Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 30 July 2019 at 3.00 pm
QE Room, Scaitcliffe House, Ormerod Street, Accrington

Membership

Chair: Councillor Noordad Aziz (in the Chair)

Councillors Jean Battle, Stephen Button, Andrew Clegg, Terry Hurn, Patrick McGinley, Tim O'Kane and Paddy Short

Co-optees: Paul Barton, Bernard Dawson, Ian Ormerod and Gareth Molineux

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

2. Minutes of Last Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)

To submit the Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 14th March 2019 for approval as a correct record.

Recommended - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

3. Appointment of Vice Chair

To appoint a Vice Chair of Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2019-2020.
4. **Appointment of Co-optees (Pages 9 - 12)**

To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the Co-optee appointments made by Council on 16th May 2019.

**Recommended**

- (1) That the Committees note the following re-appointments of Co-optees to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - Honorary Alderman Paul Barton
  - Honorary Alderman Ian Ormerod
  - Honorary Freeman Bernard Dawson

- (2) That the Committees note the following re-appointment of Co-optees to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - Honorary Freeman Bernard Dawson

- (3) That the Committees notes the previous appointment of Honorary Alderman Doug Hayes as Co-optee to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which covers the 2019/20 Municipal year.

- (4) That the Committees note the amendment to Rule C2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in the appendix to this report.

- (5) That the Committees note the appointment of Gareth Molineux as new Co-optee to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes (Pages 13 - 24)**

To approve the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2019/20, to be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet.

**Recommended**

- That the Committees approve their 2019/20 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for submission to the next meeting of Cabinet.

6. **Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities (Pages 25 - 60)**

To inform Members of the publication of new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government.

**Recommended**

- That Members note the update.
To consider three individual requests from external organisations for financial support towards the operational management of Council buildings.

Appendix 1 – Hyndburn Arts Ltd
Appendix 2 – Churchfield House
Appendix 3 – 1842 Mercer

Recommended – That the Committee considers the three requests for financial support towards the operational management of Council buildings and makes recommendations to Cabinet accordingly.
RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14th March, 2019

Present:  Councillor Jenny Molineux (in the Chair),
Councillors Noordad Aziz, Lisa Allen, Jean Battle, Stephen Button,
Terry Hurn and Tim O’Kane
Co-optees: County Councillor Bernard Dawson

In Attendance:  Councillor Joyce Plummer

338  Apologies for absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no substitute representatives.

Councillor Tim O’Kane declared an interest in item 6 of the agenda as he was secretary of Clayton Boxing Club and they could be a prospective tenant of Clayton Civic Hall.

Councillor Stephen Button also declared an interest in item 6 as he was a founder of Fields Bottom Community Group and they were interested in land at Warwick Avenue. He also worked for Hyndburn CVS and they audited the accounts at Hyndburn Voluntary Resource Centre on Cannon Street.

Councillor Noordad Aziz, who attended the meeting after it had started, subsequently declared an interest in the Cross Gates garage site in Great Harwood due to a resident approaching him in relation to the location and then being provided with the contact details for Officers at the Council.

339  Minutes of Last Meeting(s)

The minutes of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 12th February 2019 and the minutes of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny (Call in) Committee held on the 4th March 2019 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

340  ICT Report on outcomes of Previous Scrutiny Recommendations (12 October 2016)

The Portfolio Holder for Resources (Councillor Joyce Plummer) submitted a report to update progress made against recommendations noted on the 12th October 2016.

The recommendations listed then, included:

- That Cabinet be requested to ensure that the new website is user friendly for customers;

- That Cabinet be requested to investigate ways to make the online payment system simpler for customers to use;
That Cabinet be requested to work with the Head of ICT to explore the possibility of the introduction of an integrated system for the website which would require only one simple login from a customer regardless of what service they required access to; and,

That Cabinet be requested to ensure the new website and My Hyndburn app are compatible with assistive technologies in order to make them more accessible to residents who are visually impaired, elderly or those who have low literacy skills.

Two advanced questions had been submitted in relation to this agenda item.

1. How do the different service areas contribute to the development of IT systems for their service area?
2. Can you explain in more detail why the “single sign in” for online customers is not practical, and any potential solutions to this?

The Head of ICT Services responded to a number of questions from Members and stated that she had met with all service heads since being in post to discuss all systems. The Chief Planning and Transportation Officer would be contacted after Councillor O’ Kane raised concerns with finding planning applications on the portal.

Councillor Allen commented that after moving house the online system would not register for a change in Council Tax payments.

Resolved - That the contents of the report be noted.

341 Hyndburn Leisure Trust

The Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure, Lyndsey Sims submitted a report to provide a financial update for Overview and Scrutiny highlighting areas in which HBC have invested capital funding.

The report addressed in detail the following issues, which included:-

- 2018/19 Income performance
- Impact of grant reduction and lack of growth in key service areas
- Capital Development
- Organisational review
- Procurement
- Service/ Income Growth Priorities 2019/20
- Fees & Charge review 2019/20
- External funding and commissions

An overview of the Trust’s current financial position was communicated to Members with details provided on turnover and operating budgets along with the number of employees and facilities they operate.

There had been no advance questions submitted prior to the meeting and Members present asked the following:

- In three years when the funding contribution ceases from the Council would this impact upon levels of service.
- Had the swimming pool incident in the last year left the Trust vulnerable to social media attacks.
• Is the job evaluation process a cost saving exercise or a way to award fair payment.
• Does the Trust need to look at public transport arrangements in relation to Hyndburn Leisure Centre as there were no bus stops along Hyndburn Road.

The Chief Executive reported that once the Council’s £75,000 contribution ceases the Trust would be working towards a balancing budget with an aim towards health and wellbeing services.

Whilst negative media coverage can impact upon the brand promotional work had been undertaken with local schools.

The Job evaluation scheme was to award fair pay and transport issues would be part of a capital review.

Resolved - That the contents of the report be noted and that an update be provided to Overview & Scrutiny in the next 12 months.

342 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it is likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within Paragraph 4 at Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the item.

343 Land & Asset Disposals

Exempt Information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 4 – Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority.

The Regeneration and Property Manager submitted an exempt report to inform Overview and Scrutiny on the latest land and asset disposals.

Resolved - That the contents of the report be noted and any answers to the questions raised during discussion of the item be passed onto the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for distribution to Members of the committee.

Signed: .............................

Date: .............................

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed
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1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of the Co-optee appointments made by Council on 16th May 2019.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committees note the following re-appointments of Co-optees to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Honorary Alderman Paul Barton
- Honorary Alderman Ian Ormerod
- Honorary Freeman Bernard Dawson

2.2 That the Committees note the following re-appointment of Co-optees to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Honorary Freeman Bernard Dawson

2.3 That the Committees notes the previous appointment of Honorary Alderman Doug Hayes as Co-optee to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which covers the 2019/20 Municipal year.

2.3 That the Committees note the amendment to Rule C2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in the appendix to this report.

2.4 That the Committees note the appointment of Gareth Molineux as new Co-optee to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

3.1 At Council on 16th May 2019, and amendment to the Constitution was agreed to increase the number of co-optees on each Committee from three to four. This will help to boost participation in the work of the Committees. It was also agreed that members be given the ability to nominate individuals to fill co-optee vacancies and that such nominations are presented directly to Council to speed up the appointment process. This more closely reflects the reality of the current position as very few, if any, applications are received directly from the public.

3.2 Therefore, the Co-optees outlined in section two of the report were approved by Council.

4. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 Not applicable

5. **Consultations**

5.1 None

6. **Implications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)</th>
<th>None</th>
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7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers**

7.1 *Agenda, reports and minutes of Council on 16th May 2019*

Appendix

Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule C2 - Up to four members of the public may be appointed to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee as non-voting co-optees, if they are deemed to have relevant experience of matters falling within the remit of that Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The intention is that such co-optees will be non-political.

(i) Co-optees may be appointed following nomination by a councillor or following an application received directly from a member of the public.

(ii) Applications received directly from the public will be considered first at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee will consider the knowledge and experience of the applicant relevant to the terms of reference or work programme of the Committee. If the majority of the Overview and Scrutiny members support the appointment of the applicant, the proposed appointment will be presented to Council for approval.

(iii) Nominations received from councillors will be presented to the Council for approval, if supported by the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In reaching a decision, the Council will consider the knowledge and experience of the nominee relevant to the terms of reference or work programme of the Committee.”
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1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To approve the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2019/20, to be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committees approve their 2019/20 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for submission to the next meeting of Cabinet.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

3.1 At the beginning of each municipal year, the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees each agree a work programme for the year.

3.2 The process for agreeing the work programme is set out in Overview and Scrutiny procedure rule C6(a) as follows;

“A draft work programme will be submitted for comment to the first appropriate meeting of the Cabinet at the beginning of each new Municipal Year and the draft work programme for each overview and scrutiny committee will then be submitted to the next following meeting of that committee (together with any comments or recommendations from the Cabinet) for approval”.

3.3 A draft work programme for each of the Committees is submitted for comment. This will be sent in draft to Cabinet, then to both Scrutiny Committees along with any comments from Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committees will then approve a full programme which will be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet. Due to the timings of meetings...
this year (Cabinet being the week following this meeting), it is proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer will circulate any comments from Cabinet to Committee members, with a final programme being approved at the next meeting.

3.4 The work programmes have been developed following consultation including:

• Multiple emails to all Councillors
• Suggestions sought from all service managers
• Informal meeting with the Cabinet

3.5 Thirteen items were suggested by Councillors (including one item which was suggested separately by multiple Councillors). Seven of these items have been added to the work programme. Of the remaining six, one has been marked as a possibility pending further information while the others have been rejected. No items were submitted by Service Managers.

3.6 A summary of items submitted by Councillors and reasons why they have been included / not included are in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny Topic</th>
<th>Reason for Suggestion</th>
<th>Accepted/R ejected (If rejected include reason why)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Suggested Committee to review (If approved)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fly Tipping/Littering</td>
<td>Wants focus on Council action when on private land</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Review last year with waste services – agreed to focus on enforcement angle.</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFGs</td>
<td>Looking how the DFGs are given out, see if there’s a more fairer way also how much did we spend last year</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Reviewed last year. Recommendation to establish a cross party cabinet working group which was accepted.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council support for VCFS organisations</td>
<td>How do the Council support VCFS organisations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This item was rejected last year.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs lack of funding, recruiting new GPs, reduced working arrangements</td>
<td>No reason given</td>
<td>No- Cllr Glen Harrison to raise at LCC Health Scrutiny</td>
<td>Agreed that district level Scrutiny could have little value here. Requested that instead Cllr Glen Harrison raise this issue at LCC Health Scrutiny.</td>
<td>Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre Events</td>
<td>Review of events planned and money spent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rejected last year, at which time it was suggested to add to this years programme.</td>
<td>Either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness referral scheme</td>
<td>No reason given</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Homelessness was reviewed last year</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom</td>
<td>Worthwhile exercise to have the kingdom contract and the benefits (if any) brought to committee. Just before the contract is up for renewal.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Already recommended that this be reviewed (By the Committee last year)</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Waste collection system</td>
<td>Analyse how the council has coped with the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Agreed to combine with Kingdom item if Scrutiny did want to look at this.</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rollout of the new waste collection system.

In terms of customer satisfaction, cleanliness of our streets and also the financial benefits

Hyndburn’s Recovery Process for Council Tax Arrears

Council Tax arrears was the highest debt category with, in some cases, bailiffs being instructed very early in the collection process, when there are other options, such as attachment of benefits. This latter issue is more pronounced in Hyndburn than Rossendale

Yes

Communities

Universal Credit

What impact has universal credit had on the residents of Hyndburn. In particular is it contributing to the 40% of children in Hyndburn living in poverty?

Yes

This item was on the agenda last year. Deferred several times.

Communities

Taxi Licensing

Public safety and the protection of our drivers and usage of low emission taxis due to environmental impact.

Hyndburn Council has always taken public safety very seriously. This has also covered

No – green panel will look at policy

Last reviewed approx. 2014. Suggestion that green panel considers environmental issues relating to taxis.

Resources
the environmental impact of the vehicles it licenses.

Therefore could I make a recommendation that we discuss how the current policy could be strengthened in this regard.

Management of green space associated with new housing development

I think looking at this issue creatively this has to be a priority. My experience in Rishton on this hasn't be great with a recent housing development introducing private management companies taking a large proportion of service charges for simply mowing modest strips of grass and the almost the entire budget going on back room office and admin costs. The current consultation on the local plan is proposing this as the only mechanism going forward. Personally I think this is a national scandal and I think HBC could do better. There's an opportunity with new house building in terms of more creative approaches to the

| Possibility – Scrutiny Officer to discuss with Chief Planning Officer |
| Scrutiny Officer to discuss with Chief Planning Officer |
greenspace that is created, particularly with a focus on increasing bio-diversity within maintenance-light planting schemes. I also think we need to look at alternative options on management including working with key partners like Hyndburn Prospects and this could have the effect of supporting their sustainability. I don't think any of this will be remotely easy but i do think it's an area we need to focus on cos of the environmental opportunity and the need to get a better deal for local people buying houses in the borough.

3.6 Meetings with the chairs and vice chairs also took place, and items for the work programme were discussed and selected in accordance with the Criteria for Selecting Work Programme Items (Appendix 2).

3.7 In addition, Cabinet members were invited to a work programme meeting with the chairs and vice chairs of both committees to put forward potential items.

3.8 We have sought to provisionally allocate items to specific meetings. These may be subject to change during the year, particularly where they involve the attendance of external and partner organisations.

3.9 As in previous years, additional items can be added to the work programmes as the year progresses.
3.10 The Committee is asked to approve their work programme, pending comments from Cabinet.

4. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 **Not applicable to this report**

5. **Consultations**

5.1 All Councillors and Service Heads were given the opportunity to contribute to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
6. **Implications**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Financial implications</strong></td>
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7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers**

7.1 *None*
## Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2019/20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date (All 3pm unless otherwise stated)</th>
<th>Work Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>- Confirmation of Work Programme&lt;br&gt;- Appointment of Cooptees&lt;br&gt;- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Sept</td>
<td>- Enforcement of Fly Tipping and Littering on Private Land&lt;br&gt;- Green Review Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; October</td>
<td>- Review of Littering Enforcement Contract&lt;br&gt;- Report on the New Recycling Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th December</td>
<td>- Green Review – Update from Scrutiny Panel&lt;br&gt;- People Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; February</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>- Hyndburn Leisure Financial Update&lt;br&gt;- Performance Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting date (All 10am unless otherwise stated)</td>
<td>Work Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11<sup>th</sup> July                         | - Confirmation of Work Programme  
- Appointment of Cooptees  
- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government  
- Impact of Universal Credit (DWP) - agreed to defer |
| 4<sup>th</sup> September                      | - Recovery Process for Council Tax Arrears  
- Impact of Universal Credit (DWP) |
| 30<sup>th</sup> October                       | - Review of Town Centre Events |
| 18<sup>th</sup> December                      | Available for in year items |
| 18<sup>th</sup> March                         | - Crime and Disorder  
- Update on the merger of Accrington and Rossendale College |
Appendix 2

Criteria for selecting work programme items:

1. Is this topic a key priority for the Council? (e.g. as identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Strategy)

2. Is this topic important to the public? (e.g. are Members aware of public concern, has the issue been raised at Area Councils, has it been raised via public consultation?)

3. Is there evidence of poor performance or value for money concerns which Overview & Scrutiny should investigate? (e.g. from performance information, external and internal audit reports etc)

4. Does the Council spend a significant proportion of its budget on this issue?

5. Is this issue important to Members?

6. Is anyone else already looking at this issue? (i.e. is it really necessary for Overview & Scrutiny to spend time on this?)

7. Is this the right time to look at this issue? (e.g. is it about to change anyway?)

8. Will the time spent on this item be worthwhile? (e.g. can Overview & Scrutiny really make a contribution to this issue?)

9. Is there scope to involve the public, voluntary groups or other organisations in this topic?
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1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform Members of the publication of New Statutory Guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That the report is noted.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

3.1 The statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local government has now been published by MHCLG. This guidance has been produced following a commitment that Government made in early 2018, following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee’s inquiry into O&S.

3.2 A summary of the guidance can be seen below.

3.3 A cultural commitment to scrutiny is about taking action to encourage scrutiny that is challenging, uncomfortable and potentially politically difficult. Scrutiny’s part in this bargain is to recognise that its work must be designed to have impact.

3.4 The guidance has a fair amount to say on the technical aspects of scrutiny – but it does affect a lightness of touch. At various points it takes pains to note that it does not wish to prescribe – just to offer ideas and a framework within which local scrutiny functions will need to find their own solutions. But inevitably there will be things here which should cause councils to reflect on their own performance. In particular:
3.4 Role and prioritisation – scrutiny’s role has to be focused, and the scrutiny work programme needs to be carefully prioritised.
Selecting committee members – the right people have to be selected to be on committees, and to hold the position of chair. The guidance gives a sense of the personal attributes that people in these positions will require. It recognises the political element of chair selection.
Access to information – this emphasises the rights that members have to access information and states that councillors should have regular access to key sources of information which, collectively, will give them a sense of the management of the authority, with a particular focus on performance, finance and risk;
Gathering evidence and making recommendations – the role of the chair in managing the gathering of evidence is seen as especially important – as it the work of members in pulling together focused and achievable recommendations.
Resourcing – it perhaps goes without saying, but the resource must be available to ensure that the above things can happen properly. For many councils, facing severe financial challenge, we recognise that these kinds of statement coming from Government may provoke exasperation. The Centre For Public Scrutiny are planning to do more in the coming months to help councils to understand how they prioritise their work to make the best use of available resources.

3.5 This is statutory guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Local authorities and combined authorities must have regard to it when exercising their functions. The phrase ‘must have regard’, when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case. Therefore Councillors are encouraged to read through the guidance in full, which is included in Appendix 1.

3.6 Members are also encouraged to read through the updated Good Scrutiny Guide which is available here https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CfPS-Good-Scrutiny-Guide-v3-WEB-SINGLE-PAGES.pdf

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 Not applicable

5. Consultations

5.1 None

6. Implications

<p>| Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council) | None |</p>
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| |

7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:**
   **List of Background Papers**

7.1  *None*

**Appendix**
Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
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Ministerial Foreword

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority’s decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership and service failure.

It is vital that councils and combined authorities know the purpose of scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it and the benefits it can bring. This guidance aims to increase understanding in all four areas.

In writing this guidance, my department has taken close note of the House of Commons Select Committee report of December 2017, as well as the written and oral evidence supplied to that Committee. We have also consulted individuals and organisations with practical involvement in conducting, researching and supporting scrutiny.

It is clear from speaking to these practitioners that local and combined authorities with effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in place share certain key traits, the most important being a strong organisational culture. Authorities who welcome challenge and recognise the value scrutiny can bring reap the benefits. But this depends on strong commitment from the top - from senior members as well as senior officials.

Crucially, this guidance recognises that authorities have democratic mandates and are ultimately accountable to their electorates, and that authorities themselves are best-placed to know which scrutiny arrangements are most appropriate for their own individual circumstances.

I would, however, strongly urge all councils to cast a critical eye over their existing arrangements and, above all, ensure they embed a culture that allows overview and scrutiny to flourish.

Rishi Sunak MP
Minister for Local Government
About this Guidance

Who the guidance is for
This document is aimed at local authorities and combined authorities in England to help them carry out their overview and scrutiny functions effectively. In particular, it provides advice for senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees, and support officers.

Aim of the guidance
This guidance seeks to ensure local authorities and combined authorities are aware of the purpose of overview and scrutiny, what effective scrutiny looks like, how to conduct it effectively and the benefits it can bring.

As such, it includes a number of policies and practices authorities should adopt or should consider adopting when deciding how to carry out their overview and scrutiny functions.

The guidance recognises that authorities approach scrutiny in different ways and have different processes and procedures in place, and that what might work well for one authority might not work well in another.

The hypothetical scenarios contained in the annexes to this guidance have been included for illustrative purposes, and are intended to provoke thought and discussion rather than serve as a ‘best’ way to approach the relevant issues.

While the guidance sets out some of the key legal requirements, it does not seek to replicate legislation.

Status of the guidance
This is statutory guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Local authorities and combined authorities must have regard to it when exercising their functions. The phrase ‘must have regard’, when used in this context, does not mean that the sections of statutory guidance have to be followed in every detail, but that they should be followed unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.

Not every authority is required to appoint a scrutiny committee. This guidance applies to those authorities who have such a committee in place, whether they are required to or not.

This guidance has been issued under section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which requires authorities to have regard to this guidance. In addition, authorities may have regard to other material they might choose to consider, including that issued by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, when exercising their overview and scrutiny functions.
**Terminology**

Unless ‘overview’ is specifically mentioned, the term ‘scrutiny’ refers to both overview and scrutiny.¹

Where the term ‘authority’ is used, it refers to both local authorities and combined authorities.

Where the term ‘scrutiny committee’ is used, it refers to an overview and scrutiny committee and any of its sub-committees. As the legislation refers throughout to powers conferred on scrutiny committees, that is the wording used in this guidance. However, the guidance should be seen as applying equally to work undertaken in informal task and finish groups, commissioned by formal committees.

Where the term ‘executive’ is used, it refers to executive members.

For combined authorities, references to the ‘executive’ or ‘cabinet’ should be interpreted as relating to the mayor (where applicable) and all the authority members.

For authorities operating committee rather than executive arrangements, references to the executive or Cabinet should be interpreted as relating to councillors in leadership positions.

**Expiry or review date**

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

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¹ A distinction is often drawn between ‘overview’ which focuses on the development of policy, and ‘scrutiny’ which looks at decisions that have been made or are about to be made to ensure they are fit for purpose.
1. Introduction and Context

1. Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities.

2. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Recommendations following scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and scrutiny committees can also play a valuable role in developing policy.

Effective overview and scrutiny should:
- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services.

3. The requirement for local authorities in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

4. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Local Government Act 2000 to allow councils to revert to a non-executive form of governance - the ‘committee system’. Councils who adopt the committee system are not required to have overview and scrutiny but may do so if they wish. The legislation has been strengthened and updated since 2000, most recently to reflect new governance arrangements with combined authorities. Requirements for combined authorities are set out in Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

5. Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are democratically-elected bodies who are best-placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, and so gives them a great degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt.

6. In producing this guidance, the Government fully recognises both authorities’ democratic mandate and that the nature of local government has changed in recent years, with, for example, the creation of combined authorities, and councils increasingly delivering key services in partnership with other organisations or outsourcing them entirely.

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2. Culture

7. The prevailing organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails.

8. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.

9. Creating a strong organisational culture supports scrutiny work that can add real value by, for example, improving policy-making and the efficient delivery of public services. In contrast, low levels of support for and engagement with the scrutiny function often lead to poor quality and ill-focused work that serves to reinforce the perception that it is of little worth or relevance.

10. Members and senior officers should note that the performance of the scrutiny function is not just of interest to the authority itself. Its effectiveness, or lack thereof, is often considered by external bodies such as regulators and inspectors, and highlighted in public reports, including best value inspection reports. Failures in scrutiny can therefore help to create a negative public image of the work of an authority as a whole.

How to establish a strong organisational culture

11. Authorities can establish a strong organisational culture by:

   a) Recognising scrutiny’s legal and democratic legitimacy – all members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements and for combined authorities. Councillors have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.

   b) Identifying a clear role and focus – authorities should take steps to ensure scrutiny has a clear role and focus within the organisation, i.e. a niche within which it can clearly demonstrate it adds value. Therefore, prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority – this is one of the most challenging parts of scrutiny, and a critical element to get right if it is to be recognised as a strategic function of the authority (see chapter 6).

   Authorities should ensure a clear division of responsibilities between the scrutiny function and the audit function. While it is appropriate for scrutiny to pay due regard to the authority’s financial position, this will need to happen in the context of the formal audit role. The authority’s section 151 officer should advise scrutiny on how to manage this dynamic.
While scrutiny has no role in the investigation or oversight of the authority's whistleblowing arrangements, the findings of independent whistleblowing investigations might be of interest to scrutiny committees as they consider their wider implications. Members should always follow the authority's constitution and associated Monitoring Officer directions on the matter. Further guidance on whistleblowing can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf.

c) **Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny** – authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between scrutiny and the executive, especially regarding the latter's future work programme. Authorities should, though, be mindful of their distinct roles:

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<td>• The executive should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee. This could be direct, e.g. by purporting to ‘order’ scrutiny to look at, or not look at, certain issues, or indirect, e.g. through the use of the whip or as a tool of political patronage, and the committee itself should remember its statutory purpose when carrying out its work. All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a ‘critical friend’ not a de facto ‘opposition’. Scrutiny chairs have a particular role to play in establishing the profile and nature of their committee (see chapter 4); and</td>
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<td>• The chair of the scrutiny committee should determine the nature and extent of an executive member’s participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal scrutiny task group meeting.</td>
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d) **Managing disagreement** – effective scrutiny involves looking at issues that can be politically contentious. It is therefore inevitable that, at times, an executive will disagree with the findings or recommendations of a scrutiny committee.

It is the job of both the executive and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of this happening, and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement.

One way in which this can be done is via an ‘executive-scrutiny protocol’ (see annex 1) which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves in unhelpful and unproductive ways. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a framework for disagreement and debate, and a way to manage it when it happens. Often,
the value of such a protocol lies in the dialogue that underpins its preparation. It is important that these protocols are reviewed on a regular basis.

Scrutiny committees do have the power to ‘call in’ decisions, i.e. ask the executive to reconsider them before they are implemented, but should not view it as a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process or as a party-political tool.

e) **Providing the necessary support** – while the level of resource allocated to scrutiny is for each authority to decide for itself, when determining resources an authority should consider the purpose of scrutiny as set out in legislation and the specific role and remit of the authority’s own scrutiny committee(s), and the scrutiny function as a whole.

Support should also be given by members and senior officers to scrutiny committees and their support staff to access information held by the authority and facilitate discussions with representatives of external bodies (see chapter 5).

f) **Ensuring impartial advice from officers** – authorities, particularly senior officers, should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny committees. This is fundamental to effective scrutiny. Of particular importance is the role played by ‘statutory officers’ – the monitoring officer, the section 151 officer and the head of paid service, and where relevant the statutory scrutiny officer. These individuals have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.

g) **Communicating scrutiny’s role and purpose to the wider authority** – the scrutiny function can often lack support and recognition within an authority because there is a lack of awareness among both members and officers about the specific role it plays, which individuals are involved and its relevance to the authority’s wider work. Authorities should, therefore, take steps to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the outcomes it can deliver, the powers it has, its membership and, if appropriate, the identity of those providing officer support.

h) **Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee** – part of communicating scrutiny’s role and purpose to the wider authority should happen through the formal, public role of full Council – particularly given that scrutiny will undertake valuable work to highlight challenging issues that an authority will be facing and subjects that will be a focus of full Council’s work. Authorities should therefore take steps to ensure full Council is informed of the work the scrutiny committee is doing.

One way in which this can be done is by reports and recommendations being submitted to full Council rather than solely to the executive. Scrutiny should decide when it would be appropriate to submit reports for wider debate in this way, taking into account the relevance of reports to full Council business, as well as full Council’s capacity to consider and respond in a timely manner. Such
reports would supplement the annual report to full Council on scrutiny’s activities and raise awareness of ongoing work.

In order to maintain awareness of scrutiny at the Combined Authority and provoke dialogue and discussion of its impact, the business of scrutiny should be reported to the Combined Authority board or to the chairs of the relevant scrutiny committees of constituent and non-constituent authorities, or both. At those chairs’ discretion, particular Combined Authority scrutiny outcomes, and what they might mean for each individual area, could be either discussed by scrutiny in committee or referred to full Council of the constituent authorities.

i) **Communicating scrutiny’s role to the public** – authorities should ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consideration should be given to how and when to engage the authority’s communications officers, and any other relevant channels, to understand how to get that message across. This will usually require engagement early on in the work programming process (see chapter 6).

j) **Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset** – formal committee meetings provide a vital opportunity for scrutiny members to question the executive and officers.

Inevitably, some committee members will come from the same political party as a member they are scrutinising and might well have a long-standing personal, or familial, relationship with them (see paragraph 25).

Scrutiny members should bear in mind, however, that adopting an independent mindset is fundamental to carrying out their work effectively. In practice, this is likely to require scrutiny chairs working proactively to identify any potentially contentious issues and plan how to manage them.

**Directly-elected mayoral systems**

12. A strong organisational culture that supports scrutiny work is particularly important in authorities with a directly-elected mayor to ensure there are the checks and balances to maintain a robust democratic system. Mayoral systems offer the opportunity for greater public accountability and stronger governance, but there have also been incidents that highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a culture that puts scrutiny at the heart of its operations.

13. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should ensure that scrutiny committees are well-resourced, are able to recruit high-calibre members and that their scrutiny functions pay particular attention to issues surrounding:

- rights of access to documents by the press, public and councillors;
- transparent and fully recorded decision-making processes, especially avoiding decisions by ‘unofficial’ committees or working groups;
- delegated decisions by the Mayor;
- whistleblowing protections for both staff and councillors; and
- powers of Full Council, where applicable, to question and review.
14. Authorities with a directly-elected mayor should note that mayors are required by law to attend overview and scrutiny committee sessions when asked to do so (see paragraph 44).
3. Resourcing

15. The resource an authority allocates to the scrutiny function plays a pivotal role in determining how successful that function is and therefore the value it can add to the work of the authority.

16. Ultimately it is up to each authority to decide on the resource it provides, but every authority should recognise that creating and sustaining an effective scrutiny function requires them to allocate resources to it.

17. Authorities should also recognise that support for scrutiny committees, task groups and other activities is not solely about budgets and provision of officer time, although these are clearly extremely important elements. Effective support is also about the ways in which the wider authority engages with those who carry out the scrutiny function (both members and officers).

When deciding on the level of resource to allocate to the scrutiny function, the factors an authority should consider include:

- Scrutiny’s legal powers and responsibilities;
- The particular role and remit scrutiny will play in the authority;
- The training requirements of scrutiny members and support officers, particularly the support needed to ask effective questions of the executive and other key partners, and make effective recommendations;
- The need for ad hoc external support where expertise does not exist in the council;
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny has been shown to add value to the work of authorities, improving their ability to meet the needs of local people; and
- Effectively-resourced scrutiny can help policy formulation and so minimise the need for call-in of executive decisions.

Statutory scrutiny officers

18. Combined authorities, upper and single tier authorities are required to designate a statutory scrutiny officer, someone whose role is to:

- promote the role of the authority’s scrutiny committee;
- provide support to the scrutiny committee and its members; and
- provide support and guidance to members and officers relating to the functions of the scrutiny committee.

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3 Section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000; article 9 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017
19. Authorities not required by law to appoint such an officer should consider whether doing so would be appropriate for their specific local needs.

**Officer resource models**

20. Authorities are free to decide for themselves which wider officer support model best suits their individual circumstances, though generally they adopt one or a mix of the following:

- **Committee** – officers are drawn from specific policy or service areas;
- **Integrated** – officers are drawn from the corporate centre and also service the executive; and
- **Specialist** – officers are dedicated to scrutiny.

21. Each model has its merits – the committee model provides service-specific expertise; the integrated model facilitates closer and earlier scrutiny involvement in policy formation and alignment of corporate work programmes; and the specialist model is structurally independent from those areas it scrutinises.

22. Authorities should ensure that, whatever model they employ, officers tasked with providing scrutiny support are able to provide impartial advice. This might require consideration of the need to build safeguards into the way that support is provided. The nature of these safeguards will differ according to the specific role scrutiny plays in the organisation.
4. Selecting Committee Members

23. Selecting the right members to serve on scrutiny committees is essential if those committees are to function effectively. Where a committee is made up of members who have the necessary skills and commitment, it is far more likely to be taken seriously by the wider authority.

24. While there are proportionality requirements that must be met, the selection of the chair and other committee members is for each authority to decide for itself. Guidance for combined authorities on this issue has been produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Members invariably have different skill-sets. What an authority must consider when forming a committee is that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.

25. Authorities are reminded that members of the executive cannot be members of a scrutiny committee. Authorities should take care to ensure that, as a minimum, members holding less formal executive positions, e.g. as Cabinet assistants, do not sit on scrutinising committees looking at portfolios to which those roles relate. Authorities should articulate in their constitutions how conflicts of interest, including familial links (see also paragraph 31), between executive and scrutiny responsibilities should be managed, including where members stand down from the executive and move to a scrutiny role, and vice-versa.

26. Members or substitute members of a combined authority must not be members of its overview and scrutiny committee. This includes the Mayor in Mayoral Combined Authorities. It is advised that Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime are also not members of the combined authority’s overview and scrutiny committee.

Selecting individual committee members

27. When selecting individual members to serve on scrutiny committees, an authority should consider a member’s experience, expertise, interests, ability to act impartially, ability to work as part of a group, and capacity to serve.

4 See, for example, regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 (S.I. 2012/1020) and article 4 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).


6 Section 9FA(3) of the Local Government Act 2000.

7 2(3) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
28. Authorities should not take into account a member’s perceived level of support for or opposition to a particular political party (notwithstanding the wider legal requirement for proportionality referred to in paragraph 24).

Selecting a chair
29. The Chair plays a leadership role on a scrutiny committee as they are largely responsible for establishing its profile, influence and ways of working.

30. The attributes authorities should and should not take into account when selecting individual committee members (see paragraphs 27 and 28) also apply to the selection of the Chair, but the Chair should also possess the ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus among committee members.

Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the committee’s independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the executive.

31. Given their pre-eminent role on the scrutiny committee, it is strongly recommended that the Chair not preside over scrutiny of their relatives\(^8\). Combined authorities should note the legal requirements that apply to them where the Chair is an independent person\(^9\).

32. The method for selecting a Chair is for each authority to decide for itself, however every authority should consider taking a vote by secret ballot. Combined Authorities should be aware of the legal requirements regarding the party affiliation of their scrutiny committee Chair\(^10\).

Training for committee members
33. Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. Authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.

34. When deciding on training requirements for committee members, authorities should consider taking advantage of opportunities offered by external providers in the sector.

Co-option and technical advice
35. While members and their support officers will often have significant local insight and an understanding of local people and their needs, the provision of outside expertise can be invaluable.

\(^8\) A definition of ‘relative’ can be found at section 28(10) of the Localism Act 2011.

\(^9\) See article 5(2) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 (S.I. 2017/68).

\(^10\) Article 5(6) of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
36. There are two principal ways to procure this:

- Co-option – formal co-option is provided for in legislation. Authorities must establish a co-option scheme to determine how individuals will be co-opted onto committees; and
- Technical advisers – depending on the subject matter, independent local experts might exist who can provide advice and assistance in evaluating evidence (see annex 2).

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11 Section 9FA(4) Local Government Act 2000
5. Power to Access Information

37. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds, and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.

38. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information\textsuperscript{12}. In particular, regulations give enhanced powers to a scrutiny member to access exempt or confidential information. This is in addition to existing rights for councillors to have access to information to perform their duties, including common law rights to request information and rights to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

39. When considering what information scrutiny needs in order to carry out its work, scrutiny members and the executive should consider scrutiny’s role and the legal rights that committees and their individual members have, as well as their need to receive timely and accurate information to carry out their duties effectively.

40. Scrutiny members should have access to a regularly available source of key information about the management of the authority – particularly on performance, management and risk. Where this information exists, and scrutiny members are given support to understand it, the potential for what officers might consider unfocused and unproductive requests is reduced as members will be able to frame their requests from a more informed position.

41. Officers should speak to scrutiny members to ensure they understand the reasons why information is needed, thereby making the authority better able to provide information that is relevant and timely, as well as ensuring that the authority complies with legal requirements.

While each request for information should be judged on its individual merits, authorities should adopt a default position of sharing the information they hold, on request, with scrutiny committee members.

42. The law recognises that there might be instances where it is legitimate for an authority to withhold information and places a requirement on the executive to provide the scrutiny committee with a written statement setting out its reasons for that decision\textsuperscript{13}. However, members of the executive and senior officers should take particular care to avoid refusing requests, or limiting the information they provide, for reasons of party political or reputational expediency.

\textsuperscript{12} Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

\textsuperscript{13} Regulation 17(4) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(4) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.
43. Regulations already stipulate a timeframe for executives to comply with requests from a scrutiny member\textsuperscript{14}. When agreeing to such requests, authorities should:

- consider whether seeking clarification from the information requester could help better target the request; and
- Ensure the information is supplied in a format appropriate to the recipient’s needs.

44. Committees should be aware of their legal power to require members of the executive and officers to attend before them to answer questions\textsuperscript{15}. It is the duty of members and officers to comply with such requests.\textsuperscript{16}

Seeking information from external organisations

45. Scrutiny members should also consider the need to supplement any authority-held information they receive with information and intelligence that might be available from other sources, and should note in particular their statutory powers to access information from certain external organisations.

46. When asking an external organisation to provide documentation or appear before it, and where that organisation is not legally obliged to do either (see annex 3), scrutiny committees should consider the following:

a) **The need to explain the purpose of scrutiny** – the organisation being approached might have little or no awareness of the committee’s work, or of an authority’s scrutiny function more generally, and so might be reluctant to comply with any request;

b) **The benefits of an informal approach** – individuals from external organisations can have fixed perceptions of what an evidence session entails and may be unwilling to subject themselves to detailed public scrutiny if they believe it could reflect badly on them or their employer. Making an informal approach can help reassure an organisation of the aims of the committee, the type of information being sought and the manner in which the evidence session would be conducted;

\[\text{Before an authority takes a decision not to share information it holds, it should give serious consideration to whether that information could be shared in closed session.}\]

\textsuperscript{14} Regulation 17(2) – Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10(2) Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017.

\textsuperscript{15} Section 9FA(8) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(6) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

\textsuperscript{16} Section 9FA(9) of the Local Government Act 2000; paragraph 2(7) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
c) **How to encourage compliance with the request** – scrutiny committees will want to frame their approach on a case by case basis. For contentious issues, committees might want to emphasise the opportunity their request gives the organisation to ‘set the record straight’ in a public setting; and

d) **Who to approach** – a committee might instinctively want to ask the Chief Executive or Managing Director of an organisation to appear at an evidence session, however it could be more beneficial to engage front-line staff when seeking operational-level detail rather than senior executives who might only be able to talk in more general terms. When making a request to a specific individual, the committee should consider the type of information it is seeking, the nature of the organisation in question and the authority’s pre-existing relationship with it.

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**Following ‘the Council Pound’**

Scrutiny committees will often have a keen interest in ‘following the council pound’, i.e. scrutinising organisations that receive public funding to deliver goods and services.

Authorities should recognise the legitimacy of this interest and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to scrutiny members and their support staff to obtain information from organisations the council has contracted to deliver services. In particular, when agreeing contracts with these bodies, authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a requirement for them to supply information to or appear before scrutiny committees.
6. Planning Work

47. Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year.

48. Authorities with multiple scrutiny committees sometimes have a separate work programme for each committee. Where this happens, consideration should be given to how to co-ordinate the various committees’ work to make best use of the total resources available.

Being clear about scrutiny’s role

49. Scrutiny works best when it has a clear role and function. This provides focus and direction. While scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects ‘the area, or the area’s inhabitants’, authorities will often find it difficult to support a scrutiny function that carries out generalised oversight across the wide range of issues experienced by local people, particularly in the context of partnership working. Prioritisation is necessary, which means that there might be things that, despite being important, scrutiny will not be able to look at.

50. Different overall roles could include having a focus on risk, the authority’s finances, or on the way the authority works with its partners.

51. Applying this focus does not mean that certain subjects are ‘off limits’. It is more about looking at topics and deciding whether their relative importance justifies the positive impact scrutiny’s further involvement could bring.

52. When thinking about scrutiny’s focus, members should be supported by key senior officers. The statutory scrutiny officer, if an authority has one, will need to take a leading role in supporting members to clarify the role and function of scrutiny, and championing that role once agreed.

Who to speak to

53. Evidence will need to be gathered to inform the work programming process. This will ensure that it looks at the right topics, in the right way and at the right time. Gathering evidence requires conversations with:

- The public – it is likely that formal ‘consultation’ with the public on the scrutiny work programme will be ineffective. Asking individual scrutiny members to have conversations with individuals and groups in their own local areas can work better. Insights gained from the public through individual pieces of scrutiny work can be fed back into the work programming process. Listening to and participating in conversations in places where local people come together, including in online forums, can help authorities engage people on their own terms and yield more positive results.
Authorities should consider how their communications officers can help scrutiny engage with the public, and how wider internal expertise and local knowledge from both members and officers might make a contribution.

- *The authority’s partners* – relationships with other partners should not be limited to evidence-gathering to support individual reviews or agenda items. A range of partners are likely to have insights that will prove useful:
  - Public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers);
  - Voluntary sector partners;
  - Contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies);
  - In parished areas, town, community and parish councils;
  - Neighbouring principal councils (both in two-tier and unitary areas);
  - Cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships; and
  - Others with a stake and interest in the local area – large local employers, for example.

- *The executive* – a principal partner in discussions on the work programme should be the executive (and senior officers). The executive should not direct scrutiny’s work (see chapter 2), but conversations will help scrutiny members better understand how their work can be designed to align with the best opportunities to influence the authority’s wider work.

**Information sources**

54. Scrutiny will need access to relevant information to inform its work programme. The type of information will depend on the specific role and function scrutiny plays within the authority, but might include:

- Performance information from across the authority and its partners;
- Finance and risk information from across the authority and its partners;
- Corporate complaints information, and aggregated information from political groups about the subject matter of members’ surgeries;
- Business cases and options appraisals (and other planning information) for forthcoming major decisions. This information will be of particular use for pre-decision scrutiny; and
- Reports and recommendations issued by relevant ombudsmen, especially the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

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17 Authorities should ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the effective democratic scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnerships’ investment decisions.
55. Scrutiny members should consider keeping this information under regular review. It is likely to be easier to do this outside committee, rather than bringing such information to committee ‘to note’, or to provide an update, as a matter of course.

**Shortlisting topics**

Approaches to shortlisting topics should reflect scrutiny’s overall role in the authority. This will require the development of bespoke, local solutions, however when considering whether an item should be included in the work programme, the kind of questions a scrutiny committee should consider might include:

- Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue?
- How could we best carry out work on this subject?
- What would be the best outcome of this work?
- How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?

56. Some authorities use scoring systems to evaluate and rank work programme proposals. If these are used to provoke discussion and debate, based on evidence, about what priorities should be, they can be a useful tool. Others take a looser approach. Whichever method is adopted, a committee should be able to justify how and why a decision has been taken to include certain issues and not others.

57. Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that, if work programming is robust and effective, there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected.

**Carrying out work**

58. Selected topics can be scrutinised in several ways, including:

a) **As a single item on a committee agenda** – this often presents a limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue;

b) **At a single meeting** – which could be a committee meeting or something less formal. This can provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a
given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of witnesses;

c) **At a task and finish review of two or three meetings** – short, sharp scrutiny reviews are likely to be most effective even for complex topics. Properly focused, they ensure members can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, perhaps over the course of a couple of months or less;

d) **Via a longer-term task and finish review** – the ‘traditional’ task and finish model – with perhaps six or seven meetings spread over a number of months – is still appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. However, the resource implications of such work, and its length, can make it unattractive for all but the most complex matters; and

e) **By establishing a ‘standing panel’** – this falls short of establishing a whole new committee but may reflect a necessity to keep a watching brief over a critical local issue, especially where members feel they need to convene regularly to carry out that oversight. Again, the resource implications of this approach means that it will be rarely used.
7. Evidence Sessions

59. Evidence sessions are a key way in which scrutiny committees inform their work. They might happen at formal committee, in less formal ‘task and finish’ groups or at standalone sessions.

Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.

How to plan

60. Effective planning does not necessarily involve a large number of pre-meetings, the development of complex scopes or the drafting of questioning plans. It is more often about setting overall objectives and then considering what type of questions (and the way in which they are asked) can best elicit the information the committee is seeking. This applies as much to individual agenda items as it does for longer evidence sessions – there should always be consideration in advance of what scrutiny is trying to get out of a particular evidence session.

Chairs play a vital role in leading discussions on objective-setting and ensuring all members are aware of the specific role each will play during the evidence session.

61. As far as possible there should be consensus among scrutiny members about the objective of an evidence session before it starts. It is important to recognise that members have different perspectives on certain issues, and so might not share the objectives for a session that are ultimately adopted. Where this happens, the Chair will need to be aware of this divergence of views and bear it in mind when planning the evidence session.

62. Effective planning should mean that at the end of a session it is relatively straightforward for the chair to draw together themes and highlight the key findings. It is unlikely that the committee will be able to develop and agree recommendations immediately, but, unless the session is part of a wider inquiry, enough evidence should have been gathered to allow the chair to set a clear direction.

63. After an evidence session, the committee might wish to hold a short ‘wash-up’ meeting to review whether their objectives were met and lessons could be learned for future sessions.

Developing recommendations

64. The development and agreement of recommendations is often an iterative process. It will usually be appropriate for this to be done only by members, assisted by co-optees where relevant. When deciding on recommendations, however, members should have due regard to advice received from officers, particularly the Monitoring Officer.
65. The drafting of reports is usually, but not always, carried out by officers, directed by members.

66. Authorities draft reports and recommendations in a number of ways, but there are normally three stages:

i. the development of a 'heads of report' – a document setting out general findings that members can then discuss as they consider the overall structure and focus of the report and its recommendations;

ii. the development of those findings, which will set out some areas on which recommendations might be made; and

iii. the drafting of the full report.

67. Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.

68. Committees should bear in mind that often six to eight recommendations are sufficient to enable the authority to focus its response, although there may be specific circumstances in which more might be appropriate.

Sharing draft recommendations with executive members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense-check.
Annex 1: Illustrative Scenario – Creating an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol

An executive-scrutiny protocol can deal with the practical expectations of scrutiny committee members and the executive, as well as the cultural dynamics.

Workshops with scrutiny members, senior officers and Cabinet can be helpful to inform the drafting of a protocol. An external facilitator can help bring an independent perspective.

Councils should consider how to adopt a protocol, e.g. formal agreement at scrutiny committee and Cabinet, then formal integration into the Council’s constitution at the next Annual General Meeting.

The protocol, as agreed, may contain sections on:

- The way scrutiny will go about developing its work programme (including the ways in which senior officers and Cabinet members will be kept informed);
- The way in which senior officers and Cabinet will keep scrutiny informed of the outlines of major decisions as they are developed, to allow for discussion of scrutiny’s potential involvement in policy development. This involves the building in of safeguards to mitigate risks around the sharing of sensitive information with scrutiny members;
- A strengthening and expansion of existing parts of the code of conduct that relate to behaviour in formal meetings, and in informal meetings;
- Specification of the nature and form of responses that scrutiny can expect when it makes recommendations to the executive, when it makes requests to the executive for information, and when it makes requests that Cabinet members or senior officers attend meetings; and
- Confirmation of the role of the statutory scrutiny officer, and Monitoring Officer, in overseeing compliance with the protocol, and ensuring that it is used to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny, with matters relating to the protocol’s success being reported to full Council through the scrutiny Annual Report.
Annex 2: Illustrative Scenario – Engaging Independent Technical Advisers

This example demonstrates how one Council’s executive and scrutiny committee worked together to scope a role and then appoint an independent adviser on transforming social care commissioning. Their considerations and process may be helpful and applicable in other similar scenarios.

Major care contracts were coming to an end and the Council took the opportunity to review whether to continue with its existing strategic commissioning framework, or take a different approach – potentially insourcing certain elements.

The relevant Director was concerned about the Council’s reliance on a very small number of large providers. The Director therefore approached the Scrutiny and Governance Manager to talk through the potential role scrutiny could play as the Council considered these changes.

The Scrutiny Chair wanted to look at this issue in some depth, but recognised its complexity could make it difficult for her committee to engage – she was concerned it would not be able to do the issue justice. The Director offered support from his own officer team, but the Chair considered this approach to be beset by risks around the independence of the process.

She talked to the Director about securing independent advice. He was worried that an independent adviser could come with preconceived ideas and would not understand the Council’s context and objectives. The Scrutiny Chair was concerned that independent advice could end up leading to scrutiny members being passive, relying on an adviser to do their thinking for them. They agreed that some form of independent assistance would be valuable, but that how it was provided and managed should be carefully thought out.

With the assistance of the Governance and Scrutiny Manager, the Scrutiny Chair approached local universities and Further Education institutions to identify an appropriate individual. The approach was clear – it set out the precise role expected of the adviser, and explained the scrutiny process itself. Because members wanted to focus on the risks of market failure, and felt more confident on substantive social care matters, the approach was directed at those with a specialism in economics and business administration. The Council’s search was proactive – the assistance of the service department was drawn on to make direct approaches to particular individuals who could carry out this role.

It was agreed to make a small budget available to act as a ‘per diem’ to support an adviser; academics were approached in the first instance as the Council felt able to make a case that an educational institution would provide this support for free as part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Three individuals were identified from the Council’s proactive search. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee had an informal discussion with each – not so much to establish their skills and expertise (which had already been assessed) but to give a sense about...
their ‘fit’ with scrutiny’s objectives and their political nous in understanding the environment in which they would operate, and to satisfy themselves that they will apply themselves even-handedly to the task. The Director sat in on this process but played no part in who was ultimately selected.

The independent advice provided by the selected individual gave the Scrutiny Committee a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and meant it was able to offer informed advice on the merits of putting in place a new strategic commissioning framework.
Annex 3: Illustrative Scenario – Approaching an External Organisation to Appear before a Committee

This example shows how one council ensured a productive scrutiny meeting, involving a private company and the public. Lessons may be drawn and apply to other similar scenarios.

Concerns had been expressed by user groups, and the public at large, about the reliability of the local bus service. The Scrutiny Chair wanted to question the bus company in a public evidence session but knew that she had no power to compel it to attend. Previous attempts to engage it had been unsuccessful; the company was not hostile, but said it had its own ways of engaging the public.

The Monitoring Officer approached the company’s regional PR manager, but he expressed concern that the session would end in a ‘bunfight’. He also explained the company had put their improvement plan in the public domain, and felt a big council meeting would exacerbate tensions.

Other councillors had strong views about the company – one thought the committee should tell the company it would be empty-chaired if it refused to attend. The Scrutiny Chair was sympathetic to this, but thought such an approach would not lead to any improvements.

The Scrutiny Chair was keen to make progress, but it was difficult to find the right person to speak to at the company, so she asked council officers and local transport advocacy groups for advice. Speaking to those people also gave her a better sense of what scrutiny’s role might be.

When she finally spoke to the company’s network manager, she explained the situation and suggested they work together to consider how the meeting could be productive for the Council, the company and local people. In particular, this provided her with an opportunity to explain scrutiny and its role. The network manager remained sceptical but was reassured that they could work together to ensure that the meeting would not be an ‘ambush’. He agreed in principle to attend and also provide information to support the Committee’s work beforehand.

Discussions continued in the four weeks leading up to the Committee meeting. The Scrutiny Chair was conscious that while she had to work with the company to ensure that the meeting was constructive – and secure their attendance – it could not be a whitewash, and other members and the public would demand a hard edge to the discussions.

The scrutiny committee agreed that the meeting would provide a space for the company to provide context to the problems local people are experiencing, but that this would be preceded by a space on the agenda for the Chair, Vice-chair, and representatives from two local transport advocacy groups to set out their concerns. The company were sent in
advance a summary of the general areas on which members were likely to ask questions, to ensure that those questions could be addressed at the meeting.

Finally, provision was made for public questions and debate. Those attending the meeting were invited to discuss with each other the principal issues they wanted the meeting to cover. A short, facilitated discussion in the room led by the Chair highlighted the key issues, and the Chair then put those points to the company representatives.

At the end of the meeting, the public asked questions of the bus company representative in a 20-minute plenary item.

The meeting was fractious, but the planning carried out to prepare for this – by channelling issues through discussion and using the Chair to mediate the questioning – made things easier. Some attendees were initially frustrated by this structure, but the company representative was more open and less defensive than might otherwise have been the case.

The meeting also motivated the company to revise its communications plan to become more responsive to this kind of challenge, part of which involved a commitment to feed back to the scrutiny committee on the recommendations it made on the night.
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1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consider three individual requests from external organisations for financial support towards the operational management of Council buildings.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committee considers the three requests for financial support towards the operational management of Council buildings and makes recommendations to Cabinet accordingly.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

3.1 In recent years, the Council has adopted a policy of long term leasing its community buildings to local charities and community groups. This policy has allowed a number of buildings to remain open for community use across the Borough.

3.2 Recently, the Council has been approached for financial support by three individual organisations who currently manage council buildings with a long term lease, as follows:

3.3 Civic Arts Trust, who currently have a long term lease for the Civic Theatre and Arts Centre in Oswaldtwistle have requested £35,000.

3.4 Churchfield House Ltd, who currently have a long term lease for Churchfield House, Great Harwood, have requested £6,000.

3.5 1842 Mercer, who currently have a long term lease for Mercer House, Clayton Le Moors, have requested £5,000.
3.6 Representatives from the above organisations have been invited to the meeting to present their funding request and to respond to questions from the Committee.

3.7 Each organisation was requested to provide information relating to their request, details of which are outlined in the appendices.

4. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 The Committee are asked to consider each case and make recommendations accordingly.

5. **Consultations**

5.1 Not applicable

6. **Implications**

| Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council) | Although the Committee cannot make a decision on funding, should the recommendation be that Cabinet supports one or all of the requests, this will have a financial impact on the Council if the Cabinet chooses to accept such recommendation. |
| Legal and human rights implications | Not applicable |
| Assessment of risk | Not applicable |
| Equality and diversity implications | Not applicable to this report |

A **Customer First Analysis** should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.

7. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers**

7.1 None
HYNDBURN ARTS LIMITED
REPORT TO HBC

Gayle Knight
Introduction

The former Oswaldtwistle Town Hall building was refurbished in 2010/11 and reopened as the Civic Arts Centre and Theatre on August 10th, 2010. Initially the downstairs was the Arts Centre and was managed by Hyndburn Arts Trust whilst the theatre was still managed by Hyndburn Leisure. In 2015 the two floors were both brought under the management of Hyndburn Arts Limited.

The initial concept of the Arts Centre was born out of a youth drama group that was active at the time. The group was 50+ strong and had a range of ages. This demonstrated the need for cultural activities for young people. Armed with this information and skills in drama leadership and marketing, I approached the Council and convinced the leadership that it would be a positive development and beneficial, not just to Oswaldtwistle but to the whole of Hyndburn.

Since then the centre has grown from strength to strength and is now a cultural centre for the whole community with over 1,500 attending EACH WEEK to take part, rehearse, perform and watch a diverse range of activities, workshops and shows.
Key achievements to date

- Brought creative employment opportunities to area.
- Over the last three years has been responsible for £1.4 million of Arts/Cultural activity in Hyndburn.
- Won 2017 Hyndburn Business Awards tourism award and the overall prize of Business of the Year. In 2018 won Creative Business of the Year.
- Saved Accrington Carnival, Oswaldtwistle Carnival and Warner St events from ending.
- Finalists in National Voluntary Arts Awards.
- Brought in tourists from across the country.
- Added to the local economy (there are no empty shops on the stretch facing the Civic).
- Brought in funding from the Carnegie Trust and Heritage Lottery.
- Made Oswaldtwistle part of a national project via the Carnegie Trust.
- Been instrumental in the reopening of Oswaldtwistle Library for the community.
- Over 1,500 visit the Civic every week.
- Fund raised over £100k for Macmillan Cancer, Anaphylaxis Campaign, The Women’s Centre, East Lancs Hospice and worked with other community groups and schools to promote and support their work.
- Run regular creative sessions in 3 schools.
- Run the Arts Award programme allowing young people to get additional qualifications (this has particularly proven useful for Home Educated students).
- Created paid acting roles and part time jobs for young people.
- Work in partnership with local pubs and businesses to help local Police initiatives.
- Defibrillator available.
- Taking theatre shows to other venues – Rhyddings Park, Dog Inn at Belthorn, Haslingden Community Link, Oswaldtwistle Library, Ramsbottom Civic Hall, Whalley Village Hall.
- Deliver Home Ed sessions for people outside main stream education.
- Created a safe environment for events and activities for people with special needs.
- Advised other creative organisations how to develop their business models – i.e. The Bureau, Divas amongst others.
SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths
- Staff are passionate and dedicated creatives
- We produce in house shows and events at low cost
- Diverse range of activities every evening/week/month
- Diverse range of shows in the theatre
- Young people at the core of what we do
- Multi purpose building/spaces (including the use of Hippings Vale Community Centre.
- Respond quickly with ideas and creativity
- Our advocates are enthusiastic
- Volunteers
- We don’t confine ourselves to activities in the building (touring, parks, carnivals)
- Bar sales – a profitable area when taken in isolation – bottles rather than pumps means no wastage

Weaknesses
- The building is a financial drain on our resources
- No reserves
- 1/3 of our annual budget is staff costs
- Short staffed
- If professional tours cancel we lose money twice – firstly on tickets then on bar sales (no show – no bar)
- Hard to replace a cancelled professional event because of the time needed for promotion.

Opportunities
- Keep staff costs low by using volunteers – saving of £5,000 per annum
- Keep staff costs low by not replacing staff member who left – saving of £15,000
- Recoup debts from people who owe us money – ReAct Academy £5,000. If they are unable to pay then evict them and find alternative hirers.
- Concentrate on areas that are profitable
- Outreach work in schools
- Increase hirers at Hippings Vale
- Parties/princesses/in house children’s events
- Murder Mysteries and inhouse shows
- Touring theatre shows
- Complete projects to access funding.
- Apply for Arts Council/Lottery Funding for project work
- Increase bar prices
Not take on additional work that is unprofitable – i.e. Carnivals
Book more theatre performances to fill the gaps left in the programme
Ensure that any outdoor events have an indoor contingency plan in place
We are working with energy providers to reduce energy costs

Threats

Imitators – our ideas have been used by other organisations
Financial collapse
Arts Council and external funding is reducing year on year
Hirers going bust owing us money
MOVING FORWARD

Over the past 10 years we have learnt what is successful and what is not. Despite the current recession some areas of our work are profitable when taken in isolation. These are the areas that we need to concentrate on in the near future.

To remain sustainable and a viable business we have to remain innovative in our core areas and continually move and push ourselves forward to new initiatives. We have to invest in our technology and equipment to maintain our professionalism. Where we go others follow.

Touring theatre shows
We now have a strong body of work which we can tour around to other venues. We currently take shows to Haslingden Community Link, Ramsbottom Civic Hall, Whalley Village Hall, The Dog Inn in Belthorn, Oswaldtwistle Library and Rhyddings Park.
We need to move into new areas and develop new audiences. When we develop a new show we produce it in house first. The bulk of the costs are in the first production. After that we can tour it economically to other small venues. At the moment we have no structure in the shows that we take to other venues – i.e. ticket prices vary and we move from one show to the next at different venues.
We need to develop tours that we can market as a full package and we need to look at additional venues i.e. Pendle, Blackburn, Burnley and further afield.

Projects
We currently have two heritage projects which will complete later this year. We need to ensure we have replacement projects in place. Applications to funders are a continuous process but recently funders have tightened their belts and it has been disheartening. To continue to move forward we need to push forward and continue to apply for new projects.

We have been awarded some high profile events on Accrington Town Square over the last year – starting with the Christmas Light Switch on. We will apply for further events.

Commissions and Business 2 Business
When the Civic was formed, amongst other things, we were originally intended to be the Arts Development arm for the Council, see enclosed letter from Steve Tanti. We should be involved more in Arts projects and commissions and should be at the forefront of the Council’s ‘arts’ offer. I believe the Council is under using us as a promotional tool for positivity in the borough.
**Parties/princesses/in house children’s events**
We have developed this over the last few years and it is becoming more popular. We need to expand our reach and again move out of our local area. We have helped to create a niche for this type of thing in Hyndburn and others have copied us extensively.

**Murder Mysteries and inhouse shows**
We have become adept over the last four years at Murder Mystery shows and Children’s shows. These are quick and easy for us to prepare.

**Technology**
We have been developing games and treasure hunts using apps and technology. We need to devise a way to make these income generators.

**Outreach work**
We currently work with a number of schools on a regular basis delivering anything from one off workshops to full ‘play in a week’ sessions. From September we will be pushing this out to more schools.

**Hippings Vale**
Currently Hippings makes a small monthly profit. We will look at increasing hirers and putting in more activities ourselves.

**Christmas Panto**
When we took over the Christmas period was losing Hyndburn Leisure approximately £30,000 per annum. We have turned that around and it is now a profitable area. However, there is still more to be done to maximise income from Panto and we are drawing in new schools each year.
Financial

For the first 8 years (four operating the downstairs Arts Centre and since 2015 operating the whole building) we have come in exactly on forecast. This has been with some support from Hyndburn Borough Council. But, it should be pointed out that Hyndburn Leisure was losing Hyndburn Borough Council £56k per annum which over the last four years would have been £224k. In the last four years we have had £82.5k in grants from HBC which has saved the Council £141.5k.

That £82.5k has been just over 5% of the income of Hyndburn Arts over the last four years. Hyndburn Arts is not for profit so over £1.4m has been ploughed back into the economy and has provided events and activities for the community AND a tourist destination for visitors to the area.

The main cost area for Hyndburn Arts is staff. We produce a large amount of activity on a minimum staff. Over the last few months we have reduced staff costs by using volunteers on the bar more frequently and by not replacing a staff member who left.

These last few months have been difficult for us financially through no fault of our own. The recession has tightened people’s purses slightly and some shows have cancelled their national tours due to low ticket sales. We’ve also had some shows booked in that have been cancelled due to controversy.

We need to pick ourselves up and look at shows that are booked in and ensure that the programme of professional shows is more robust. Plus looking at cost savings on things like energy.

Repair costs are high and if something goes wrong it is rarely a small job – we’ve had a flood this year from old pipes that burst, our fire alarm broke and the heating broke last year. It is hard to absorb these costs without reserves.

We are at a crossroads. We can make savings and concentrate on more profitable areas but we also need an injection of cash to clear some debts and move us forward with investment.

Our budget for 2019/20 would show a loss without a cash injection. The budget should not be read as a cash flow as some figures are spread across the year.
SUMMARY

We have proven ourselves to be invaluable to Hyndburn. From reinstating and saving the two Carnivals to bringing tourism into the area to providing a safe and inviting cultural community centre. We are at the heart of the local community and deliver an incredible amount of work for such a small team.

We were responsible for the hugely successful Christmas Light Switch on in Accrington last year and for many of the events on the Town Square this year.

We are important to individuals in the area for our approach to inclusivity whilst creating a highly professional company that tours around the county.

We can build on work that we’ve done, streamline some unprofitable areas and continue to develop high quality arts for Hyndburn.

We hope that HBC can see that we are invaluable and they should be investing in us and supporting us over this current difficult period.
Appendix 1

Examples of the Civic’s Reach
All events September 2018 to February 2019
Note: data does not totally show ‘on the door’ sales, nor does it show regular users i.e. coming to clubs and activities. It is a snapshot which shows how far people travel to attend shows at the Civic and the impact we have on local tourism.

SPECIFIC EVENTS
80’s night – Friday 5\(^{th}\) October 2018
389 attended via 108 unique bookings
Maps below show postcodes of unique bookings.
Panto 2018
Number of unique bookings to public performances: 396
Total audience to public performances: 1456
Number of school bookings and school children attending: 28 separate bookings for a total of 3137 children.
Appendix 2

CASE STUDIES/TESTIMONIALS

The following letters of support illustrate the impact that the Civic has on local lives.

Case Study 1 – names are redacted in this testimonial for anonymity.

My name is Sarah Calderbank and I'm 37 years old. I live in Oswaldtwistle with my partner of 15 years, Ryan (39), and my sons Kane (10) and Brandon (7). I'm writing to explain how the Civic Arts Centre has impacted on our family.

We have been involved with the Civic since 2015, when Kane first started attending weekly dance sessions and our involvement has grown from there to the point where the Civic is a regular and valuable part of our life. At the moment, both my sons attend weekly drama sessions at the Civic, as well as holiday drama schools, I volunteer as a Matron when they perform in shows and we regularly attend a wide range of shows, events and activities at the Civic.

The Civic is so much more to us than just a local arts venue, it is a lifeline for our family for many personal reasons. My partner Ryan has had mental health difficulties for over 10 years and was diagnosed with Depressive Psychosis (Schizophrenia) in 2012, when he also suffered with suicidal feelings. I am Ryan's main carer and at that time my children were only 4 and 1 years old and his support needs meant that over the course of several years I became socially isolated and struggled with my own low moods, leading to social anxiety. His ill health still continues to mean that I have little support with caring for our children and that I rarely get to go out without them, other than working while they are at school. The family orientated opportunities offered by the Civic have been a real life line for me personally. Over the years we have had many forms of family and individual therapy but nothing has helped me more with my own recovery than my involvement with the Civic. Through volunteering at the Civic I have a feeling of accomplishment, I have made lots of new friends and have a genuine feeling of being accepted as part of the Civic family. I am never reluctant to go to the Civic, which is a big thing for someone who has suffered from social anxiety.

The Civic is very much a safe place for us all where we are always happy, engaged and supported. This is particularly important for my son Kane, who was diagnosed with ADHD 18 months ago after a 3 year long diagnostic process. Kane has had many difficulties at school over the last 5 years and prior to starting activities at the Civic he had a feeling of not really fitting in and not having anything that he was good at. After joining Dramatic Annie drama sessions his confidence improved rapidly, as did his feeling of being accepted and having genuine friends. None of the difficulties with hyperactivity, lack of concentration, difficulty listening and learning that he experienced at school were an issue at the Civic. He was like a different child and, in fact, found that some elements of his ADHD could actually be used to his advantage. Hyper-focus is a common trait in children with ADHD and this has resulted in Kane having a real talent for learning scripts. Kane is never happier than when he is involved with a production at the Civic, he completely thrives in that environment. He has performed in 5 Dramatic Annie "big shows" alongside his Dramatic Annie friends as well as many Play in a Week productions, carnivals and other opportunities. He was also invited to take part in two of the Civic's in-house Christmas productions, It's a Wonderful Life in 2017 and Alone at Christmas 2018, an adaptation...
Home Alone in which he took the lead role of Kevin. It is impossible for me to put into words what our involvement in that production did for **Kane**’s mental health. At a time when he was struggling with anxiety and seeing a counsellor as a result of Year 6 pressures, he was completely empowered by this role. His confidence was boosted so much, he had a huge feeling of pride and he was thrilled that he made genuine friendships with many of the adult cast members.

As I report myself, **Kane** has a genuine feeling of being accepted at the Civic, but this is in no small part aided by the inclusive environment created by the Civic. The Civic’s approach to creating a safe environment for people with allergies demonstrates their willingness to go the extra mile to create a safe space for people who have different needs, as does the fact that people with learning disabilities are regularly included in mainstream classes and productions - true inclusion as opposed to providing separate activities exclusively for people with disabilities which unfortunately is common place in the arts industry. This highly visible and emphatic approach to inclusion is vital to children like **Kane** who have learning difficulties; he can always be confident that people at the Civic will create a safe space for him where he won’t be judged by his difference.

Nobody is ever excluded from taking part at the Civic for any reason, as my other son **Brandon** found recently. After taking part in drama shows for 2 years, he suddenly developed stage fright last year. Some drama groups may have felt that this meant that he could no longer take part, but **Brandon** has been nurtured and enabled to join in any way that is meaningful to him. For the last show he was given the role of "Props Master", which was included in the show programme and he was given an all important badge with his name and role on it. Little things like this make all the difference to children who are feeling challenged and instead of feeling demoralised that he wasn’t brave enough to go onstage, he felt incredibly proud of his role and his confidence was boosted, leaving open the option to one day return to a role on stage.

I hope these stories go some way to explaining the significance of the Civic in our lives. To some families an arts centre is just a place where they occasionally go to see a show, but it is so much more to us. It provides regular entertainment, performance opportunities for the boys, learning opportunities through some projects, volunteering opportunities for me, social opportunities for us as a family and as individuals, and so much more. It is a safe space where all four members of our family are happy, confident and comfortable, which might not sound significant in itself, but for the individuals in our family and the challenges we each face, it is immeasurably important. It is a complete lifeline for us and without it I am certain that all four of us would need additional interventions from mental health services.
Case study 2

Sarah Lewis
24 Hargreaves Road
Oswaldtwistle
Accrington
BB5 4RN
24/06/2019

To whom it may concern,
I’m writing this letter in support of the Civic Arts Centre in Oswaldtwistle and what it means to myself and my family.
Where do I start?
Well, we have been accessing the Civic theatre for around 5 years now around a few days a week and it’s such a fabulous community hub and space. We have gotten to know all the staff.
My daughter started musical theatre and dance classes 5 years ago and the theatre has grown and continues to grow with us as a family. She has grown in confidence since starting the classes and loves it.
We have also all made really good friends over the years while attending the classes, groups, events, shows.
We watch a variety of different shows including family ones. We have a son with disabilities who manages to access the shows too thanks to the staff. The staff know Oliver very well now and are always put him at ease by saying hello and talking to him. They are also always happy to help with whatever his needs are. They also try and make the Civic accessible for all needs and abilities and make it as Inclusive as possible for everybody.
Questionnaires go out to parents and people to see if there is any way they can improve with events especially for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Without them all we wouldn’t be able to access the theatre.
Gayle has helped me raise awareness with a major project I was working on to raise funds to build a park for children with disabilities and has always been happy to help and offer advice. It’s all about networking with other people and this is what the Civic is great for. I attended and presented at the Big Positive Meeting which always brings local people and the community together and always has positive outcomes.
It’s really good to see links between the Civic and other community spaces, Rhyddings Park for instance. We attend events organised by the Civic at the park which again brings the community together of all ages.
Without the Civic Arts Centre and all the fabulous staff who live and breath it, we wouldn’t have anywhere to locally to go to and enjoy things that most take for granted. It’s not just a theatre, but a lot amore than that. It brings people of all ages and abilities together through activities, groups, events and theatre.
Regards
Sarah Lewis
Case study 3

Thank you to everyone at The Civic for their continued support. We heard today that Jess had been successful in obtaining her GOLD Arts Award in Photography and as a family we are extremely proud of her.

Jess has been ill for several years and home educated since the age of 14. Initially being too ill to do any academic study but gradually she has learned to do a bit more and take each day one step at a time.

Over the last 12 months Jess has attended the home educated Arts Award sessions. She has been taken there by her sister and both girls have enjoyed their weekly two hour sessions. Jess has grown in confidence and has now achieved 2 bronze, 1 silver and now a Gold award. The opportunity to study in a small group has been ideal for Jess and The Civic have provided support and understanding, helping the group work together but also independently and to achieve both an award and friendship from like minded people.

Thank you from The Robinson family
Case study 4

26 Louie Pollard Crescent
Great Harwood
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB6 7TG

Tel 01254 876345

24 June 2019

To whom it may concern,

I would just like to say how wonderful the Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre and Theatre is. My daughter Emilia, has been attending the Civic for over 7 years and thoroughly enjoys all the classes she has attended. The Civic has not only given her the opportunity to dance, act and sing on stage, but to meet a wide and diverse range of people, build friendships out of her own school groups, believe in herself and build confidence to go and achieve her dreams.

She has recently completed two weeks work experience at the Civic which she gained a great deal from in terms of fulfilment and experience. All the staff were brilliant with her and treated her as one of the team.

I joined the Adult Panto Group two years ago and have enjoyed every minute of the rehearsals and shows. Everyone is welcoming and friendly, there are no prejudices and everyone is treated equally. Like my daughter, I have made new friends and we both refer to the Civic as our 'Civic Family'.

Kind regards

Wendy Geldard
Case Study 5

To whom it may concern,
My daughter started singing in Skoot as a fun thing to do with her friend. It raised her confidence and resulted in her singing solo on stage before the age of ten.
Little did I know that it would also result in me becoming involved there too. I have run Skoot alongside my friend for nearly two years now. It’s an amazing thing to watch children grow from those who can barely walk in without their parents to confident young people who sing confidently in front of their peers and an stage. The Civic Centre is a special part of the community, the more you go the more you find to go to! It’s contribution spreads across ages and often brings people together in a range of different ways, a true heart of our community.

Karen Jack
Case study 6

25th June 2019

Joanne Shepherd
12 Higher Peel St
Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB5 3JJ

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you in order to support the Civic Arts Centre, Oswaldtwistle, for any funding available now or in the future. It is not difficult to comprehend the way in which the Civic has enhanced the local community or the impact it has made over the last 9 years.

One of my earliest memories was that of my daughter being able to hold the Olympic Torch as it made its way through the town, facilitated by the events at the Civic and the honour held by Gayle Knight to be a bearer. So from the start off Oswaldtwistle Civic was put on the map.

I have had a career in the arts and, after a period of calm for a few years it was great that the Civic was born and enabled me to relight my enthusiasm. I was already involved with St Mary's Pantomime group who took up residence at the Civic and made full use of the fantastic facilities. On a personal note, I had wanted to set up a singing group for kids for some time and with the help and assistance of Gayle Knight and staff I formed sKoot (singing kids of Ossy together). We used the Civic rehearsal space and the group was such a success with 35 participants at its height and requests for performances across the borough. Then of course the parents became jealous and once again with assistance from Gayle and her team CAST (Civic Adults Singing Together) was formed. sKoot is still being run from the Civic some 8 years later and CAST ran for 6 years. I was then asked if I would be involved with a new project spearheaded by the Civic 'A Play in a Week'. The success of this enabled us to continue the project and other subsequent plays performed in order to assist with funds for the Civic itself.

My creative juices were flowing thanks to this hive of activity and the community's willingness to participate. I had a couple of charities close to my heart that I wanted to assist in raising funds for. Once again with the full support of the Civic I was able to produce, publicise and perform in a two hander play. Shortly after, following the death of Victoria Wood I was then able to direct and perform in a Victoria Wood revue show, again raising money for charity along with a cast of 15 local people. This was such a success that we were awarded by NODA that same year for the production.

I have been a regular visitor to other productions at the Civic since it opened. So not only have I entertained I have also been entertained by this magnificent facility for the last 9 years and continue to do so. The variety of shows, the helpful staff, the amazing resources and facilities have made the Civic Arts Centre a community hub in Oswaldtwistle which our little town would be lost without.

Joanne Shepherd
Case Study 7

My theatre school has been based at The Civic since both opened back in September 2010. The staff at The Civic are wonderful and always try their best to accommodate our requirements regarding our classes and theatre productions. The centre has brought a lot to the local community over the years and continues to offer so much to people who without them would not be able to partake in many things which they will most certainly find enriching; educational programmes, theatre groups, sewing groups, reading groups... the list is quite astounding. Gayle Knight is one of the hardest working people I know. She is constantly coming up with new ideas for themes and activities to offer within the centre and the local community. They never stop. It’s a great place and I have loved being a small part of it over the last decade.

Best wishes,

Cassandra Webster
Appendix 3
Dear Gayle,

**Arts Development**

Following your recent discussions both with David Welsby and myself concerning arts development work within Hyndburn, I am writing to you to outline the type of arts related work that we would like you to undertake. I can confirm that we will consult with you on arts related activities that are planned or taking place within Hyndburn.

The Council would like you to undertake the following duties:

- To represent Hyndburn Borough Council in discussions with the Arts Council and Lancashire County Council’s Arts Development Team
- To represent Hyndburn Borough Council on the Board of Creativity Works
- To pursue arts related funding in partnership with the Council and to implement and manage resources connected with any successful bids

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes for a successful year at the Civic Arts Centre.

Yours sincerely,

S. Tanti,
Deputy Chief Executive.
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Churchfield House is an iconic detached house set in its own grounds opposite the St. Bartholomew's Church in Great Harwood. Fondly known as Great Harwood’s Stately Home!

It was built by Surgeon Henry Ainsworth Grimes in 1851 on a plot of land purchased from James Lomax. By 1857 it had been sold to Joseph Haydock, a wine merchant, who took an active role in Great Harwood’s wellbeing, he was a member of the Nuisance Committee, and was on the Local Board from 1863. He fought long and hard for a sewage system to replace the gullies in the streets.

On his death he left the house to his youngest son Milton, who married Janet, the couple had no children, but took an active role in the town and Milton joined Great Harwood Urban District Council in 1895. All through their lives they strove to make people’s lives better.

On his death in 1926 the house was left to Janet for the remaining years of her life, on her death in 1936. The house and its contents became the property of the people of Great Harwood, and the grounds a pleasure park for their use. It was originally left as a Library, but as the Council had by then built a new Library, it became a reading and meeting room. Many of our older visitors, recall fond memories of open fires, books and newspapers, and friendships, something we try in our own way to emulate.

The house from then on underwent many changes, it had a family who looked after the house, had its own gardener, who grew all the flowers for the town, and during the war grew food to support the war effort. Sadly due to road widening schemes, all the greenhouse, stables, pot rooms and garden rooms have been demolished.

In 2013 Great Harwood Civic society decided to move from meeting in a pub, to using Churchfield House. To say the house was tired was an understatement, no longer open to the public, and only used by two businesses, a speech and drama coach, and Slimming world. Sad and neglected, just did not cut it, (Photographs are available to look at) The society then approached HBC with a view to leasing the house and restoring it to its original use, after many challenges, and aided by teams at HBC Churchfield House Trust was formed, now on completion of the 25 year lease Churchfield House Ltd.

Many changes have taken place, windows and doors replaced, the whole house decorated and re carpeted and a new kitchen installed.

We have had two visits from the Princes trust foundation team, who undertook initial decorating work, and we as a society worked with HBC, to gain the National Lottery grant for the restoration of the Mercer town clock.

Churchfield is manned by volunteers, we have no paid staff, but we do have a student program running 6 young people who work for 2 hours a week during term time, and longer during the holidays, they are given a little money and tips. 3 of these
have now gone on to apprenticeships, their confidence in dealing with the public and responsibilities is very rewarding.

The house is open to the public, we serve lunches on Thursday Friday and Sunday, proper home cooked food and we have a loyal customer base, and visitors from all over this country and beyond. The income generated from this goes to the running of the house.

We have many groups using the house. University of the 3rd age have several courses running, and we have Yoga classes, Rainbows, Great Harwood Camera Club, in fact anyone who we can fit in we do. And you can learn to play the Ukulele for free.

We are licenced for weddings, and we cater for every celebration from birth to death. Most of these groups use the house for free, they make a donation for tea and biscuits.

We are proud of the fact that we have turned Churchfield around, pay all the bills and running costs, and importantly it is once again used as Mr and Mrs Haydock intended, as a hub for the people of Great Harwood. Some of our customers are elderly, they have made new friends, and can be assured of company, and a welcome, we also check they are ok if they go missing. People visiting Churchfield go away with a smile.

We wish to apply for a grant of £10,000. We have received an unexpected water rate bill of in excess of £6,900. This is based on the rateable value of the property, and the size of the grounds. And the fact that we are registered as a Ltd Company.

To stop this happening year on year, we need to apply for charitable status, and a requirement is that we have a fund of £5,000 in a bank account reserved for this purpose. We would need this money immediately.

We need the other £5,000 to enable us to pay the water rate bill, should this be reduced, we will return any balance.

The actions we are taking by becoming a Charity will prevent bills of this size in the future, we would otherwise be in this position, year on year.

We hope we can resolve these issues for the future, but for now we need assistance.

Thank You

Lynn Wilson, Chair of Churchfield House Ltd & on behalf of my fellow Directors.
**Mercer House, Clayton Le Moors**

The request is made so that we can carry on maintaining the buildings as we have done over the last few years.

This has been explained to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive at a meeting.

Mercer House 1842 has always been able to be helped with grant funding but can no longer do this due to a lack of staff.

I have had lengthy correspondence with the Leader requesting that the local Councillors explain ways they want to get involved and any issues that local groups may have in not being able to gain access to Mercer House.

I will bring copies of this correspondence on the day of the meeting.

Mr Nick Collingridge
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