



# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report



2024-25



**Elmbridge**  
Borough Council  
... bridging the communities ...

## 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 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**;
- **Scrutinising externally** issues of public concern beyond the remit of the Council.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has 14 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 they have been directly involved. The Committee is chaired by a member of the opposition party. During 2024-25, the Committee met on 7 occasions.

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



**Chair**  
Cllr John Cope



**Vice Chair**  
Cllr Pippa Graeme

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During 2024-25 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approached scrutiny of key local issues and the Council's work thematically with the aim of hearing from both the Council's perspective and from external partners and other organisations where possible. The Committee continued to effectively utilise their progress tracker and work programme.

Throughout the year the Committee scrutinised areas concerning the maintenance and upkeep of Elmbridge streets and greenspaces. This included discussions on **street cleaning and management of Elmbridge's green spaces** with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability with representatives from Joint Waste Solutions also in attendance at the relevant meetings to present reports and respond to questions from the committee.

The committee considered the **Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnerships (ECSP) Plan for 24/25** in July 2024, where it was decided the next plan would go to Overview and Scrutiny prior to going to Cabinet and Council. Therefore, **ECSP Plan for 2025/26** was also considered at the March 2025 meeting. The annual reports from the **Performance and Finance Standing Panel** the and the **Community Safety Working Group** were also presented to the committee for consideration.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing attended the committee in November to discuss **affordable and social housing provision**. Representatives from Paragon Asra (PA) Housing and Southern Housing were also in attendance to provided further information and respond to questions on social housing in Elmbridge including quality of service.

At the February meeting, the committee discussed an update on the independent review of the Community Centres from the Portfolio Holder for Community Care who was in attendance along with representatives of the Elmbridge Community Centres Alliance.

The Committee also provided invaluable scrutiny of documents and policy proposals, offering feedback on items including the **Scrutiny of emergency planning arrangements**, the **Esher Vison**, the **Elmbridge Borough Council Draft Asset Management Strategy 2024-2030**, **2025/26 budget setting**, the **Annual Vision 2030 refresh 2025/26** and **updates on Local Government Reorganisation**.

### Outcomes

The Committee's progress tracker contains a number of outcomes achieved throughout the year and several of the topics on the Committee's work programme in 2024-25 were added throughout the year as a result of progress tracker items. Key highlights include:

- Member's site visit to Thames Water's Esher Treatment Works in January 2025.
- Data on the number of crimes resolved using CCTV was shared with the committee.
- Data on the number of street cleaning reports and the average number of days for issue resolution was provided.
- A guide for Members on their role in an emergency and the SLRF risk register were shared with the committee.
- Data was shared on the review of the locking of Council-owned car parks to reduce antisocial behaviour.

## Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups

**Established to perform issue-based/time-limited reviews of specific issues**

There were no Task and Finish Groups in 2024-25.



## 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 2024-25 the Panel continued to review and monitor Council services to ensure they are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Issues examined this year by the Panel included 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budget update, an update on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26, the Budget and Council Tax report and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy Action Plan.

The Panel also reviewed the quarterly income and expenditure as well as performance indicators progress against the Vision 2030. In addition, it reviewed the quarterly Crime and Disorder Benchmark report and the 2025/26 Budget.

## Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

**Collaborative consultative forums providing views on matters within its remit.**

There is one permanent Working Group reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Community Safety Working Group

The Community Safety Working Group fulfils the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's responsibility as the designated crime and disorder committee. Therefore, much of the group's focus was on the general work of the Elmbridge Community and Safety Partnership. There were discussions on CCTV performance, Safer Streets work and the monitoring of the Walton-on-Thames Public Spaces Protection Order. The Borough Commander was in attendance to provide commentary on the latest crime statistics and updates on some notable incidents.



## Looking forward to 2025-26

Following the work of the Committee in 2024-25, it is now time to develop in more detail the Committee's programme for 2025-26 and where appropriate, 2026-27.

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. The next couple of years and the changing landscape of local government are crucial for residents and the Committee will look to ensure their needs and voices are represented. While external bodies are under no obligation to attend Overview and Scrutiny meetings, we are hopeful invitations sent in 2025-26 to representatives from external bodies will be accepted and meetings attended in the spirit of community co-operation and good will. 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.