (Pre Decision Scrutiny)
- Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

Review work of 2015/2016 has received Cabinet's response. Almost all of the recommendations were accepted, which highlights that Overview and Scrutiny is continuing to make significant influence of Council policy, both in terms of holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to policy development, and the well-being of the citizens of Northampton.

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Raising the profile of Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton

The profile of O&S has continued to be raised with a number of important and successful reviews carried out during 2016/2017. O&S is keen to keep this up and invites suggestions for the work programme from various partners, Agencies and members of the public.

The Scrutiny review process at Northampton is widely recognised both within the Council and amongst the citizens of Northampton.

The O&S Work Programme received extensive press coverage, locally, which just under 50 individuals responded to, suggesting around 55 ideas for future Scrutiny review.

Paperless Overview and Scrutiny

As reported in last two year's Annual Reports, the innovation attracted national interest. External interest in the innovation has again continued this year, with a number of enquiries regarding the success of the innovation.

Public engagement within the Overview and Scrutiny process at Northampton

O&S has included various issues referred to it from the public onto its Work Programme. The details below provide key points of how O&S work has reflected the concerns of service users.

Key Example of review work during 2016/2017:

Museum Trust (Pre-Decision Scrutiny)

The report of the Museum Trust (Pre Decision Scrutiny) was presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2016/2017. The O&S Committee will begin monitoring of the accepted recommendations early in 2017/2018.

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to undertake pre-decision Scrutiny - Scrutiny of the establishment of the Museum Trust to ensure the best outcome for the future of the Museum Service and Cultural Quarter. The purpose of the report of the Panel was to notify Cabinet on the outcome of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel that undertook the above pre-decision work in response to the decision by Cabinet to consider Trust Status for Northampton's Museums.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Museums had advised the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming event in March 2016 that work was underway regarding investigating the feasibility and benefits of establishing a Museum Trust. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to include a review of Museum Trust (Pre-decision Scrutiny) in its Work Programme 2016/2017 and commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review. A short, sharp review commenced in May 2016 and concluded in July 2016. This review linked to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 1 – Northampton Alive - A vibrant town for now and the future.

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The pre-decision scrutiny activity was a focussed piece of work that linked to the Council's corporate priorities and examined a range of information. The Scrutiny Panel looked at what the needs for the provision of Museums were within the Borough of Northampton and the need for a Museum Trust for Northampton. Baseline information was received.

This short sharp Scrutiny pre-decision activity took place between May 2016 and July 2016.

Councillor Jamie Lane
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2

Co-Opted Members

This year, the Scrutiny process chose to engage the expertise and knowledge of co-optees in its review process for two of its reviews. It also fully utilised expert advisors in the witness evidence process. Further details are contained at page 2 of this Annual Report.

Review work 2016/2017

O&S at Northampton has undertaken some excellent review work again this year.

The best practice Scrutiny review work has continued to be built upon. Over the last year, Scrutiny reviews have attracted interest from both external organizations and the public.

Overview and Scrutiny at Northampton continues to be Councillor-led and focuses on the major issues affecting the town. It has therefore carried out some very high profile reviews this year, the impact of which will be reported in next year's O&S Annual Report:

Scrutiny Panels

The Scrutiny Panels obtain information to inform the Review through a variety of methods, including:

- Research and briefings commissioned from officers
- Select committee-style meetings with external experts and relevant officers
- Informal interviews
- Site visits
- Surveys

Some meetings of the Scrutiny Panels are often held in a 'Select Committee' format, with the Scrutiny Panels seeking evidence through a question and answer session with senior officers, Cabinet Members, external experts, representatives of interested groups or members of the public who have relevant experience.

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Child Sexual Exploitation

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to ensure Northampton Borough Council (NBC) plays an active role in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Key lines of Inquiry:

- To gain an understanding of the work currently being undertaken by partnerships, statutory and voluntary organisations, and the Police to address these issues
- To investigate how NBC contributes to the above work
- To raise awareness of CSE, human trafficking and domestic slavery of children in Northampton
- To explore best practice elsewhere in identifying and providing support to victims of CSE
- To understand what NBC is doing outside the Scrutiny process in relation to human trafficking and domestic slavery of children

The recommendations of the Review are around:

- Making Public Spaces Safer
- Communication and E-Safety
- Training and Awareness Raising

The report will be presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2017/2018.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in April 2016, agreed to include a review that would look at how NBC played an active role in tackling CSE. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2016 and concluded in March 2017.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 2 – Safer Communities – Making you feel safe and secure.

It was a very interesting and informative Review; with clear evidence received. I would like to extend my thanks to those that have taken the time to contribute to the extensive evidence base of this Scrutiny Review, by either attending a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel, or by submitting written evidence where this was not possible.

The Scrutiny Panel held interviews with the Cabinet Members, Senior Staff at Northampton Borough Council and a number of external expert witnesses. Desktop research was carried out by the Scrutiny Officer.

Child sexual exploitation is still a largely hidden crime and the Scrutiny Panel acknowledge that the way to tackle this is for Agencies to work together. I highlight that from the wealth of evidence received it became apparent that Agencies are working together in Northamptonshire on this.

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Our recommendations have been based on the evidence that was submitted to us over this ten month thorough period of putting the Review together.

Councillor Dennis Meredith
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1

Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny)

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to review how the Borough Council and its partners prevent homelessness and to respond to those without homes in the borough.

Key Lines of Enquiry

- To gain an understanding of the work currently being undertaken by Northampton Borough Council (NBC), partnerships, statutory and voluntary organisations to address homelessness
- To assess the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough assess the initiatives currently in place to tackle homelessness
- To examine the Council's Severe Weather Provision
- To gain an understanding of the effect on the health, wellbeing and the safety of homelessness people, including rough sleepers
- To gain an understanding of the causes and barriers to support homelessness
- Identify any specific groups that are not accessing services

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in April 2016, agreed to include a review around how the Borough Council and its partners prevent homelessness. An in-depth review commenced in May 2016 and concluded in March 2017.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 3 - Housing for Everyone - Helping those that need it to have a safe and secure home

The recommendations of the review were around the themes:

- Multi Agency Working
- Improving access to homelessness services
- Improving access to health services
- Temporary accommodation

The report will be presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2017/2018.

The review was a focussed piece of work that linked to the Council's corporate priorities and examined a range of information. The Scrutiny Panel looked at evidence from Local Authorities noted for best practice, heard from Authorities, organisations and groups regarding the assistance that they provide to homeless people and rough sleeper. Interviews with the Cabinet Members and senior staff from Northampton Borough Council and various external witnesses were held. Baseline information was received and desktop research carried out.

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Homelessness is a growing problem, more and more people face the prospect of living in temporary accommodation or just sofa surfing with their friends or relatives. Homelessness is due to a number of factors, further details are provided within the report of the Scrutiny Panel.

Evidence received showed that being homeless is physically and mentally difficult and that homeless people are among the most vulnerable.

Councillor Zoe Smith
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3

Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

The objective of the Scrutiny Review was to provide Scrutiny input into the Action Plan for the Council's Emissions Strategy

Key lines of Inquiry:

- To increase Councillor and public understanding of air quality issues in Northampton
- To understand the causes and impact of air pollution
- To understand the actions being taken to reduce air pollution in Northampton
- To understand the actions being taken by partners to reduce air pollution in Northampton
- To provide recommendations for the production of the Action Plan for the Council's Emissions Strategy, which will identify ways of improving air quality in Northampton
- Examine all current air quality management areas to ensure they are performing.
- To see if they can be improved and consider all other factors and future factors in moving forward

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a briefing note regarding the Emissions Strategy, including hotspots, at its meeting held on 15 August 2016. Following consideration of this information it was agreed that a Scrutiny Review would commence to investigate the Air Quality Action Plan and how Scrutiny could provide input into this. An in-depth review commenced in October 2016 and concluded in April 2017.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority – protecting our environment - A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors.

The recommendations of the Review were around the themes:

- Emissions Strategy Action Plan
- Councillor and Public Awareness of Air Quality Issues
- Partner Agencies

The report will be presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2017/2018.

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Scrutiny holds a specific and important role in the oversight of significant issues affecting the population and this review was a focussed piece of work that linked to the Council's corporate priorities and examined a range of information.

During its Review the Scrutiny Panel realised that moderate. Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.

The recommendations made in this report address a wide range of issues raised throughout the Review, regarding pollution and emissions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of the Council who attended meetings and gave an informative presentation and provided critical information in response to the core questions of the Panel; and the key Agencies and partners who gave up their time to contribute to this Review in such a meaningful way.

Councillor Sam Kilby-Shaw
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 4

Museum Trust (Pre Decision Scrutiny)

Please refer to page 4 for a precis of this review.

NBC Owned Street Lighting

The purpose of this Scrutiny activity was to differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting.

Key lines of Enquiry

- Investigate all NBC owned street lighting, not just those in situ on housing land
- Differentiate between Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned street lighting
- How the public can report problems and issues with street lighting
- Cost of NBC owned street lighting and energy consumption
- On-going costs for NBC street lighting

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 29 July 2015, received a briefing paper on street lighting from Northampton Partnership Homes. Following discussion of this briefing paper, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Working Group to investigate NBC owned street lighting. A short, sharp Scrutiny activity commenced in September 2015 and concluded in May 2016.

This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods - Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment

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Cabinet received the report in the summer 2016 and Overview and Scrutiny will monitor the implementation of the accepted recommendations in the spring 2017.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up the Working Group following receipt of an initial briefing paper on NBC owned street lighting on housing land. NBC owned street lighting has been an on-going issue for approximately four years. It had begun when Northamptonshire County Council had upgraded certain street lights and the query arose regarding ownership of some lighting columns. It is an historical issue. Previously, NBC street lighting had been mapped on the NCC mapping system but this is no longer the case.

Over a series of four meetings, the Working Group received various pieces of key information that informed this Scrutiny activity. A site visit took place to various locations in the borough so that Councillors could have sight of examples of NBC owned street lighting columns.

Councillor Phil Larratt
Chair, Street Lighting Working Group

Re Provision of the Environmental Services Contract

A Working Group of Councillors from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is undertaking Scrutiny activity and the work has not yet concluded. It will report its findings in the Municipal year 2017/2018.

How has the work of the Scrutiny Panels made a difference to the Council and our residents?

Accepted recommendations from previous Scrutiny reviews, undertaken during the previous year, are being monitored by the O&S Committee.

Key examples

Tree Maintenance

Following a motion that had been carried at full Council at its meeting on 15 September 2014:

“There are many areas of the Eastern District where historic planting of the wrong kind of trees in the residential areas cause a number of problems for residents - from light being blocked from homes, to fallen debris, to damage to property from roots.

'This Council resolves to develop a plan to consider removing trees that are identified as problematic and consider replacing them with smaller trees more suited to residential areas.

'This Council recognises this issue is complex and many trees are located on housing land

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that will soon be managed by Northampton Partnership Homes so therefore refers this matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.”

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group would be set up to look at tree maintenance issues.

The recommendations were around:

- Right to light
- Reporting mechanisms
- Tree Inspection Programme
- S106/CIL process
- Revised Tree Maintenance Policy

Cabinet accepted all of the recommendations within the report and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitored the implementation of the accepted recommendations. Monitoring was completed in February 2017.

Match Day Parking Working Group

Following a motion that was unanimously carried at full Council at its meeting in October 2014:

“This Council recognises the exceptional parking problems that residents and tenants regularly encounter in St James as a result of match day parking. But the problems in St James are not only match day parking. The people coming into St James taking up residents’ and tenants spaces include people coming into the area to work and some people parking at the flats and walking to the station to avoid the parking charges there. This council therefore resolves to do the following:

- 1. Look into the possibility of issuing tenants in NBC homes that have allocated parking areas with free parking permits. The properties considered would be: Cordwainer House, Stitchman House, Stirup House, Lapstone House, Eyeletter House, Abbey House, Melbourne House, Devonshire House, although this list is not exhaustive. This measure would ensure that premium allocated parking is not occupied by people from the outside area. This should be supplemented with sufficient enforcement to tackle inappropriately and incorrectly parked vehicles.*
- 2. This council also agrees to consult with Northamptonshire County Council, the Police and Highways to look at the possibility of extending free parking permits into other parts of St James, Upton, Duston and other parts of the town which may then replace the current parking permit scheme which is presently under review and thus remove the need to financially penalise the people of St James simply because people from the*

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outside area come to park in St James, as a successful sports club is located on their door step.

3. *This Council resolves to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out a detailed investigation to look at these options for Cabinet to consider."*

A Working Group was set up to carry out this Scrutiny activity.

The purpose of this Scrutiny activity was to undertake a review, to gain a better understanding of residential parking problems, as detailed in motion that was unanimously carried at full Council on 27 October 2014. In doing this, the Working Group:

- Investigated the possibility and viability of issuing tenants in NBC homes (including Corwainer House, Stichman House, Stirup House, Lapstone House, Eyeletter House, Abbey House, Melbourne House, Devonshire House) that have allocated parking areas with free parking permits.
- Investigated the possibility and viability of extending free parking permits to other parts of St James, Upton, Duston and other parts of the town

The Working Group heard from a number of key expert advisors and its recommendations are around:

- Residents' Parking Permits
- Car Parking
- Season Ticket Holders - buses

The report was presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016 and the Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the accepted recommendations in 2017.

Health Check of the Local Economy

The purpose of the review was to look at how partners locally, including the private sector, can work together to influence the local economy.

Key lines of Inquiry:

- How can schemes, such as Apprenticeship Programmes, be developed and expanded so that they deliver for both local employees, employers and local residents?
- What is the vision for skills and learning issues, particularly low skills?

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- What support is there for those that are in long term unemployment?
- What are the areas for potential growth in jobs?
- What can other organisations/groups/individuals do to help?
- Whether a mapping skills gap exercise has been undertaken to identify the type of skills that are in short supply; and what the findings of this exercise are
- How specific servicers can be used to generate business investment
- How can the offer of commercial land in the borough be improved to ensure a steady stream of quality premises that are accessible by new and established organisations?
- What could feasibly be done to improve the physical infrastructure in and around the town?
- How it can be ensured that those who are seldom heard or isolated are engaged with?

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in June 2015, agreed to include a review of the health check of the local economy. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in July 2015 and concluded in March 2016.

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were around the themes:

- Raising the profile and the economic growth in Northampton.
- Raising the profile of organisations assisting with the economic growth of the town.
- Addressing the future skills requirements of each sector of the local economy within Northampton.
- Raising the profile of apprenticeships and vocational training in Northampton.
- Developing a Skills Strategy for Northampton.

The report was presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2015/2016. Monitoring of the accepted recommendations contained within this report is taking place.

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Effectiveness of the Enforcement of the Licensing Policy for Taxis and Private Hire

The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to investigate the pattern of provision of licensing in respect of taxis and private hire.

Key lines of Inquiry:

- To review the policies and strategies for licensing
- To assess the effectiveness of the legislation for licensing
- To raise awareness of the licensing and planning framework around the regulation of private hire and taxi licensing
- To assess what mechanisms are in place for the exchange of information between the Council, the Police and licence holders.
- To examine what options are available and any best practice or solutions that other Local Authorities have successfully implemented
- To assess the provision and usage of taxi ranks in the borough

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in June 2015, agreed to include a review of the effectiveness of the enforcement of Licensing Policy in respect of Taxis and Private Hire. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 3 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in July 2015 and concluded in March 2016.

A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising five Councillors.

The review attracted interest from the public, with a number of members of the public attending meetings of the Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendations of this Scrutiny review were around the themes:

- Provision and Usage of Taxi ranks in the borough
- Policies and Strategies for Licensing and the effectiveness of the legislation for licensing
- Information Exchange
- Raising the awareness of the licensing and planning framework around the regulation of private hire and taxi licensing
- Taxi Marshals
- Highways

This report was presented to Cabinet in the Municipal year 2016/2017 and monitoring is complete.

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Keep Northampton Tidy

The purpose of the review was:

- To undertake a review regarding implementing a 'Keep Northampton Tidy' campaign with an accent on preserving wildlife and encouraging children (and adults) to take an interest in their surroundings, to include Community Clean Ups and 'Northampton in Bloom.'
- A review of the problem of littering and fly-tipping, particularly in un-adopted roads and the gateways into the town.
- To explore opportunities to enhance the gateways into the town.

Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel were around the themes:

- Keep Northampton Tidy
- Keep Northampton Tidy Campaign
- Gateways into the town
- Purple Flag Accreditation

Cabinet accepted all of the recommendations within the report and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee began the monitoring process in June 2016 and it is expected that it will be complete in the spring 2017.

Budget Scrutiny

Each year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee sets up the Reporting and Monitoring Working Group to:

- Review the revenue budget proposals and the Council's medium term financial plans.
- Recommend a short list to Overview and Scrutiny for detailed consideration.
- Consider suggestions from the public and other Councillors for items to be included in the short list for scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny finds it helpful for a small Working Group of Councillors to take a brief overview of all the budget proposals and bring a small selection to the Committee for detailed scrutiny.

This year the Working Group comprised six Councillors from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in February 2017, undertook budget scrutiny of the following issues:

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- Budget pressures on temporary and bed and breakfast accommodation and the plans in place to mitigate this.
- How NPH are delivering within the total fee for Housing Services that NBC provides to them, details around Government funding proposals and developing new housing stock and the possible use of existing garage sites.

Looking ahead

The Work Programme for 2017/2018 was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the spring 2017. Three Scrutiny Panels will be set up and will scope the reviews:

- Cemeteries
- Dementia Friendly Town
- Culture and Tourism

Details of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017/2018 will be published on the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#) as soon as it is finalised.

What are our Challenges for 2017 2018?

- To build on Overview and Scrutiny's achievements by setting stretching targets to broaden our impact. An example would be to ensure the Committee continues to undertake pre-decision scrutiny activities.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny continues to make a positive contribution to the development of policy and the continuous improvement of the Council's operations.
- To continue to ensure the O&S work programme reflects concerns of service users, community and public – ensuring that a wide range of organisations, partners and the public are consulted with for suggestions for scrutiny review and then on the actual work programme.
- To ensure O&S is able to respond effectively to legislative requirements, such as the new powers, for example, wider powers to influence policy and public service delivery in their area – for example investigated issues beyond its traditional remit but affect local people.
- To continue to ensure O&S works with the community and key partners to respond to concerns.
- To continue to ensure that the work of O&S has a positive effect on decision-makers and provide evidence that it has made a real difference.
- To continue to increase public participation in O&S at Northampton by increased public suggestions for scrutiny review and increased attendance at O&S Committee and Panel meetings. This process has continued to increase year on year.

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Glossary of Terms

Call-In

The process by which the O&S Committee considers whether a decision is properly taken or is the right decision.

Cabinet (Executive)

The Executive body responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council and the development of policy. Cabinet Members have portfolios or areas of responsibility (e.g. Housing) for which they take executive decisions.

Councillor (Member)

An elected local representative on the Council, a Councillor represents the interests of the people who live in their ward and Northampton as a whole

Pre-decision Scrutiny:

O&S may inform Executive decisions on topics on the Forward Plan by making evidence based recommendations or advice prior to formal decision by the Executive.

Review

A study led by Scrutiny Councillors on a current issue, selected by the Committee. It aims to identify areas of good as well as poor practice, compare performance with other Councils' countrywide, and challenge existing practice where relevant.

The review will lead to recommendations for improvements to relevant Cabinet Members as well as outside agencies, such as health trusts. While these are not obliged to support the recommendations, effective consultation has been proven to lead to consensus and to Cabinet support for reviews undertaken.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/2017

Contact details for more information

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, is always very happy to speak to local people about the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If you have any comments or queries, or would like to suggest areas which may be appropriate topics for future work, you can speak to her by calling 0300 330 7000 or by [email](#).

You can view recent agendas and minutes on the Council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk or by contacting [Democratic Services](#)

Overview and Scrutiny has its own dedicated website within the Council's website. The current work of Overview and Scrutiny and the reports already published are available on this site. The address is www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Suggest an item for Overview and Scrutiny to investigate?

Do you have any suggestions for issues for inclusion onto the Overview and Scrutiny future Work Programme? If so please complete the form overleaf and return to: -

Overview and Scrutiny
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Email: [Scrutiny](#)

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Just as Overview and Scrutiny has considerable influence when used in the right way, there are times when other procedures are more appropriate.

Overview and Scrutiny cannot help in the following areas:

Individual complaints about specific issues - these should be taken up through Northampton Borough Council's Customer Care Procedure.

Proper accounting for money of the Council - this is the responsibility of the Audit Committee - for information, contact 01604 837722

The conduct or behaviour of a councillor or officer - this is the responsibility of the Standards Committee - for information, contact 01604 837722.

It cannot be guaranteed that items raised in this way will actually be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

Suggested Issue for Overview and Scrutiny

Name:

Email:

Telephone

Issues suggested for inclusion on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/2017

If English is not your first language and you need help in translating this document please contact Tracy Tiff on 01604 837408.

Jesli angielski nie jest Twoim jezykiem ojczystym
a potrzebujesz pomocy w przetlumaczeniu tego
Если английский не Ваш родной язык и Вам
нужна помощь с переводом этого документа,
то свяжитесь с Трайсу Тиф.Тел. 01604 837408

Haddii afka Ingriisigu aanu ahayn luuqad-daada
kowaad oo aad u baahan-tahay in laga caawiyo
turjumidda warqaddan fadlan kala xidhidh Tracy
Tiff tilifoonka 01604 837408

如果英語不是你的主要說用語言而需要幫助將這
份文件翻譯，請致電 01604 837408 向 Tracy Tiff
提出要求。

যদি ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় এবং এই দলিলটি অনুবাদে
আপনার সাহায্যের দরকার হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে ট্রেইসি টিফ-এর
সাথে 01604 837408 এই টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

LARGE PRINT AND TAPE

If you would like this document as large print or as a tape recording please call
01604 837408