

Swindon Borough Council

Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 14 September 2020

Microsoft Teams Meeting for Members, LiveStream for the press and public

At 6.00 p.m.

Conservative Councillors

Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair)
Matthew Courtliff
Barbara Parry
Kevin Parry
Roger Smith
Timothy Swinyard
Rahul Tarar

Labour Councillors

James Robbins (Chair)
Junab Ali
Emma Bushell
Jim Grant
Jane Milner-Barry

Liberal Democrat Councillors

Andy Spry

Committee Officer: Vicki Yull, 07980 752043, CommitteeServices@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

AGENDA

NOTE

The link for the public session of the meeting is here: [Link for the public to watch Scrutiny Committee on 14th September 2020](#)

This link will only work from 6.00pm on 14th September 2020. For help on viewing the meeting, please visit: [Link for help on using Microsoft Teams](#)

Please note that if Members resolve to go in to a private and confidential session the public link will be closed.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10th August 2020.

4. **Public Question Time**
Please refer to the guidance below.
5. **Consideration of Cabinet Decisions** (Pages 9 - 10)
6. **Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety** (Pages 11 - 26)
7. **Work Programme 2020/2021** (Pages 27 - 42)
8. **Status of Requests for Action and / or Information** (Pages 43 - 48)

Date of Despatch: 04 September 2020

Access Arrangements: If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

Public Question Time: Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting.

The deadline for submitting questions for this meeting is 3.00pm on 9th September 2020.

Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Chief Legal Officer. We will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the [Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance](#), which is available on the Council website or from the Committee Officer named above. A privacy note about how we record Public Questions is available here: [Publication of public questions and questioners](#)

Terms of Reference:

- To meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Officer decision making and the way in which Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are made;
- To consider requests for “Call-in” as defined in the Council’s “Call-in” Procedure;
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination;
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned;
- To receive a report by the Leader of the Council at its first meeting after each Annual Council Meeting (or at such a meeting as is agreed by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council) on the service issues for the year ahead, the Leader of the Council’s priorities for the coming year and on the

Council's performance in the previous year;

- To oversee the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny within the Council, including determining (i) where matters fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which of those Committees will assume responsibility for any particular issue, (ii) a system to ensure that referrals from Committees to the Cabinet, either by way of report or for reconsideration are managed efficiently and do not exceed any limits set out in the Council's Constitution, and (iii) in the event of reports to the Cabinet exceeding any limits in this Constitution or if the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardises the efficient running of Council business, at the request of the Cabinet to make decisions about the priority of referrals made.
- To carry out any investigation into the business and functions of the Council and to call in any Cabinet Member or senior officer of the Council so that they can offer advice, support or answer any question that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions.
- To carry out an external scrutiny function, particularly in relation to corporate issues and issues falling into the remit of a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- the review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations;
- the management of performance,
- the monitoring of progress against corporate priorities and
- the formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders.

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to)

- Good governance
- The Budget Scrutiny function.

Quorum: The quorum for this meeting is at least one quarter of the whole number of the Committee, which is four Councillors.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 10 AUGUST 2020

PRESENT: Councillors James Robbins (Chair), Steve Weisinger (Vice-Chair), Junab Ali, Steve Allsopp, Matthew Courtliff, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Roger Smith, Timothy Swinyard, Rahul Tarar and Robert Wright.

Also in attendance were: Councillors Russell Holland (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage), Robert Jandy (Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence), and Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Change).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Emma Bushell, Jim Grant, Jane Milner-Barry and Carol Shelley.

8. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. The following declarations were made:

- Councillor Steve Allsopp made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 11 (Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills) as a member of the Oak Tree Primary School Governing Body.
- Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 11 (Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills) as she is employed at The Ridgeway School (part of the White Horse Federation).

9. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10. Public Question Time

There were no questions submitted under this item.

11. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills

Councillor Russell Holland (Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills), was in attendance and presented to the Committee a report summarising progress and performance in respect of the key objectives of his role, which are to:

- Ensure the Council achieves Financial Sustainability.
- Be the Council's Champion for Strong Financial Management.
- Provide political leadership for Commercialisation.
- Set the Council's Commercial Investment Strategy, and, through the senior officer and the Commercial Investment Strategy Board, oversee its delivery.
- Ensure Council owned assets are used effectively.

- Set the welfare and benefits policy and, through the senior officer, oversee its delivery.
- Provide the overarching direction to enable the Borough to have the range of vocational and higher education opportunities necessary to meet the future needs of employers.
- Provide political leadership through the Swindon Challenge Board in raising school attainment.
- Ensure that the Council's agreed priorities within the portfolio are delivered.

The Cabinet Member is responsible for securing the following Vision pledges:

- Pledge 7: In addition to the two new free secondary schools, build one secondary and 13 primary schools to meet the needs of our increasing population.
- Pledge 8: Improve educational attainment, in particular at ages 16-19 so we are above the average in England by 2021.
- Pledge 9: Increase the number of people starting an apprenticeship in line with the targets in the Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Pledge 10: Secure a range of options to access Higher Education in Swindon to drive up attainment.
- Pledge 11: Work with partners to increase the level of skills of Swindon's workforce to support all our residents, including the most vulnerable, to access employment.
- Pledge 17: Provide early support so that Swindon residents are financially included and avoid getting into debt.

The Cabinet Member also has delegated responsibility for:

- Annual Budget (Revenue and Capital Programme)
- Finance Management Overview
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Commercial Investment Fund
- Disposal of Assets
- Swindon Housing Company
- Revenue and Benefits Services
- Welfare and Benefits Policy
- Strategic Procurement
- Audit and Risk
- Adult Learning
- Higher/Tertiary Education
- Skills
- Apprentices
- Education Services including, Provision for Early Years, LA Maintained Schools, Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Education Other Than At School, Tuition Service, Championing Excellence and Promoting High Standards
- Schools' Forum
- Traded Services
- Libraries

Councillor Holland introduced his report and highlighted the following points:

- That the Government has been forthcoming with two sets of funding (and other measures) to assist councils, businesses and individuals.

- That the additional spending required as a result of the Covid pandemic, predominantly on the assistance required by service providers in adult social care, has left the Council in a difficult position.
- The Government has stated that any significant reduction caused by Covid to council tax collections can be extended from one to three years to help mitigate the impact on council budgets. However, this will result in the Council running at a deficit and could potentially cause longer term difficulties.
- How all involved are working towards ensuring that schools can be safely opened from September.
- That Early Years outcomes have seen an improvement.
- The latest Ofsted inspection result for Adult Community Learning having been 'Good, with elements of outstanding'.

Councillor Holland responded to questions put by Councillors Steve Allsopp, Barbara Parry, Timothy Swinyard, Bob Wright and the Chair on the following matters:

- Whether the full market rate is being charged by the Council for the use of depot facilities at Waterside by a Parish Council, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- Concerns following the publication of national data that is indicating that local authority commercial investments are at risk following Covid.
- The pragmatic approach adopted in supporting businesses during Covid and the measures taken by the Council to help alleviate pressures such as delaying the collection of rents.
- The £1.2m annual gross return expected from the purchase of two properties within the Borough.
- The improvements to the Council's procurement approach and how these can be demonstrated, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- The membership of the Commercial Investment Strategy Board and its review of the issues caused by Covid.
- The impact of Covid on the overall level of debt incurred by the Council.
- The impact on the Council's plans should Government decide to increase borrowing rates, and the expectation that Government will continue to reimburse the additional costs incurred from dealing with Covid.
- The future demands on social care budgets from additional and unexpected Covid-related health complications.
- An explanation for the reduction in the number of households receiving a single person Council Tax discount between August 2019 and February 2020.
- Increases expected to Council Tax given the reduction in Government grants, demographic changes, and the additional costs incurred responding to Covid.
- Proposals for supporting external organisations (such as the Credit Union) who help assist residents in deteriorating financial circumstances.
- The data for Key Stage 1 outcomes in numeracy, which were not set out in the report, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- Swindon being lower than the national standards in reading, writing and maths, and the measures being taken to improve this position such as working with other authorities on areas of best practise.
- Proposals for improving the situation at those schools in Swindon, which have been judged as 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

- How the designation of grades will be undertaken in England and the communication on this matter with schools.
- The anticipated impact on Ofsted inspections / results from Covid.
- Proposals for closing the gap on those entering higher education between Swindon and the national average.
- Expectation in demands on the capital budget as a result of the Free School programme no longer being accessible as a route to new school provision, particularly given developments such as the New Eastern Villages and the capacity that will be required as a result.
- The recent Government announcement regarding the merging of various levies, including S106, and the subsequent impact on proposals for the two primary school sites in Lotmead and Lower Lotmead Villages, the details of which will be circulated to members subsequent to the meeting.
- Undertaking a gaps analysis of school provision for the under-fives across Swindon to identify any missing coverage prior to any further schools being encourage to expand their provision in this area.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Holland be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

12. Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2020/2021 Scrutiny Work Programme, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 7th July 2020.

The Chair advised that he is meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss how the Council's response to the recovery from Covid can be scrutinised effectively, and that an update will be provided at a future meeting.

The Committee considered a proposal for the creation of a Task Group with the remit of producing an overview of the Town Centre as a concept. To include reviewing its social importance to the town as a whole, and what is needed socially to increase footfall and open new businesses.

Resolved – That a Town Centre Task Group be added to the Work Programme for 2020/2021.

13. Status of Requests for Action and / or Information

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.

Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider the decisions arising from the meeting of the Cabinet on the 9th September 2020.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference include the review of the Cabinet decision making process and the way in which Cabinet decisions are made. As part of the Scrutiny function the Scrutiny Committee is able:
 - 1.2.1 To refer decisions back to Cabinet for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which, if there is no agreement, the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination.
 - 1.2.2 To refer Cabinet decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Review the process of Cabinet decision-making and the decisions made.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to review the decisions of the Cabinet to be held on the 9th September 2020. The minutes of the meeting will be forwarded to Members as soon as they become available.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 None.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications. Such implications are set out in the original reports previously circulated to all Councillors with the Cabinet Agenda.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 None.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft minutes of the meeting of Cabinet to be held on 9th September (to follow).

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Author: Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.
- 1.2 A key purpose of the Scrutiny Committee function is to hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that Council priorities and performance are being delivered. The Scrutiny Committee partly fulfils this requirement through the use of question and answer sessions with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Question and Answer session is to ensure that the Cabinet Member provides the Scrutiny Committee with performance information that relates to their portfolio responsibilities and provides an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to ask questions on the portfolio responsibilities.
- 1.4 The remit of the Committee includes the review, scrutiny, and development of policy recommendations and the monitoring of performance of corporate priorities.

2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of the report by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.
- 2.2 Put appropriate questions to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.
- 2.3 Decide if any further action is required.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety is Councillor Cathy Martyn who is accountable for the following Pledges from the Council's Vision:
 - 3.1.1 Pledge 6 (in part). Ensure that there is a range of good quality housing options in Swindon, including affordable opportunities to buy and rent.
 - 3.1.2 Pledge 12 (in part). Work with partners to promote healthy lifestyles for the people of Swindon

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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- 3.1.3 Pledge 16 (in part). Deliver a programme of work to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses feel that Swindon's town centre is a safe place to live, work, visit and do business
- 3.1.4 Pledge 26. To prevent homelessness where possible, using additional measures including the Temporary Winter Housing Provision and enabling a Day Centre to prevent rough sleepers from returning to the streets.
- 3.2 The Portfolio responsibilities for this Cabinet position were updated in December 2016 and are as follows :
 - 3.2.1 Housing Allocations and Advice Services
 - 3.2.2 Empty Homes
 - 3.2.3 Estate and Tenancy Management
 - 3.2.4 Housing Enabling and Strategic Services
 - 3.2.5 Homeline Services
 - 3.2.6 Homelessness
 - 3.2.7 Housing Right to Buy/Sales Services
 - 3.2.8 Neighbourhood Wardens
 - 3.2.9 Private Sector Housing Renovation Grants
 - 3.2.10 Repair and Improvements to Council Housing Stock (*Day to Day Repairs sits with Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment as from May 2020*)
 - 3.2.11 Sheltered Accommodation
 - 3.2.12 Environmental and Public Protection Services
 - 3.2.13 Gypsies, Travellers and Unauthorised Encampments
 - 3.2.14 Reducing Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse
 - 3.2.15 Control Room Operations
 - 3.2.16 Licensing
 - 3.2.17 Community Safety Partnership
 - 3.2.18 Reducing Domestic Abuse

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

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3.2.19 Parishes

Update on current priorities and key achievements

Delivering The Council's Vision and Pledges

Pledge 6 (in part). *Ensure that there is a range of good quality housing options in Swindon, including affordable opportunities to buy and rent.*

- 3.3 The Queens Drive regeneration is now underway. Demolition has been completed of the first two 1950's system built "Easiform" blocks. Overall the old blocks without significant investment were increasingly difficult to heat and the outdated kitchens and bathrooms reduced comfort still further. All of the blocks along Queens Drive will now be replaced with 149 new homes, 129 of which will be at either affordable or social rents levels dependent on grant funding. Further sites in Ventnor Close, in Haydon Wick, Ashley Close in Walcot and Huntley Close in Walcot are now at the formal planning application and costings stage. In addition, early consultations have started on 2 further sites which will have been reported to Cabinet, namely Bromley Close in Walcot and Windmill Hill in Freshbrook. In all, these sites amount to a development programme of well over 300 new affordable homes.
- 3.4 Our ongoing work with partner housing associations adds much needed new additional affordable housing, this includes homes negotiated under Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act powers. In 2019/20 229 were delivered for Swindon in this way. Our main partners are Aster, GreenSquare, Stonewater and Sovereign.
- Pledge 12** *Work with partners to promote healthy lifestyles for the people of Swindon and* **Pledge 16** *Deliver a programme of work to ensure that residents, visitors and businesses feel that Swindon's town centre is a safe place to live, work, visit and do business.*
- 3.5 The Licensing Committee has considered policies for the introduction of CCTV in cabs, removal of partitions in cabs and limiting the age of vehicles to ensure greater public safety for both drivers and users. These policies remain under review following consultations and will be taken forward for consideration in the next year.
- 3.6 The Licensing and Public Protection teams have undertaken a significant amount of work under the 'Covid Regulations' to ensure that businesses and licensed premises are operating safely and to guidance and law. In addition a number of operations and activities have been undertaken which have ensured that the public are not at risk from dangerous and unlawful activities and operations. These are detailed in the relevant section of this report.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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Pledge 26 *To prevent homelessness where possible, using additional measures including the Temporary Winter Housing Provision and enabling a Day Centre to prevent rough sleepers from returning to the streets.*

- 3.7 Although the last 6 months this service has been dominated by our response to Covid 19, strong building blocks were already in place with completely new processes following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- 3.8 Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the focus has been on preventing homelessness during lockdown as well as accommodating and supporting all rough sleepers. 38 individuals who were either sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough have all been supported since March. After successful negotiations with private landlords and hoteliers extra capacity was obtained to accommodate everyone sleeping rough. The Homelessness Service continues to work closely with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government on both the “Every One In” and “Next Steps” programmes for Rough Sleepers supported during the pandemic. At the time of writing the Council was preparing a Bid for Next Steps funding, this includes acquiring additional Housing First accommodation and introducing a Pathway for ineligible people as well as securing more emergency accommodation for rough sleepers.
- 3.9 The majority of the homelessness voluntary sector have understandably been restricted in what services they can offer, the Council’s Homelessness Service has therefore necessarily committed itself to the main operational activities required. The Haven, operated by the Swindon Night Shelter was closed but reopened in August 2020. The reopening has gone well with the centre open 3 days a week for 5 hours on each of these days. Up to 8 clients can visit the Haven by appointment at any one time and have use of the laundry and shower facilities.
- 3.10 As many of the support services are continuing to work from home then engagement with other agencies such as Turning Point and Probation is limited to virtual appointments via Zoom and Team calls. the Council’s Rough Sleeper Team continues to offer frontline outreach services. The Council has maintained contact with key partners to support and step back up their operations at the appropriate time.
- 3.11 The Secretary of State announced in June an extension of Government ruling that evictions and possession proceedings could not be taken until 23 August which has been extended to 20th September. Officers continue to work with clients to ensure that both landlords and tenants understand this position. Additional accommodation has also been identified with private landlords should it be required as possession action returns, however the Homelessness

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Prevention Team are in regular contact with all clients at risk with personal housing plans in place that take account of this risk.

- 3.12 The Council's wider and innovative approach to rough sleeping continues to gain the positive interest of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, resulting in successful grant awards. The latest bid is for "Next Steps" funding and it is hoped to report on the outcome at the meeting.

Licensing and Public Protection

(i) Response to Covid 19

- 3.13 Both the Licensing and Public Protection teams have been heavily involved in the Covid response, working closely with Public Health and other partners to keep Swindon residents as safe as possible. Most notably, a member of the Public Protection team has been seconded to work with Public Health colleagues for 12 months to deal with local outbreak issues from an Environmental Health perspective, leveraging in their local and practical knowledge. This member of staff, and another also directly assisted care homes through the peak of the crisis, visiting and inspecting establishments with Covid outbreaks to identify issues with infection control or other processes. These officers also completed PPE super-trainer training, and subsequently ran training courses for all care and nursing home staff on the proper use of PPE in a further effort to limit cases and deaths in the sector.
- 3.14 Both Licensing and Public Protection officers were very quickly warranted to enforce the Business Closure Regulations under the 'Covid Regs'. The Licensing Team leading on enforcing regulations in licensed premises and the Trading Standards team leading on business closures. Both have conducted many overt and covert visits to premises in response to allegations from the public and referrals from partners. The Licensing Team have undertaken 5 weeks of activity with the Police since licensed premises re-opened and have provided advice and guidance both via Pubwatch and on site to Designated Premises Supervisors. A number of prohibition notices were served compelling businesses to close, and a licensed premises that flouted the Regulations may be subject to review. Trading Standards have also been pivotal in ensuring that PPE obtained by the Council is safe to use and meets all relevant standards, and the team have also been very active on price gouging and sharp practice by traders attempting to exploit panic and supply pressures. Inevitably a number of scams related to Covid have also been exposed, and the team has been instrumental in limiting their damage to Swindon residents.
- 3.15 At the beginning of the crisis, the Health Compliance team worked extremely hard to identify and liaise with organisations providing food for the vulnerable and

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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key workers to ensure that they did not inadvertently harm their customers. The team has also used their extensive knowledge and records of local businesses to ensure that they are aware of what they need to do to keep their staff and customers safe, and have run mail campaigns on Covid secure measures and Legionella as lockdown was eased. Advice has been given to Swimming Pools, Groceries, Care Homes and Nursing Homes, Care Providers, Hairdressers, Tattooists, Nail Bars, & Cold Stores particularly. The team has also responded to very large numbers of complaints and enquiries about food and other businesses around social distancing and 'Covid-secure' measures.

- 3.16 The Healthy Neighbourhoods team have run campaigns on bonfires through the pandemic period; trying to limit the number of bonfires set at a time when many are ill with respiratory disease. Officers have visited properties alleged to be setting bonfires to offer verbal advice, outside of their normal process. The team have also communicated extensively with HMO Landlords; offering advice and guidance to limit infections in their properties.
- 3.17 As part of the Council's initial response to Covid, it was agreed that taxi licences would be immediately extended by 3 months. Whilst this has impacted on our income and hence our ability to offer a fully resourced service, it enabled taxis to continue to perform an important public service function throughout that period. On our advice, private hire companies are supplying masks to their drivers, and we have had a really positive reaction from the trade on how we have dealt with Covid and compliance in taxis has been good.
- 3.18 The Licensing Manager chairs the multi-agency Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG). As part of the Covid recovery phase a number of significant events have been planned, and ESAG provides the opportunity for regulatory agencies to be consulted on the events in advance and to offer advice and support. An event that is unsupported by ESAG is unlikely to be licensable. A representative of the Public Health and Health and Safety teams have joined ESAG to provide advice on events that could pose a risk to public health, linked to Covid. The drive in cinema are an example of an event that was supported by ESAG, with the organiser following expert advice.

(ii) Business As Usual

- 3.19 The vast majority of work in these areas is statutory, and has continued at differing levels throughout the pandemic. Some notable achievements are:
- 3.19.1 The Licensing Manager took responsibility for securing and overseeing all aspects of the successful Christmas market that was held in the Town Centre. Whilst a similar event this year is unlikely due to social distancing

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requirements, last winter's event provides a stepping stone to something potentially more significant at some point in the future.

3.19.2 The Licensing Manager is also responsible for overseeing and signing off sports ground safety. This has principally focussed around the County Ground. An external audit of the certification process found that the Sports Ground Safety Authority were satisfied with the performance of the Licensing Authority, which was a huge endorsement for the work that has gone into this.

3.19.3 A large and complex prosecution of a national manufacturing company was successfully undertaken with the company found to be operating with inadequate safety arrangements, including dangerous substances and with explosive atmospheres. The company were fined £398,000 with full costs.

3.19.4 A regional Trading Standards project was operated in partnership with the DVSA in which a number of vehicles were prohibited from sale on forecourts and traders appropriately dealt with.

3.19.5 An investigation into illegal tobacco sales found a premises with hydraulically operated secret compartments to hide illegal cigarettes and tobacco. A premises closure order was imposed by the Magistrates which triggered a review by the Licensing Authority resulting in revocation of the Licence.

3.19.6 The first Civil Penalties have been issued on 'rogue' landlords in Swindon for 4 offences. Civil Penalties totalling £67.5k have so far been imposed. The take up of the new HMO Licensing regime continues to be good, with 350 HMOs now licensed in the Borough.

What would you do differently?

3.20 The Council's response to Covid has been fantastic. It has, however, also been extremely resource intensive and is prioritised over much of the day to day work. A restructure is proposed which links the Regulatory functions in a much more holistic manner, providing much needed resource and resilience across the services. Had the proposed structure been in place pre-Covid we might have been in a strong position to blend the Covid response with continuing day to day work in a more efficient manner, with staff beginning to be cross trained by service specialists in the various regulatory functions that the team performs.

3.21 The Christmas market attracted footfall into the town centre, but was extremely time consuming to arrange, licence and manage. This work fell onto a single member of staff who was already carrying a significant caseload. Future events

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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would need to be properly planned in advance, and we will build on our relationship with In:Swindon to ensure that the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and that events such as these move forward in partnership.

What are the Challenges and Priorities facing your Portfolio?

- 3.22 Covid recovery work will inevitably form the lion's share of the Council's regulatory services work in the short to mid-term. This will continue to involve inspections to premises to ensure that Covid Regulations and Government advice is being followed. This work is expected to increase as the Government continues to open up other elements of the service sector and will inevitably become focussed around the behaviours that environments create. It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in activity in the run up to Christmas both in terms of events and business compliance.
- 3.23 Work will also continue on Sports Ground Safety. Again, the re-introduction of spectators into sporting events will require careful management, and the Abbey Stadium will also require inspection from a spectator safety perspective.
- 3.24 Additional, but ongoing work in taxi licensing, animal health and welfare, HiMO licensing and environmental health, food safety and hygiene and trading standards will also be prioritised based on risk and impact.

Housing Management

- 3.25 **Tenancy Management.** Rent arrears which are Covid 19 related within the Council's housing portfolio have increased. At the time of writing 364 tenancies have arrears relating to financial pressures caused by Covid 19 amounting to £235k. Dedicated support is available to support tenants in difficulties and rent arrears processes have been adjusted to work with tenants on realistic repayment schemes taking account of individual circumstances. The income of the Housing Revenue Account to meet tenants' service aspirations depends on a high rate of collection. The collection rate for 19/20 recovered 98% of rent owed. This continues to be a remarkable achievement given the on-going changes to the Welfare System.
- 3.26 Sheltered and Supported Housing has been a key priority to maintain safe systems of work, for example the use of communal areas have had to be limited and home visits reduced to essential activity. However from an early stage contact has been made with all tenants over the age of 70, over 1000 contacted by telephone and 400 by letter, ensuring that wider needs were being met particularly for those shielding. This intervention has been particularly well received. There has been no disruption to the Homeline Service although risk assessments ensures the appropriate working methods and use of PPE are in place.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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- 3.27 The wider Sheltered Housing review was completed in 2019/20. Currently the Council operates a service with live-in Sheltered Housing Officers. However, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit to these posts and the value of a “live-in” service, when officers are off duty out of hours is arguably an inefficient use of resources. The roll out of the final changes has been delayed due to the pandemic, but when fully deployed the new *cluster* model will deliver savings of £150,000 per annum.
- 3.28 **Housing Repairs** Non-urgent repairs ceased in March due to the risks associated with home visits for residents and operatives. A considerate and gradual approach has helped focus on backlog repairs and manage the control of planned maintenance works. The upgraded online repairs portal and new video interaction solution will help to reduce the number of in-home visits and provide significant improvements to how we operate. In addition, plans are in place to let new framework contracts to provide flexibility for future programmes of work.
- 3.29 **Housing Lettings.** A new online system was developed and implemented in 2019/20. Feedback on the new system has been positive once it was fully rolled out make bidding for properties far more user friendly. Lettings were reduced in the initial weeks of the pandemic as house moves were prohibited, but the service has managed to make available every possible home for those in greatest need. July and August saw increased activity with the normal Housing Bidding system fully operational. A specialist Housing Needs Response team has been put in place to help combat the pandemic. The aim has been to ease the demand on health and care services and allow a fast tracking of any patients being discharged from health or care settings who require social housing. Council stock was prepared in readiness and procedures and processes put in place for any referrals.
- 3.30 **Void Management.** This is the work undertaken to return properties back into use after a tenancy has ended. Through a combination of excellent work from the in-house work force and the direct management of three subcontracting teams, the Council made significant improvements in turnaround time in 2019/20. The target for the end of the year was to keep the total number of voids below 100 at any given time and this has been achieved.
- 3.31 **Tenant Participation and Tenant Academy:** At the start of lockdown we asked tenants what they would like to see from the Housing Service during the coronavirus lockdown and unsurprisingly communications was a recurring theme. Having listened to this request we are now providing the following:
- 3.31.1 New ‘virtual’ community cafes using Facebook set up twice a week with the Street Reps and over 70 tenants regularly join in to hear from guest
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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speakers on subjects such as fire safety, money advice and domestic abuse and provides an opportunity to stay in touch.

3.31.2 For tenants in sheltered housing, there is now a monthly Tenant Association Sheltered Housing Newsletter' to help keep residents informed and entertained.

3.31.3 Fortnightly editions of the 'Tenant Focus' e-Newsletter, previously produced monthly.

3.31.4 Free learning opportunities through the Tenant Academy & Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

What would you do differently?

3.32 The Housing Service continues to deliver its Service Improvement Plan during 2020/21. Some of the improvements have already been mentioned such as the greater opportunity to offer user friendly digital channels for our customers. These changes are already making a positive impact such as the new and refined Bidding function for letting council and housing association properties. Work also continues to improve the technology available for all mobile working. Handheld devices are now in use for all Trade Operatives and Neighbourhood Wardens that enable live interaction with the main Housing operating system reducing unnecessary inter team hand overs, paper forms and adds pace to service delivery.

3.33 This has been a challenging time for the service during the pandemic and temporarily withdrawing services such as non-urgent repairs was on balance the right decision due to risks to the public, operatives and most importantly reducing the opportunity for the virus to spread.

3.34 Care has also been taken to gradually reintroduce our important voluntary sector back into the frontline. For our Homelessness outreach functions, the in-house team have been exemplary in carrying the majority of this responsibility. It has been equally important to increase our longer term resilience by developing safe working.

What are the Challenges and Priorities facing your Portfolio?

3.35 **Investment in the Council Housing stock.** The social housing 4 year rent reduction of 1% per year exacerbated the capital funding shortfall in the HRA. A Medium Term Financial Plan will be brought to Cabinet in October 2020, following discussion at the Housing Management CMAG on 7 October 2020, demonstrating how a balanced Housing Revenue Account budget can go some way towards meeting the investment requirements in the stock. We intend to

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replace electric storage heaters in 65 properties with air source heat pumps (together with internal wall insulation, secondary glazing and ventilation in homes in the Railway Village via the Green Homes Bid), and we are starting to develop a policy on EV charging points.

- 3.36 **Homelessness.** The Council must maintain its strong track record in preventing homelessness, including rough sleeping. The Homelessness Strategy was agreed in 2019 by the Health and Wellbeing Board. Activity continues to be refined including the Temporary Winter Housing Provision, set to be in operation for its 4 year in January 2021. Ongoing external funding will provide greater opportunity to deliver services and acquire additional accommodation. A bid for “Next Steps” funding has been submitted to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to deliver this ambition.
- 3.37 **Tenancy Services.** Support must be maintained to our tenants experiencing difficulty in paying their rent following a drop in household income as a result of the pandemic. Formal approval has been sought from the Ministry of Communities and Local Government for the use of a Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme from within the Housing Revenue Account in 2020/21. This funding will be prioritised for those experiencing greatest difficulty.

Community Safety

- 3.38 Following the outbreak of Covid-19 and the proposed national lockdown the Community Safety team (CSP) worked with partners to mitigate the expected increase in incidents and severity of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (DA & VAWG) Board established a weekly Task Force to anticipate need and put measures in place to respond appropriately. This included Refuge overspill options with local hotels, and individual Wi-Fi and computer access for each Refuge place to support families with educational and social needs.
- 3.39 The Task Force was extended to ensure sufficient support is in place for people exploited into sex work, and a review of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) administration will make an increase in cases to that forum easier to manage, as lockdown eases. A recent review of the Task Force by the DA & VAWG Board established that all identified need had either been mitigated or that long-term solutions had been identified and initiated.
- 3.40 The CSP team in partnership with the police and housing have made good use of Closure Orders and Partial Closures to protect victims of cuckooing by *County Lines* drug dealers. This has enabled support services to work with vulnerable people that would not be accessible without the orders in place.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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- 3.41 A review of SBC's response to its Prevent Duty to support people at risk of radicalisation identified resource and training needs that were supported by the Community Safety Partnership and have been implemented.

Reducing Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- 3.42 Turning Point, have entered into year three of a three year plus two contract; the additional two years have been confirmed with the contractor and will expire March 2023. Overall successful completion (where a person successfully completes a course of treatment and is discharged) performance improved in the last quarter of 2019-20 with the service now performing better against our local outcomes comparator areas. Swindon rose into the top 75 authority areas for successful completions of both opiates and alcohol and non-opiates and in the top 114 for alcohol completions. It does however remain in the bottom 38 authorities for non-opiate completions which is focus of commissioning attention with Turning Point. Covid-19 lockdown presented a series of challenges for the service, with a significant switch to online delivery of interventions, including medical reviews and 1:1 sessions. These resulted in a reduction in the number of sessions not attended. Supervised consumption was reviewed and the number being asked to consume medication in pharmacies was safely reduced and continues to be risk assessed on an individual basis. A decision was taken with the service to risk assess people who might be eligible for completion and to maintain contact where appropriate to ensure their safety in difficult health circumstances – this may impact successful completion figures during quarter 1 this year.
- 3.43 Turning Point contributed to the safe management of rough sleepers being accommodated at the Great Western Hotel, and continues to maintain those who have been found accommodation as the scheme is run down. They have worked closely with the Rough Sleeper Team and Threshold, managed by the senior commissioner. 38 people were supported with harm reduction (including needle exchange at the hotel) early engagement and structured interventions.
- 3.44 Dual diagnosis meetings for Swindon commenced this July. It has been decided to run them separately from Wiltshire as there are differences in presentation and client groups which warrant a Swindon specific approach. The operational focus is ensuring both services work closely together to support complex clients, to engage with them as appropriate and to ensure optimal outcomes. Commissioners and services are seeking to develop earlier intervention for complex cases.
- 3.45 Issues with needle exchange waste across the town were identified and jointly reported in the Adult Overview and Scrutiny in 2019. It is the focus of a follow-up report to the same committee.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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What would you do differently?

- 3.46 The work of the CSP team on the Risk Management Panels has highlighted the complexity and risk involved in the lives of a number of Swindon residents. These are cases where early intervention and prevention options have not been exercised or not been successful. The Risk Management process can only be successful with full engagement from all relevant partners and if the response is a shared commitment to supporting the most vulnerable. This is a resource intensive process but the outcome far outweighs the investment. The CSP team will continue to work with partners to develop and maintain that engagement and commitment.
- 3.47 Swindon's Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy, covering the next five years, will look to respond with a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) across partnerships and with communities. By using an early intervention approach we can reduce the impact of domestic abuse and prevent escalation, which will increase safety and wellbeing and break the cycle of those affected. Alongside this, working with perpetrators to address and disrupt their abusive behaviours and hold them accountable for their actions, we can reduce crisis intervention.

Reducing Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- 3.48 Following the lock down we are working with Turning Point to establish:
- 3.48.1 A review of supervised consumption. This is designed to improve recovery prospects and outcomes and reduce costs. A significant proportion of those supervised have coped well during lockdown and we want to appropriately extend the positive messages this has engendered.
- 3.48.2 Work to improve the prevention and early intervention options for those who are experiencing issues with alcohol, through developing a pharmacy based identification and brief advice option, which can lead to structured treatment as appropriate. This will link with Turning Point's online support structures.
- 3.48.3 Review the service offering for non-opiate clients, to understand the gaps and barriers which appear to exist for this group and to ensure that the interventions are available to reduce the harms associated with using these substances.
- 3.49 In order to engage those with Dual Diagnosis we are:
- 3.49.1 Refreshing our local strategy for this vulnerable group. Following a successful meeting to re-establish the Swindon dual diagnosis group, we have sufficient will and traction to develop a positive strategy. This will

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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explore how Swindon can develop link working between mental health and substance misuse services primarily, but also considering, e.g. rough sleeping services; improve learning and training between disciplines and support practitioners to improve outcomes for clients. The strategy will seek to establish thresholds and working frameworks for early intervention, structured joint interventions and complex cases. Links with the suicide prevention agenda and complex groups will be explored and strengthened. As we formulate this response we will consult with the public and we expect to report this to the Health & Wellbeing Board. A plan of action will follow. We will be approaching partners to understand how we can identify need, approaches and resources to develop this strategy.

3.49.2 Turning Point and AWP will continue to run a Dual Diagnosis operational forum to skill and information share. They are also discussing complex cases to ensure integrated working.

3.50 In order to reduce hospital related admissions for alcohol:

3.50.1 We are having to review our specialist substance misuse liaison team based at GWH from Avon & Wilts Partnership (AWP), following Wiltshire's decision to withdraw from the project. The team has an in reach role at the hospital offering consultancy, assessment, review and onward links to community services (particularly the community drug and alcohol service). They prioritise trying to intervene with patients who repeatedly present at GWH with alcohol related issues/ 'Frequent Attenders'.

3.50.2 A key element of this review will be to understand the framework in which frequent attenders can be held in treatment as they move from a hospital setting back to the community and the role of the community service in supporting both GWH and the liaison team in managing this crucial point in the process.

3.50.3 National data from 2019-20 is not yet available to determine direction of travel on alcohol related hospital admissions; alcohol related or alcohol specific mortality.

What are the Challenges and Priorities facing your Portfolio?

3.51 The Community Safety Partnership Board and its delivery of key priorities is under review. The complexity of responding to community safety issues, particularly during and after lockdown needs more commitment and strategic response than is currently in place and the review should encourage a wider and more robust partnership response.

Reducing Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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- 3.52 The mental health of clients accessing treatment for substance misuse and who have a number of health and social complexities (rough sleeping, sex working, criminal justice interactions, etc.) present a number of challenges for Turning Point and the partnership. The evidence of working through lock-down and the need to work in conjunction demonstrated the value of well-coordinated multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working. This will form the basis of commissioning modelling across the authority.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Committee can choose not to operate a Cabinet Portfolio Question and Answer session system.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act requires every local authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor, and improve performance.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other direct implications arising from this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by it.

Climate Change

- 5.4 New council affordable housing developments are currently working towards the proposed changes to Part L of the building regulations, to support low carbon solutions. More broadly, within the council housing stock the service is exploring the use of more efficient products and processes. This includes the replacement of inefficient electric heating systems. The Housing Service is also retrofitting products including external wall insulation. Finally, through the Tenant Academy and various communications the Housing Service is encouraging our residents to be more energy efficient.

Care Leavers

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Michael Ash, Director of Housing, mash@swindon.gov.uk

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5.5 Housing Services and Children's Services work closely together in order to meet the accommodation needs of Care Leavers. The joint protocols that are in place were commended in the most recent Ofsted inspection.

5.6 As set out above, Reducing Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Services are commissioned by the Council and have a range of interventions that can support Care Leavers.

Diversity Impact Assessment

5.7 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the work programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

5.8 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Overview Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

6. Consultees

6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 None.

Work Programme 2020/2021

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All Wards

Parishes Affected: All Parish Areas

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the topics for the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2020/2021, as agreed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7th July 2020 and revised at subsequent meetings throughout the year.
- 1.2 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to have a Work Programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year.
- 1.3 The Work Programme details the various topics and issues that each Committee intends to look into during the coming year with the aim of producing evidence based recommendations intended to provide service improvements for Cabinet and external agencies / bodies to consider.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the approved Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

3. Detail

The Work Programme

- 3.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to have a Work Programme that details the activities that it will be undertaking during the Municipal Year.
- 3.2 Under the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to agree a Work Programme at the start of the Municipal Year outlining their priorities and likely outcomes of considering these issues. This task was completed by this Committee at its first meeting on 7th July 2020.
- 3.3 The Work Programme is developed taking into account:
 - 3.3.1 Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet Forward Plan.
 - 3.3.2 Partnership strategic priorities and objectives.
 - 3.3.3 The interests and concerns of Members, Council officers, members of the public, and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

Work Programme 2020/2021

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

- 3.4 Committees are encouraged to review the Work Programme on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant and to prioritise the workload of the Committee.
- 3.5 Members are reminded that the Work Programme must also take into account:
 - 3.5.1 The workload of the Committee and of individual members.
 - 3.5.2 The capacity of officers to support a review.
 - 3.5.3 The resource implications of carrying out a review.
 - 3.5.4 The timescales for a review.
 - 3.5.5 The most appropriate method of carrying out a review e.g. Committee meeting, Task Group, Member Champion review.

Developing the Work Programme – The Executive

- 3.6 It is important that Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the work of the Council and its partner agencies, and produces tangible outcomes for local people that result in real service improvements. Selecting the right topics is crucial to ensure that scrutiny will be effective.
- 3.7 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are encouraged to work with Cabinet in the best interests of the Borough and to take into account the priorities and suggestions of Cabinet as detailed in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward plan, attached at Appendix 2, when considering the contents for the Work Programme.
- 3.8 In addition, Members attention is drawn to the Scrutiny Process Flowchart, attached at Appendix 3, which is aimed at assisting Members in identifying how they could influence policy development.

Standard Work Programme items

- 3.9 In addition to selecting various topics and issues for inclusion in the Work Programme, the Scrutiny Committee has a number of additional items that it has incorporated into its Work Programme, such as:
 - 3.9.1 Cabinet Member Question and Answer Sessions. Each Cabinet Member will be expected to appear before the Scrutiny Committee to answer questions relating to their portfolio responsibilities, performance and future plans.
 - 3.9.2 Review of Cabinet Decisions. The Scrutiny Committee will be required to review the decisions taken by Cabinet.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

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3.9.3 Leader's Report. The Scrutiny Committee will receive an annual presentation and a six monthly update from the Leader of the Council on the administrations priorities for the year and performance.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Committee can choose not to have a detailed Work Programme although it is recommended that it is best practice to do so.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial or procurement implications arising as a result of this report. Any expenditure arising as a result of an item on the Committee's Work Programme will be met by the Overview and Scrutiny Support budget, subject to the approval of the Committee.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act requires every local authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor and improve performance.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no other direct implications arising as a result of this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 None.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

Work Programme 2020/2021

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2020/2021.

8.2 Appendix 2 – Current Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan.

8.3 Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Process Flowchart.

Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2020-2021

Terms of Reference of the Committee

- To meet at regular intervals to review the policies, process and implications of Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Officer decision making, and the way in which Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are made;
- To consider requests for “Call-in” as defined in the Council’s “Call-in” Procedure;
- To refer decisions back to Cabinet (or the decision maker) for reconsideration. It may do this once for any individual decision, after which if there is no agreement the decision will be referred to the full Council for determination;
- To refer Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for investigation without delaying the implementation of the decision concerned;
- To receive a report by the Leader of the Council at its first meeting after each Annual Council Meeting (or at such a meeting as is agreed by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council) on the service issues for the year ahead, the Leader of the Council’s priorities for the coming year, and on the Council’s performance in the previous year;
- To oversee the arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny within the Council, including determining (i) where matters fall within the remit of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which of those Committees will assume responsibility for any particular issue, (ii) a system to ensure that referrals from Committees to the Cabinet, either by way of report or for reconsideration, are managed efficiently and do not exceed any limits set out in the Council’s Constitution, and (iii) in the event of reports to the Cabinet exceeding any limits in the Constitution, or if the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardises the efficient running of Council business, at the request of the Cabinet to make decisions about the priority of referrals made;
- To carry out any investigation into the business and functions of the Council and to call in any Cabinet Member or senior officer of the Council so that they can offer advice, support or answer any question that will assist the Committee in carrying out its functions; and
- To carry out an external scrutiny function, particularly in relation to corporate issues and issues falling into the remit of a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee as they relate to –

- The review, scrutiny and development of policy recommendations,
- The management of performance,
- The monitoring of progress towards delivering corporate priorities,
- The formulation of advice for the Cabinet, Council and other partners and stakeholders, and
- Strategies to reduce or prevent Crime and Disorder.

To have specific responsibility (but not limited to)

- Good governance.
- The Budget Scrutiny function.

Review of the Work Programme

The work programme will be reviewed at every meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to ensure that it remains relevant, to ensure that Members and Officers have sufficient capacity to deliver the work programme and to include any additional items on the work programme, if appropriate.

To assist members in developing the Committee’s work programme, a copy of the current Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 2 to the covering report.

Contact details

Committee Officer: Vicki Yull
 Email: vyull@swindon.gov.uk
 Tel: 07980 752043

7th July 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Leader of the Council update	To receive a half yearly update from the Leader of the Council on the performance of the Council, to receive details of any major issues or problem areas and to review progress against priorities set out in annual presentation.	Councillor David Renard
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Work Programme 2020/21	To discuss and agree a rolling work programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year and review the Overview Task Groups	n/a

10th August 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	To review the portfolio and performance of Commercialisation, Education and Skills.	Councillor Russell Holland

14th September 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety.	Councillor Cathy Martyn

26th October 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	Councillor Mary Martin

9th November 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Review of the 2019/20 Municipal Year	To receive the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report.	Chief Legal Officer
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence.	Councillor Rob Jandy

7th December 2020		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Leader of the Council update	To receive a half yearly update from the Leader of the Council on the performance of the Council, to receive details of any major issues or problem areas and to review progress against priorities set out in annual presentation.	Councillor David Renard
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet

11th January 2021		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Budget Scrutiny	To review the Budget proposals for 2021-2022.	Councillor Russell Holland
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning.	Councillor Gary Sumner

8th February 2021		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services.	Councillor Maureen Penny

29th March 2021		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Review of Cabinet Decisions	To receive the decisions taken and the process taken in making those decisions of Cabinet.	Cabinet
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Adults and Health	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.	Councillor Brian Ford

26th April 2021		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage.	Councillor Dale Heenan
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Climate Change	To review the portfolio and performance of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change	Councillor Keith Williams

Other issues for Scrutiny Committee to consider		
Item	Objectives	Witnesses
Averies Task Group Final Report	To receive the final report of the Task Group and make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet and Council.	Task Group Members
Review of Scrutiny Process	To review the scrutiny procedures at Swindon Borough Council.	Task Group Members
Town Centre Task Group	To reviewing its social importance to the town as a whole, what is needed socially to increase footfall and open new businesses, and to define an overview of the Town Centre as a concept.	Task Group Members

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Swindon Borough Council

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021 – Proposed AGENDA ITEMS and KEY DECISIONS (as at 01/09/20)

Key Decisions are defined as:

decisions that are likely to be significant in terms of spending or savings having had regard to the Council's budget for that particular service or function, and decisions that are likely to have a significant impact on two or more Council wards.

If you wish to make your views known on any matter set out in this work-plan, please contact the relevant Cabinet Member or the contact officer identified.

Councillor:	Portfolio:
David Renard	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
Russell Holland	Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice Chair of Cabinet, and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills
Brian Ford	Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
Dale Heenan	Cabinet Member for the Town Centre, Culture and Heritage
Robert Jandy	Cabinet Member for Organisational Excellence
Mary Martin	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cathy Martyn	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Maureen Penny	Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services
Gary Sumner	Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning
Keith Williams	Cabinet Member for Climate Change

Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions September 2020

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
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Cabinet Meeting Date - 9th September 2020

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
Budget Management Update (September)	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Capital Monitoring Quarter 1 update	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
School Place Planning Study 2020	Yes	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 1st June 2020	Corporate Director of Children's Services Commissioner Education Place Planning and Admissions	00 School Place Planning Study 2020 tracker
Swindon Borough Local	No	Cabinet Member for Strategic	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 23rd July	Director of Strategic Development	Swindon Borough

Development Scheme Review 2020		Infrastructure, Transport & Planning		2020	Service Manager – Planning Policy	Local Development Scheme Review 2020 Forward Tracker
Swindon Borough Council Covid-19 Recovery update	Yes	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 23rd July 2020	Chief Executive Chief Operating Officer	

Cabinet Meeting Date - 21st October 2020

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
Budget Management Update (October)	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints	No	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 31st July 2020	Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) Head of Customer Services, Registrars and Bereavements	Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints

Climate Change Strategy	Yes	Cabinet Member for Climate Change	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 31st July 2020	Director of Economy, Growth and Place Director of Economy, Growth and Place	00 Climate Change Strategy
Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan	Yes	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 1st June 2020	Director of Housing Karl Read ksread@swindon.gov.uk	00 Shool Place Planning Study 2020 tracker

Cabinet Meeting Date - 2nd December 2020

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
Budget Management Update (December)	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Capital Monitoring Quarter 2 Update	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	

Treasury Management - mid-year update report	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Swindon Borough Council Covid-19 Recovery update	Yes	Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 23rd July 2020	Chief Executive Chief Executive	

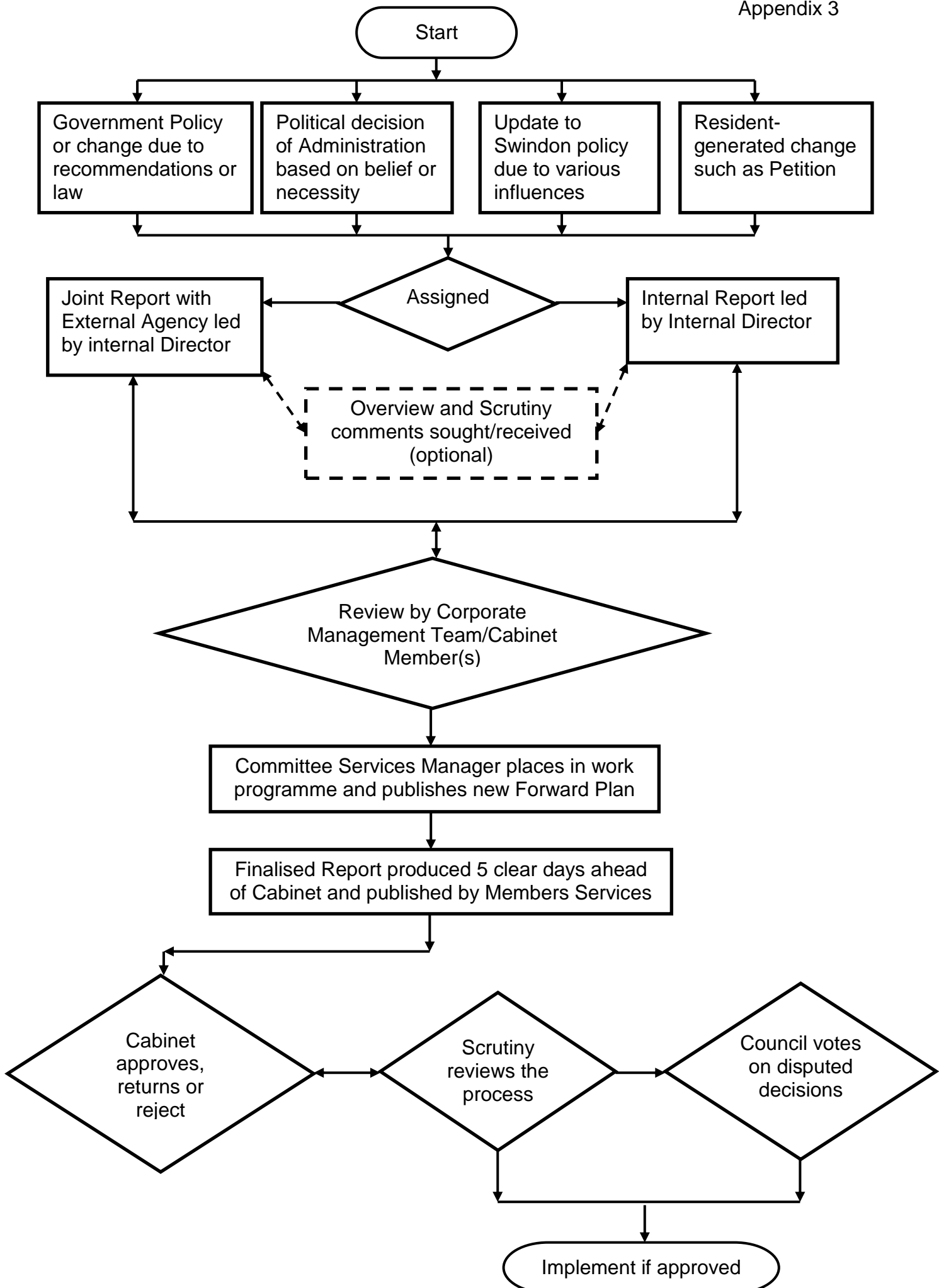
Cabinet Meeting Date - 3rd February 2021

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
Budget Management Update (February)	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
New Capital Programme, including capital management strategy	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Treasury	No	Deputy Leader of	Cabinet		Corporate Director of	

management strategy statement		the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills		Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
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Cabinet Meeting Date - 24th March 2021

Subject	Key Decision Yes/No	Portfolio Holder / Cabinet Member	Decision Maker	Consultation Responses/Date of Notice	Contact Officer	Available Background Papers
Budget Management Update (March)	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 13th February 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Capital Monitoring Quarter 3 Update	No	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Cabinet	Date of Notice: 4th may 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Assets Corporate Director of Finance and Assets	
Public Open Space and Parish Asset Transfers - Response to Council motion	Yes	Leader of the Council	Cabinet	N/A Date of Notice: 2nd June 2020	Head of Property Assets Head of Property Assets	Public Open Space and Parish Asset Transfers Cabinet Report Tracker



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Status of requests for action and / or information

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Author: Chief Legal Officer

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the status of requests for action to be taken or information to be provided.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 Consider the responses provided by officers, and actions taken in relation to each issue, and determine if any further action is required.
- 2.3 Agree that, subject to the Committee's requests for further action to be taken, issues shown as being completed be removed from the status report.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee has requested that a report be submitted to each meeting on the status of its earlier requests for action to be taken or information to be provided, allowing members to consider if any further action is required.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 None.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Vicki Yull (Committee Officer), 07980 752043, VYull@swindon.gov.uk.

Status of requests for action and / or information

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th September 2020

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the Work Programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 None.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Schedule of the status of requests for action to be taken or information to be provided.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS REQUIRING A WRITTEN RESPONSE AND MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION 10th August 2020		
Minute No. 11	Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Education and Skills	Outcome
To confirm why a Parish Council is paying £1 a month rent for Waterside Depot facilities and not being charged the market rate.	<p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>The Borough Council has enabled the temporary use of parts of the Waterside depot by two Parish Councils as they were unable to source alternative accommodation in a timely manner due to CV19 restrictions. Staff and service transfers needed to be undertaken in accordance with the decisions taken by the Councils Cabinet and the consultations with Unions and staff. The arrangement is temporary only for a maximum term expiring 31 March 2021 and only continues whilst they directly deliver Streetsmart services for Swindon residents.</p> <p>The accommodation being utilised is not possible to let on commercial terms as it forms part of the Borough Councils main storage facility and would be unsuitable for sharing with anyone other than public sector partners. The two Parish Councils who have been offered and accepted accommodation have needed to fund directly the securing of a defined area within the buildings from the rest of the storage facility (installing their own secure compounds) and are also being charged for any services available at Waterside that they utilise equal to the cost incurred by the Borough Council plus an additional management charge.</p>	Completed
To provide examples of how the Procurement Team has developed improvements in the Council's procurement approach (including	<p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>The Councils scrutiny procedure for high value procurements, known as the Gateway process, has undergone a significant restructuring to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the</p>	Completed

the process for high value procurements and guidance to managers in relation to social value).	<p>process. This includes a reduction in the number of ‘Gates’ that officers must navigate whilst at the same time sharpening the focus for scrutiny on the key procurement issues.</p> <p>In addition to this, guidance notes have been further developed to help commissioning officers achieve social value from tender exercises and a standard social value question has been updated and that is directly aligned to the Council’s priorities which service areas can then apply appropriately.</p> <p>The Councils commissioning toolkit continues to be developed to assist officers and service areas in undertaking robust pre-procurement activities. This includes guidance and templates to enable key commissioning cycle activities such as demand management, market analysis, design of future provision etc. to be carried out in a robust and effective manner.</p>																																																	
To provide data on the Key Stage 1 Outcomes relating to numeracy for 2019/20.	<p>The following response was provided:</p> <div><p>% EXS+ Maths</p><table><tr><th></th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th></th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Swindon</td><td>77%</td><td>78%</td><td>77%</td><td>↓</td><td>-1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>National</td><td>75%</td><td>76%</td><td>76%</td><td>↔</td><td>0.0%</td></tr><tr><td>Gap</td><td>2.0%</td><td>2.0%</td><td>1.0%</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>Quartile 2, Rank 42</p></div> <div><p>% Greater depth Maths</p><table><tr><th></th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th></th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Swindon</td><td>20%</td><td>23%</td><td>23%</td><td>↔</td><td>0.0%</td></tr><tr><td>National</td><td>21%</td><td>22%</td><td>22%</td><td>↔</td><td>0.0%</td></tr><tr><td>Gap</td><td>-1.0%</td><td>1.0%</td><td>1.0%</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>Quartile 2, Rank 44</p></div>		2017	2018	2019			Swindon	77%	78%	77%	↓	-1.0%	National	75%	76%	76%	↔	0.0%	Gap	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%				2017	2018	2019			Swindon	20%	23%	23%	↔	0.0%	National	21%	22%	22%	↔	0.0%	Gap	-1.0%	1.0%	1.0%			Completed
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Gap	-1.0%	1.0%	1.0%																																															
Ofsted: 74% Primary schools: good or outstanding 20%: require improvement 5%: remain inadequate. Where is missing 1%?	<p>The following response was provided:</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Phase</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>Swindon All Schools</th><th>England All Schools</th></tr><tr><td>Open Schools</td><td>86</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Schools not yet inspected</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Schools Inspected</td><td>81</td><td></td></tr></table>		Phase			Swindon All Schools	England All Schools	Open Schools	86		Schools not yet inspected	5		Schools Inspected	81		Completed																																	
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	Outstanding	8		
	Good	54		
	Requires Improvement	13		
	Inadequate	6		
	% Good or Outstanding	77%	86%	
To confirm whether S106 monies can still be used for the two primary school sites identified for Lotmead and Lower Lotmead Villages.	<p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Yes a s106 contribution has been agreed for primary and secondary education.</p>			Completed

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