



# SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022



**Tendring**  
District Council





# Contents

Opening	01
Line Up	01
Cross Committee Events	02 - 03
Innovation	03
Pre-Discussion Scrutiny	04
Work	04 - 06
Words from the Leader	06

# Opening

Due to the highly positive reception of the last Scrutiny Report the Chairmen decided to keep the "Joint Report" format for this year's Annual Scrutiny Report, as they both believe this showed the joined up nature of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and how they work alongside each other. Each Committee looks at distinct areas of the Councils role.

## RSOSC

Looks at internal items

## &

## CLOSC

Looks at external items (partners)

But they both come at the task from the same direction, as a Critical Friend.

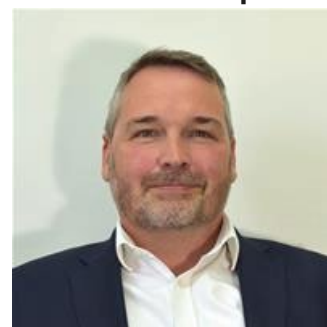
Both though are guided by the Corporate Plan objectives and the themes and ambition of that Plan. Overview and Scrutiny looks to add value to the intentions of the Corporate Plan. This honest, and more times than not, candid approach to scrutiny provides the Council with a safety net, as the OSC's examine proposals and decisions the Council makes and often have their own unique insight which contributes its own objectivity to the Cabinet, Council and partner organisations.

# Line up

This past year there has been some changes to the membership of the 2 OSCs.

At the start of the year Councillor John Chittock formally took on the role of Chairman of the Community Leadership OSC; replacing Cllr Mick Skeels. Councillor Mark Stephenson retained the role of Chairman of the Resources & Services OSC with Councillor Gary Scott continuing as Vice-Chairman. Cllr Chris Amos was Vice-Chairman of Community Leadership OSC until early 2022 when there was a change in Committees he was a member of. His place on Community Leadership OSC was taken by Cllr Jayne Nash. As a consequence, at its March 2022 meeting, Councillor Graham Steady took on the Vice-Chairman role until the Annual Meeting of Council in April 2022. Cllr Sue Honeywood then joined the Committee in place of Cllr Mick Skeels. Cllr Sue Honeywood was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee. In January 2022, Councillor Daniel Land left the Resources & Services OSC and was replaced by Councillor Amos.

**Councillor Mark Stephenson**



**Councillor John Chittock**



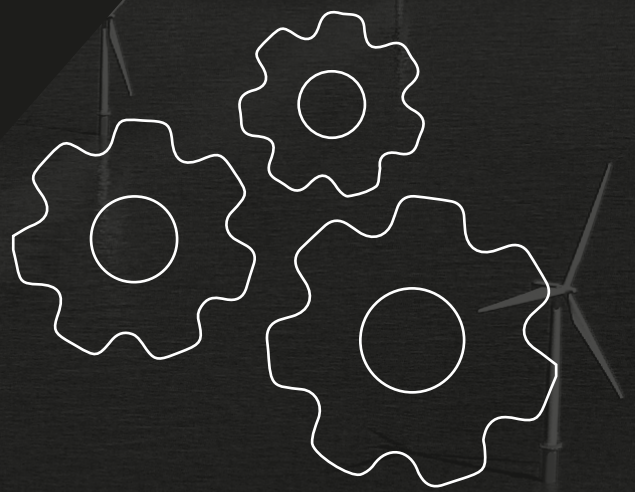
# Cross Committee Events



In recognition of the changing face of Overview and Scrutiny at the Council, the CfGS (Centre for Governance and Scrutiny) were invited to support the Council through a review of the Council's governance practices and procedures.



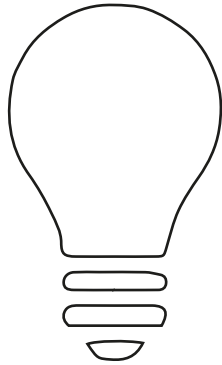
CfGS carried out a series of 1-2-1 interviews with the Members of Cabinet, OSCs Chairmen and Committee Members, Group Leaders, Senior Officers and Dem Services. They also conducted 2 groups sessions with cross sections of Councillors and observed different meetings of Cabinet and the two Committees.



The CfGS is a social purpose consultancy and national centre of expertise. Their purpose is to help organisations achieve their outcomes through improved governance and scrutiny. This was achieved by an in-depth review of how both OSCs operated internally as Committees, as well as how Cabinet and Senior Officers worked with the OSCs.



As a result of the CfGS's review, the Council received an extensive report from CfGS with a number of recommendations. These can be summarised as:



- ✓ Scrutiny being owned Council-wide
- ✓ Reinforce Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol
- ✓ Information sharing to inform Scrutiny topics
- ✓ Improve cross party working – collaborative
- ✓ Strengthen work programme development
  - ✓ Clearer focus on Cabinet's decisions
  - ✓ Briefing Items kept off agenda of OSCs
- ✓ Greater emphasis on outputs of scrutiny and monitoring response to recommendations
- ✓ Greater use of Task and Finish Groups etc of Scrutiny at Committee
  - ✓ Skills Development for OSC Chairs
  - ✓ Mandatory Training for OSC Members
  - ✓ Bolster public involvement/expert witnesses

The Council has considered all of these recommendations and will keep them in mind as it seeks to enhance the overview and scrutiny function.

# Innovation

During the pandemic the practice of having remote pre-meetings, the week prior to the Committee meeting, had started to manifest, this practice was so effective that it has now solidified itself into standard operating procedures of the OSC's and is seen as the most effective way to develop Key Lines of enquiry.



This year also saw a change to the standard model of pre-meeting as the Resources & Services OSC assessed the value of a "hands on" approach and partook in 2 site visits.

# Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The Resources & Services OSC Scrutinised the Joint Use sports facilities report in December 2021 prior to its submission to Cabinet. This was a substantial piece of work which the Committee members believed required on site visits to the facilities in both;



as well as 2 further meetings in the early part of 2022.

## Work

The Resources & Services OSC had an in-depth investigation into the voids (unoccupied properties) in the Council's housing stock, this Task and Finish Group met on multiple occasions in 2021 (and led to the RSCOSC submitting a number of recommendations to Cabinet to address and monitor the position).

The Resources & Services OSC also considered that importance of the Waste and Recycling item on the work programme and created a "Task and Finish" Group to undertake the Scrutiny.

The Community Leadership OSC undertook an investigation into "Children Missing from Education" with representations from Essex County Council. As an outcome of this scrutiny Cabinet agreed to write to Essex County Council, giving the Cabinet's support to strengthening home education and to write to the Secretary of State for Education outlining support for the powers/measures as indicated above, as well as giving support to the Essex County Council Cross-Party Response to the House of Commons' Education Committee Report entitled "Strengthening Home Education".

# Resources & Services OSC

- ✓ Leisure centres and the Leisure Strategy & Skate Park
- ✓ Seafront Expenditure & Cliff stabilisation
- ✓ The Beach Huts Service
- ✓ TDC Enforcement in the district
- ✓ To examine the Council's communications strategy
- ✓ Celebrating the Area's Heritage
- ✓ Budget scrutiny
- ✓ Housing Voids

work programmed from  
Full Council 2021/22

From the work programme items Approved by Full Council the following were not undertaken

Joint Panel with Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Post COVID Regrowth



Joint Panel with Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Carbon Neutral by 2030. REPROGRAMMED TO 2022/23 & ADJUSTED

Disabled Facilities Grants

To examine the Council's communications strategy

## Community Leadership OSC

- ✓ To enquire into the safeguarding and educational position concerning those of school age not attending mainstream schools
- ✓ To consider the issue of suicide levels in the District
- ✓ To consider the mental health needs of residents of the District and the services to meet those needs
- ✓ District wide health levels and Health inequalities due so socioeconomic factors
- ✓ Anti-social behaviour & Scooters
- ✓ Housing issues in the district
- ✓ Freeports
- ✓ Enquire into the work of the Anchor Institution
- ✓ To examine the informal partnerships that were harnessed during the covid-19

From the work programme items Approved by Full Council the following were not undertaken

Joint Panel with Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Post COVID Regrowth

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Joint Panel with Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Carbon Neutral by 2030.

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Crime and disorder -To consider the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's emerging/revised Police and Crime plan

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Maintenance of existing B&C roads

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Jaywick, social issues, crime and deprivation, housing. REPROGRAMMED TO 2022/23 Bridleway provision locally and facilities for horse riders

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Private Sector Housing and rental build quality

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In January 2022 the Resources & Services OSC undertook it's scrutiny of Budget, at the end of the Committee Councillor Neil Stock OBE (Leader of the Council) said of scrutiny:



*"I genuinely do thank you, I have done the scrutiny role myself, so I do appreciate the value, significance and the key role that it plays in a democratic system, I often joke, if I was king of the world, that would be great for me, until it wasn't great anymore, I could make all sorts of crazy decisions on my own, some of them would have been fantastic, some others wouldn't have been so good. Even with in the grouping of Cabinet there will be differences of opinion which are right and proper and they're good, because you need someone to point out other views and opinions.*

*We need Overview and Scrutiny, even if we don't always necessarily like it or do what is recommended, but we need that challenge and the committee are giving us a challenge and leads for a better decision making process and makes for a better Local Authority which makes us a better Council and District".*

