

**Council**

**28 October 2025**

**Part 1 - Public**

**Matters for Information**



Member

Cllr Anita Oakley – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny

## **Overview and Scrutiny – Annual Report**

### **1 Summary and Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the work of the Committee over the past year

### **2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area**

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny process monitors how decisions are made and how resources are used, holding decision makers accountable and identifying ways to improve performance and value for money.

### **3 Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 This report sets out a summary of the activities and work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past twelve months. Full details of all the reviews undertaken and other matters considered by the Committee over this period are set out on the Council's website.
- 3.2 In the last 12 months, 5 programmed meetings of the Committee took place. In addition to these formal meetings, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and members of Cabinet regularly meet to discuss workload and current opportunities and challenges across each portfolio.

### **4 Proposal**

- 4.1 Set out below are details of the Committee's main meetings and a brief description of the work undertaken.

## 4.2 **O&S Committee Meeting – 14 November 2024**

- 4.2.1 The agenda for this meeting included Key Performance Indicators, where positive and negative trends in the report were discussed and noted.
- 4.2.2 The meeting also considered a review of Tonbridge Community Forum and Parish Partnership Panel. As a result of this review, Tonbridge Community Forum changed venue to the Methodist Church in Tonbridge, all meetings changed to “in person” rather than online and an open discussion section was introduced for members to discuss and respond to items raised. Initial responses in relation to Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) were referred back to the Panel for further discussion.
- 4.2.3 An information report was also considered regarding the progress and implementation of the Agile software system. The report responded to queries raised by Members and a further request was made for another update report to be shared.

## 4.3 **O&S Committee Meeting – 23 January 2025**

- 4.3.1 At this meeting the Committee considered the Revenue estimates 2025/26 along with a detailed list of services and whether they were mandatory or discretionary. The Revenue Estimates were endorsed for consideration by Cabinet. The Committee also considered the Capital Plan Review for 2024-25 with recommendations going on to Cabinet.
- 4.3.2 Also on the agenda was the introduction of the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025-26 to strengthen links with the Corporate Strategy and set out priorities for the year.
- 4.3.3 In addition, a presentation was given by the Leader and the Chief Executive, providing an update on the Devolution White Paper released by Government on 16 December 2024.

## 4.4 **O&S Committee Meeting – 3 April 2025**

- 4.4.1 Included on the agenda was a presentation from representatives of Citizens Advice North and West Kent. Members were updated on the services provided and the numbers of residents in Tonbridge and Malling who have received advice and support.
- 4.4.2 The Committee also heard from representatives of South East Water who had been invited to attend the meeting to provide an update and answer questions in relation to recent water outages. Representatives responded to concerns and noted potential areas of further improvement to improve resilience of the water supply.

- 4.4.3 Corporate Key Performance Indicators were also considered for the quarter 3 period, with positive and negative trends noted.
- 4.4.4 Following further consideration by the Parish Partnership Panel, a report was considered in relation to future meetings. It was recommended that all meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, with a remote joining option retained as an option.
- 4.4.5 An information report was considered regarding affordable housing delivery with Members updated on current national and local issues with securing affordable housing. The Committee recognised the challenges around affordable housing provision and welcomed more detail to be brought to a meeting of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee.
- 4.4.6 A report reviewing the primary care capacity was also considered due to member concern regarding the pressures being placed on GP practices especially in the northeast of the borough arising from growth and development. The report provided an overview of capacity and information regarding future requirements.

#### **4.5 O&S Committee Meeting – 26 June 2025**

- 4.5.1 A report on Empty Homes was provided for information, which included current figures on empty homes across the borough, trends, comparison with other Kent local authorities and the empty Homes Officer post.
- 4.5.2 The Committee also considered the annual consultant use report for the 2024-25 financial year along with the annual review letter from the Local government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 4.5.3 A Part 2 – Private Report was also considered – Built Environment and Public Protection Software System. The report presented findings of the independent review, identifying key learning and actions.

#### **4.6 O&S Committee Meeting – 11 September 2025**

- 4.6.1 The Borough Council's representative, Cllr M Boughton provided a brief overview of the role and activities of South East Council.
- 4.6.2 The Annual Service Delivery Plan – Quarter 1 data was also considered by the Committee.
- 4.6.3 The Angel Leisure Centre replacement project was considered, with an opportunity for the Committee to ask questions to the project team.
- 4.6.4 The Executive/Scrutiny Protocol was considered by the Committee and on the grounds of the increasing importance and reliance of I.T. it was agreed that I.T Policies and Strategies would be included within the standing items for consideration.

- 4.6.5 The Committee also received an update on Information Rights Requests and noted the increasing volume and complexity of these requests. A further review of resources for the management of information requests was supported, subject to any proposals considered by general Purposes Committee and the Council.

## **5 Summary of activity**

- 5.1 Overall, it has been a busy and productive year for the Committee, marked by a strong commitment to improving transparency, accountability and service delivery across the council. The Committee has undertaken a wide range of reviews, examined key policy areas and provided constructive recommendations that have influenced positive change.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	None