
Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2018-19



Overview and Scrutiny

What is 'Overview and Scrutiny'?

The Local Government Act 2000 first introduced the requirement for every local authority to include provision for at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Subsequent amendments to the Act have further developed the role of Overview and Scrutiny within local authorities.

Although not a decision-making body, effective Overview and Scrutiny has enormous potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the Borough.

The Committee can review and scrutinise any matters which affect the Council, its area or the residents of that area, in order to provide greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of local services.

The following key roles were identified as areas which Overview and Scrutiny should be concerned with in Elmbridge:

- **Holding the Cabinet to account**, which may include reviewing decisions taken by Cabinet, but not yet implemented, via the 'call-in' procedure;
- **Monitoring Council performance**;
- **Reviewing policy**;
- **Developing policy**; and
- **Scrutinising externally** issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Council.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has 16 members. All Elmbridge Borough Councillors are eligible to sit on the Committee, except for members of the Cabinet. No Councillor can be involved in the scrutiny of a decision with which he/she has been directly involved. The Committee is chaired by a member of the opposition parties.

Detailed arrangements regarding the operation of overview and scrutiny can be found in the Council's Constitution.



Chairman
Councillor Nigel
Haig-Brown



Vice Chairman
Councillor Rachael I.
Lake

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During 2018-19 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continued to scrutinise Portfolio Holders, raise important local issues with external organisations and examine Council performance and future plans.

The Elmbridge Borough Commander updated the Committee on the ongoing work of Surrey Police, explaining that actions taken to tackle the high number of burglaries had delivered successes, particularly in relation to arrests of members of an international criminal gang. Members were also reassured that liaison with local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes is important to the Borough Commander, as are communications with residents more generally.

The Committee heard from Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regarding plans for the Molesey Hospital site. The CCG is currently working towards an outline business case for the redevelopment.

Other topics of local importance examined by the Committee included rail transport provision. South Western Railway and Network Rail were invited to the Committee to discuss issues such as the varied level of disability access across Elmbridge and how to report flooding and graffiti.

The Committee also fulfilled its role in reviewing and shaping the Council Plan for 2019-20, which sets out how the Council will work towards its five-year vision.

All Cabinet Members were invited to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to provide a comprehensive overview of their Portfolios, setting out the key challenges and achievements from the last year.

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups

Established to undertake time-limited reviews of specific issues

The Committee established 3 Task and Finish Groups.

Heathrow's Public Consultation on Airspace and Future Operations ran from 8 January 2019 to 4 March 2019. During this period the Group considered the issues likely to affect residents of the Borough and presented its report with recommendations to Independent Cabinet Member Decision Making for approval and submission as the Council's formal response to the consultation.

Health and Wellbeing - reviewed service delivery in Elmbridge and produced a report identifying gaps in provision and suggesting potential improvements for consideration by Council officers.

Parking – considered the implications of continuing to provide free car parking on Saturdays in Walton-on-Thames and local village car parks and made recommendations to Cabinet.

Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panel

Established to perform scrutiny related functions, throughout the year

The Performance and Finance Standing Panel undertakes detailed scrutiny of often complex financial and performance information. In 2018-19 the Panel continued to review Council services to ensure they are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Issues examined by the Panel included the Surrey County Council parking contract, the speed and quality of planning decisions, performance of the joint waste contract and the Capital Strategy 2019-39. In addition, the Panel reviewed quarterly income, expenditure and performance indicators against the 2018-19 Council Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

Collaborative consultative forum providing views on matters within its remit

There are six permanent Working Groups reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- Countryside Consultative Group – acts as a forum for Elmbridge`s Countryside Estate where information is exchanged and issues relevant to good practice in countryside management can be discussed. Projects debated included: resurfacing of the Old Cranleighans Track on Ditton Common, Woodland Management on West End Common and Glaxosmithkline access track on Weybridge Heath.
- Constitutional Review Member Working Group – no meetings this year.
- Community Safety Working Group – the Group reviewed the work of the Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnership noting the decrease in anti-social behaviour following the introduction of the Walton Public Spaces Protection Order. A two-year extension was recommended subject to further consultation with stakeholders.
- Elmbridge Older Person`s Advisory Body – continues to review, develop and promote key community services with key local partners.
- Elmbridge Energy and Sustainability Group – this year focused on single use plastic which included a review of waste and recycling in the Borough, community-led initiatives and current approaches to reduction and elimination, developing a Single-Use Plastic Action Plan for 2019-20.
- Elmbridge Annual Grants Panel – considers applications from individual residents and organisations.

Looking forward to 2019-20

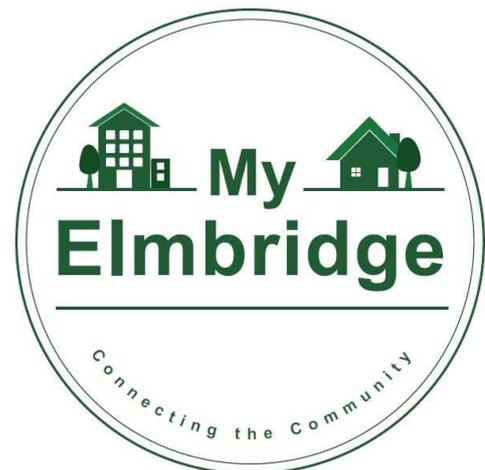
Following the work of the Committee in 2018-19, it is now time to look to the development of the Committee's programme for 2019-20.

The Committee will continue to review key local issues and engage with a range of partner organisations to ensure that its work reflects the priorities of residents and businesses. With the challenging financial environment for local government set to continue, the scrutiny of performance and financial information will continue to be a core aspect of the Committee's work.

Contact us

Further information on Overview and Scrutiny is available on the Elmbridge Borough Council website. Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings generally start at 7.00pm and are held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Centre in Esher. The meeting dates for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2019-2020 are now available and are published on the Elmbridge Borough Council website.



Watch online: elmbridge.public-i.tv/core/portal/home

Web: elmbridge.gov.uk/councillors-and-committees/overview-and-scrutiny/

Suggest a topic: bit.ly/2BY011Q

Email: overviewandscrutiny@elmbridge.gov.uk

Tel: 01372 474385

Write: Overview and Scrutiny, Elmbridge Borough Council, High Street, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9SD