

<b>Council</b>	<b>Agenda Item: 13</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	29 June 2016
<b>Report Title</b>	Overview and scrutiny annual report 2015/16
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Andy Booth, Chairman, Scrutiny Committee
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Abdool Kara, Chief Executive
<b>Head of Service</b>	David Clifford, Policy and Performance Manager
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Bob Pullen, Policy and Performance Officer
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Forward Plan</b>	<b>Reference number:</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	1. That Council considers the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16.

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The report at Appendix I provides details of the work of the Scrutiny Committee during 2015/16.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 It is common practice among local authorities for the work of the overview and scrutiny committees to be reported and considered each year by the authority, usually in the form of an annual report. In any case, the Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference require it to report annually to Council on its work, and make any recommendations for amended working practices if appropriate.

## **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee made some good progress last year, as noted in the report. Recommendations previously accepted by Cabinet have been or are in the process of being implemented.
- 3.2 The annual report also serves as a useful summary of the Committee's work, which can be shared with residents via publication on the Council's website, and other social media and press releases.

## **Alternative Options**

- 4.1 This is largely a report for information, and so no alternative options are proposed.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Committee has considered the annual report at its meeting of 9 June, and resolved that it should be presented to Council for their consideration.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Committee scrutinises a wide number of issues across all of the corporate priorities, and more generally helps to improve and enhance decision-making in the Council, and so supports the Corporate priority of being 'A Council to be Proud of'.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Scrutiny Committee's explicit remit is scrutiny of the preparation of the Council's annual budget, and to review and scrutinise the Council's performance in relation to budgetary management.
Legal and Statutory	The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires all local authorities to establish one or more overview and scrutiny committees.
Crime and Disorder	The Scrutiny Committee has an explicit remit to consider crime and disorder matters.
Sustainability	The Committee have received reports on the Council's progress on climate change in the past.
Health and Wellbeing	The Committee has scrutinised health and wellbeing matters in the past.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified.
Equality and Diversity	None identified.

## 7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

## 8 Background Papers

- 8.1 None.

**Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16**

**Swale Borough Council**

## Foreword

Welcome to the overview and scrutiny report for 2015/16. The aim of this report is to reflect on the work that has been done in Swale this year.

2015/16 was a transitional year for the Scrutiny Committee. Following the Borough Elections in May 2015, we saw a big change to the membership of the Committee, with many long-standing, experienced, former members standing down from the Council, and a large influx of new members who had no previous experience of overview and scrutiny and were completely new to Swale Borough Council.

All newly elected councillors had received comprehensive induction training, but it would have been too much to expect those members to have immediately taken on the role of 'scrutineers' before they had acclimatised themselves to the workings of Council, Cabinet and Committees.

The Scrutiny Committee is unique among the Council's committee structure in that it acts on powers set down in legislation in order to hold the Leader and Cabinet to account on behalf of the whole Council. It therefore operates quite differently from any other Council Committee, and has much more freedom to set its own work programme and agendas, and is able to require Cabinet Members and senior officers to appear before it.

As a result, it has taken us longer to get a number of reviews we identified earlier in the year up and running, although with renewed impetus three reviews are now under way, with reports and recommendations expected early in the new Municipal Year.

2016/17 presents a particularly challenging financial climate for the Council, and the Committee has to continually adapt and respond to meet the many challenges ahead. We need to give a particular focus to resources, and continually challenge whether the services the Council provide are being delivered in the most cost-effective and efficient ways.

The overview and scrutiny function at Swale should not be excluded from this continuous drive for efficiency and effectiveness, and during the course of the year we will review how we can improve. A refresh of the Swale Scrutiny Handbook will provide part of this impetus. It is two years since the Council last changed its overview and scrutiny processes, and consideration will be given on whether to 'Peer Review' our systems and process to ensure we are as effective as the best in the country.

Overview and scrutiny will need to be at the very centre of the difficult decisions the Council will need to take during 2016/17, and we stand ready to play our part in these considerations in order to ensure that decisions are taken in a transparent and evidence-based way.

I hope that all members will continue to fully engage in the Committee's reviews in order to ensure that the Council's decision-making processes are appropriately scrutinised in a systematic, transparent, and fair manner.

If you would like to contribute to the scrutiny process, or have ideas for areas which you think would benefit from scrutiny, we would welcome your suggestions. Please let us have your views by email [democraticservices@swale.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@swale.gov.uk) or telephone on 01795 417 330.

Councillor Andy Booth  
Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee 2015/16

# 1 What is overview and scrutiny?

## Introduction

- 1.1 Overview and scrutiny is a function of all English local authorities with an executive form of governance. This includes those, such as Swale, where a leader and cabinet take day-to-day decisions, and only decisions which affect the overall budget or policy framework are taken by the whole council.
- 1.2 Overview and scrutiny's main role is to hold the leader and cabinet to account on behalf of the whole council. This includes monitoring how well the council manages its resources and runs its services, as well as scrutinising the cabinet's formal decisions before they are put into operation.
- 1.3 Overview and scrutiny committees also have powers to examine other public services not provided by the council, including some health and policing matters.

## Overview and scrutiny at Swale

- 1.4 Swale Borough Council has a single Scrutiny Committee which exercises all of the formal powers available to it under the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended).
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Committee comprises 13 councillors who are not members of the Cabinet. Whereas Cabinet members are usually drawn exclusively from the political group with a majority of seats on the Council, the Scrutiny Committee is made up of councillors from all groups, and seats on the Committee are allocated in accordance with the political balance considerations across the Council as a whole. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are appointed at Annual Council at the start of each new Municipal Year.
- 1.6 The role of the Scrutiny Committee includes:
  - reviewing or scrutinising decisions made by, and performance of, the Cabinet and Committees and Council Officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
  - reviewing or scrutinising the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets, and/or particular service areas;
  - requiring members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Chief Officers to attend before it to answer questions about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects; and
  - reviewing and scrutinising the performance of other public bodies in the area.

- 1.7 The Scrutiny Committee also has special responsibility for scrutinising the Cabinet's annual budget proposals as part of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.
- 1.8 The Scrutiny Committee is not a decision-making body as such. Instead it makes recommendations to Cabinet, who can either accept or reject them. In either case, Cabinet must always respond 'on the record' to Scrutiny Committee recommendations, stating why they have or have not been accepted. The Committee can also make recommendations to other organisations beyond the Council, but their legal powers here are weaker.
- 1.9 The Committee has a power to 'call-in' a Cabinet decision which has been taken but not yet implemented. Once the Committee has 'called-in' a Cabinet decision, it will consider the decision and decide whether to refer it back to Cabinet for reconsideration.
- 1.10 As well as regularly scrutinising financial and performance monitoring information, the Scrutiny Committee reviews a wide range of other topics.
- 1.11 Swale has also established a Policy Development and Review Committee which reviews any new or revised council policies, and advises the relevant Cabinet member accordingly. This Committee does not have any formal overview and scrutiny powers, but it does have the power to make recommendations to the person or body that referred an item to it. A separate annual report for the Policy Development and Review Committee is prepared each year.

## **Principles**

- 1.12 The key local principles forming the foundation of the overview and scrutiny function at Swale Borough Council are as follows:
  - the focus for scrutiny must be based upon the achievement of outcomes rather than upon process and procedures, in order to develop a function that can make a real difference to the Council and the Borough;
  - that overview and scrutiny be positive, objective and constructive, seeking to add value to any service that it considers. Scrutiny should acknowledge good practice where found, and recommend improvements where necessary; and
  - it is essential that the Council has an active and challenging scrutiny function that reflects corporate priorities regarding the provision of services.
- 1.12 Overview and scrutiny plays an important role in the overall governance of the Council.

## 2 Scrutiny Committee

2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for focussing on scrutiny and the holding to account of corporate issues such as the budget, service performance, and delivery of planned actions. Its full Terms of Reference during 2015/16 were as follows:

**Preamble:** the Scrutiny Committee satisfies the requirement under legislation (S.9F of the Local Government Act 2000 as inserted by the Localism Act 2011) to include provision for the appointment of one or more committees. The Scrutiny Committee plays a particular role in scrutinising the Executive's annual budget proposals as part of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Part 4.3 of the Constitution refers).

**General role:** Within the terms of reference, the Committee will:

- (i) review or scrutinise decisions made, and performance of, the Cabinet and Committees and Council Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- (ii) review or scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (iii) require Members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Chief Officers to attend before it to answer questions about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (iv) make recommendations to the Cabinet or appropriate Committee or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process – it is expected that reviews of policy arising out of the work of the committee would be referred to the Policy Development and Review Committee;
- (v) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
- (vi) make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive;
- (vii) make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of the area;
- (viii) exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the executive;
- (ix) consider Councillor Call for Action requests in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action Protocol contained in Part 5 of this Constitution; and
- (x) in accordance with Section 19 of The Police and Justice Act 2006, to act as the Council's "Crime and Disorder Committee" in terms of reviewing and scrutinising decisions made, or other actions taken, in connection with the responsible authorities discharge of their Crime and Disorder functions.

The Scrutiny Committee shall exercise overall responsibility for any finances made available to them.

Annual Report – the Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the full council on its work and make recommendations for amended working methods if appropriate.

## Membership

2.2 The following Councillors served on the Scrutiny Committee since May 2015:

- Councillor Andy Booth            Chairman
- Councillor Lloyd Bowen        Vice Chairman
- Councillor Mike Baldock
- Councillor Derek Conway
- Councillor Mike Dendor
- Councillor Mick Galvin
- Councillor Mike Henderson
- Councillor Ken Ingleton
- Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams
- Councillor Peter Marchington
- Councillor Colin Prescott
- Councillor Ben Stokes
- Councillor Roger Truelove

## 3 Scrutiny work programme

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee’s work programme includes the oversight of many areas of Council business, such as the budget, service performance, and delivery of planned actions, as well as a number of dedicated reviews. Key areas of work for 2015/16 are summarised below.

<b>Core work programme 2015/16</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Focus of discussion</b>	<b>Status</b>
Performance and financial monitoring	Ongoing - reviewed periodically throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indicators not achieving target</li> <li>▪ significant budget variances</li> </ul>	<b>Complete</b>
Council budget	Annual review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Cabinet’s annual budget proposals are scrutinised before these</li> </ul>	<b>Complete</b>

		are ratified by the Council	
Fees and charges	Annual review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Committee considered Cabinet's proposals for fees and charges at an extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 9 December 2015</li> </ul>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Scrutiny reviews</b>			
<b>Review</b>	<b>Date review template agreed</b>	<b>Report/recommendations submitted to Cabinet</b>	<b>Status</b>
Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration proposals	-	-	<b>Complete</b>
Council Tax support scheme	-	-	<b>Complete</b>
Housing services	14/10/15	-	<b>Ongoing</b>
Leisure and tourism	14/10/15	-	<b>Ongoing</b>
Development management	14/10/15	-	<b>Ongoing</b>
Conduct of 2015 elections	-	-	<b>Complete</b>
Call-in: Cabinet decisions on allocation of grant for S.106 software and reallocation of underspent member grants	-	9 December 2015	<b>Complete</b>
Call-in: Cabinet decision on CCTV consultation	-	5 January 2016.	<b>Complete</b>

### **Performance and financial monitoring**

- 3.2 The Committee receives reports on performance and financial monitoring at many of its meetings.
- 3.3 The Committee regularly considered those indicators where performance was not achieving targets, and discussed with Heads of Service their plans for turning performance around on these indicators.

- 3.4 The Committee plays a significant role in the Council's performance management arrangements in that indicators which consistently fall into the 'red' category are escalated up to the Scrutiny Committee for further investigation.
- 3.5 The Committee received regular financial monitoring reports that presented Members with the opportunity to highlight significant budget variances, and ask questions of officers and Cabinet members about their plans to address this.

### **Council budget**

- 3.6 One of the Committee's key responsibilities is to scrutinise the Cabinet's annual budget proposals before these are ratified by the Council, which took place at a specially convened meeting on 28 January 2016.
- 3.7 The Committee Chairman opened the meeting up so that any Council Member could attend and make representations. The Cabinet Member for Finance, along with other Cabinet Members and Senior Officers were present to respond to Members' questions. The Committee scrutinised the Cabinet's budget proposals line by line.
- 3.8 Cabinet noted the Committee's comments at their meeting of 3 February 2016.
- 3.9 The reports the Scrutiny Committee considered on the Council's draft budget are available here:  
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s4197/FINAL%20-%202016-17%20Budget%20Report%20for%20December%20Cabinet%20Final%20v4.pdf>
- 3.10 The Committee's consideration of the draft budget is available here:  
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1594/Printed%20minutes%2028th-Jan-2016%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

### **Fees and charges**

- 3.11 The Committee considered the Council's annual review of fees and charges separately from the Budget this year. A record of the Committee's discussions with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Head of Finance is available here:  
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1657/Printed%20minutes%2009th-Dec-2015%2017.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

### **Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration proposals**

- 3.12 The Committee received an update on 14 October 2015 from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Director of Regeneration on the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration project.

3.13 A record of the discussion is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1591/Printed%20minutes%2014th-Oct-2015%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

### **Council Tax support scheme**

3.14 The Committee had been maintaining a watching brief on welfare reform for several years, and has periodically reviewed matters relating to the implementation of welfare reform at Swale.

3.15 The Committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Revenues and Benefits Assistant Manager at their meeting of 14 October 2015, and were invited to consider the Council's proposals for the Council Tax support scheme to operate in 2016/17. A record of the Committee's discussion with the Cabinet Member and lead officer is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1591/Printed%20minutes%2014th-Oct-2015%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

### **Housing services**

3.16 This review had started in the 2014/15 Municipal Year, and the Committee had already discussed with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Head of Housing Services, and the Housing Options Manager on a range of issues relating to housing. At that meeting on 2 September 2014, officers gave an overview of housing issues, both in the national and local contexts, and members explored issues such as: shortage of suitable accommodation, temporary accommodation, affordable housing, and private rented accommodation.

3.17 The Committee heard from representatives of AmicusHorizon, the largest Registered Social Landlord operating in Swale, at their meeting on 11 November 2015. A record of the Committee's consideration is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1592/Printed%20minutes%2011th-Nov-2015%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

3.18 The Committee resolved to refresh this review and take it forward in the early part of the 2016/17 Municipal Year. A review coordinator and supporting Task and Finish Group have been appointed by the Committee.

### **Leisure and tourism**

3.19 This review was agreed by the Committee at the start of the Municipal Year.. Its purpose was to establish whether the Council was making the most of Swale's leisure and tourism offer in order to encourage people to visit the Borough.

- 3.20 The Committee had an initial discussion with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the officers who lead on tourism at their meeting on 10 February 2016. The key issues that were highlighted were:
- use of apprentices and internal partnership working;
  - budgets and resources;
  - investment in Swale and the support of local businesses;
  - use of social media to encourage visitors;
  - Visit Swale website;
  - performance monitoring of quality accommodation in Swale;
  - partnership agreement with Visit England;
  - The Faversham Society as an events provider and sole accredited museum in the Borough;
  - successful tourist projects in Swale;
  - planned projects in the future; and
  - funding by SBC of growth in tourism.
- 3.21 A record of the Committee's discussion is available here:  
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1595/Printed%20minutes%2010th-Feb-2016%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>
- 3.22 A Task and Finish Group has been established to take this review forward, and it has already made significant progress in gathering evidence through issuing a questionnaire to local tourism facilities and serviced and non-serviced accommodation providers, and visiting key operators in Swale's tourism sector.
- 3.23 The Group is also planning to visit districts with a similar tourism profile to Swale in other parts of the country, to compare how councils promote tourism and encourage visitors to their areas, and whether the Council should consider adopting practice from elsewhere.
- 3.24 The Task and Finish Group will conclude the review early in the new Municipal Year, and present and report and recommendations to the Committee for initial consideration. Recommendations will subsequently be submitted to Cabinet.

### **Development Management**

- 3.25 This review was also agreed by the Committee at the start of the Municipal Year. Its purpose was to review the effectiveness of the Council's processes for deciding planning applications, and all of the various elements that that entails.

- 3.26 The Committee had an initial discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning, the Head of Planning Services, and the Development Manager at their meeting on 13 January 2016. The key issues that were highlighted as areas to consider were:
- planning delegations and the volume of applications that were coming to the Planning Committee for decision;
  - the role of statutory consultees in the decision process;
  - the role of parish and town councils;
  - planning appeals;
  - unadopted land on new developments; and
  - Section 106 agreements.
- 3.27 A record of the Committee's discussion is available here:  
<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1593/Printed%20minutes%2013th-Jan-2016%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>
- 3.28 The Task and Finish Group will conclude the review early in the new Municipal Year, and present their report and recommendations to the Committee for initial consideration. Recommendations will subsequently be submitted to Cabinet.

### **Conduct of 2015 election**

- 3.29 The Committee had invited the Chief Executive/Returning Officer, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, and Electoral Services Officer to provide a report on the conduct of the 2015 elections. This took place at the Committee's meeting on 11 November 2015, and the report is available here:  
[http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s3863/2015%20Elections%20Review\\_26.10.15.pdf](http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s3863/2015%20Elections%20Review_26.10.15.pdf)
- 3.30 The elections held on 7 May 2015 combined those for the Parliamentary, Borough and parish/town councils, and were the most complex ever held in Swale. They were also the first elections to be held since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, and had to take account of changes to ward and parish boundaries following reviews.
- 3.31 The Committee considered a number of factors including:
- Cross-boundary arrangements with the Returning Officer for Maidstone Borough Council for the Faversham and Mid Kent Parliamentary election;
  - resources and capacity in the Elections Team; and
  - the conduct of the verification and counting of votes.

3.32 A record of the Committee's consideration is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1592/Printed%20minutes%2011th-Nov-2015%2019.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

### **Call-ins**

3.33 Call-ins were held on 9 September 2015 to consider Cabinet decisions on allocations of grant to (a) purchase Section 106/CIL software and (b) allocate underspend of Members' grant, with recommendation back to Cabinet to reconsider. The Committee only resolved to refer the decision on Member grant back to Cabinet. A record of the consideration is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1670/Printed%20minutes%2005th-Jan-2016%2018.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

3.34 A record of the Cabinet's decision is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1648/Printed%20minutes%2021st-Sep-2015%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=1>

3.35 A further call-in was considered at an extraordinary meeting of the Committee on 5 January 2016 regarding a proposed consultation on the siting of CCTV cameras. The decision was referred back to the Cabinet Member. A record of the consideration is available here:

<http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g1670/Printed%20minutes%2005th-Jan-2016%2018.00%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

3.36 A record of the Cabinet Member's is available here:

<http://10.201.65.162/documents/g1674/Printed%20minutes%2007th-Jan-2016%2019.00%20Cabinet%20Delegated%20Decisions.pdf?T=1>

## **4 Review of approach to overview and scrutiny in 2015/16**

4.1 We have taken this opportunity to review the way in which overview and scrutiny has worked in Swale during 2015/16, in order to build on our strengths and address any areas that could be identified for further development.

4.2 At Appendix I we set out a review of each of the major pieces of work that overview and scrutiny carried out during the year. Some common themes emerge from this review, as set out below.

4.3 Particular strengths that we would wish to build on during 2016/17 include:

- devoting sufficient time and resources to a few key issues which have major implications for residents, rather than reviewing areas where there is little or no evidence to suggest services are under-performing;

- continuing the practice of undertaking more of scrutiny’s work on a ‘Task and Finish’ basis, so that Committee time can be used more effectively; and
- urging Cabinet Members and officers to bring forthcoming decisions to scrutiny at an early stage.

4.4 Particular areas that have been identified as requiring further development during 2016/17 include:

- restricting reviews to issues where evidence suggests that they would benefit from scrutiny input;
- seeking opportunities to have an early input to issues, rather than being presented with a fait accompli; and
- being more diligent in ensuring reviews start as quickly as possible after the scope has been set, by appointing Task and Finish Groups quickly, and receiving regular reports from Task and Finish Group coordinators to ensure that reviews are progressing sufficiently.

4.5 The actions that we will put in place to address these include:

- revising the Swale Scrutiny Handbook, which was produced some years ago, to bring it up to date;
- exploring with the Member Development Group how members of the Scrutiny Committee can develop their scrutiny skills through training; and
- ensuring Swale BC’s overview and scrutiny processes mirror best practice elsewhere, including consideration of whether a ‘Peer Review’ of the function should be instigated.

## 5. Contact details

5.1 Scrutiny Committee meetings take place throughout the year and members of the public are welcome to attend. Dates, agendas, reports and minutes for these meetings can be found on the Council’s website: <http://www2.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. Alternatively, you can telephone Democratic Services on 01795 417 330.

5.2 The Scrutiny Team provides independent and professional support and advice to the Members of Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 You can contact the Scrutiny Team using one of the following methods:-

By e-mail/telephone to:	<p><b>Bob Pullen – Policy and Performance Officer</b>  <a href="mailto:BobPullen@swale.gov.uk">BobPullen@swale.gov.uk</a>  01795 417 187</p> <p><b>Democratic Services</b>  <a href="mailto:Democraticservices@swale.gov.uk">Democraticservices@swale.gov.uk</a>  01795 417 330</p>
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In writing to:	Scrutiny Team Policy and Performance Unit Swale Borough Council Room 310 Swale House East Street Sittingbourne Kent ME10 3HT
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5.4 A full list of Committee meeting dates, times, venues and agendas is available on Swale Borough Council's website: <http://www2.swale.gov.uk/dso/>

## Overview and Scrutiny Committees Review of 2015/16 major reviews

Title	Overview	Strengths	Development Areas
Performance and financial monitoring	Scrutiny Committee focuses on indicators not achieving target, and significant variations to the proposed budget	<p>The Chairman and Vice-Chairman have held regular pre-meetings with the Policy and Performance Team and Head of Finance in order to thoroughly prepare for Committee meetings – particularly those involving performance and/or finance.</p> <p>The Committee plays a significant role in the Council's performance management arrangements.</p> <p>The Committee receives regular financial monitoring reports that present members with the opportunity to highlight significant variations to the proposed budget, and ask questions of officers and Cabinet members about their plans to address this.</p>	Develop Member skills through training on performance and financial management.
Council budget/ Fees and charges	The focus is to scrutinise Cabinet's annual budget proposals before these are ratified by Council. This is normally preceded by scrutiny of Cabinet's proposals for fees and charges.	<p>Review took place at a specially convened meetings on 28 January 2016.</p> <p>The Committee Chairman opened the meeting up so that any Council Member could attend and make representations.</p> <p>The majority of Cabinet Members and Heads of Service were present to answer questions and provide further information.</p>	More could perhaps be done in the way of preparation by the Committee so that particular areas of the budget which give rise to concerns can be given greater focus, and possible recommendations for change be made to Cabinet.
One-off reviews and hearings	The Committee considers a number of topics throughout the year on a one-off basis rather than	These reviews provided the Committee for non-executive members to raise concerns with Cabinet Members and senior officers in an open and transparent	It is imperative that Cabinet Members and senior officers ensure that the Cabinet Forward Plan is kept up to date with

Title	Overview	Strengths	Development Areas
	<p>as part of an in-depth review. Examples this year include conduct of the 2015 elections and Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration.</p>	<p>forum.</p> <p>The ability to discuss policy considerations and reasons for decisions in an open forum contributes to good governance.</p>	<p>informative and timely information regarding forthcoming decisions, so that the Scrutiny Committee has sufficient notice of when decisions are to be made so they can play an appropriate and proportionate part in the pre-decision process.</p>
<p>Major reviews</p>	<p>These are identified in the Committee's forward work programme at the beginning of each new Municipal Year. Examples this year include Housing Services, Development Management and Tourism and Leisure</p>	<p>These reviews work best when they are conducted through Task and Finish Groups who undertake most of the activity outside of the Committee cycle and provide progress reports periodically to the Committee, which culminates in a report and recommendations for the Committee's consideration.</p>	<p>The Task and Finish Groups need to be formed soon after the scope of the review has been agreed by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee needs to pay particular attention to managing these reviews to ensure they provide evidence-based reports and recommendations in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Call-ins</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Committee is the only Council Committee that has the power to 'call-in' Cabinet decisions for consideration once they have been made, but not implemented.</p> <p>The Committee is able to consider Cabinet decisions and refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration.</p>	<p>There are clear guidelines on how call-in should be used, with safeguards against abuse of the powers available to the Committee.</p>	<p>There have effectively been three call-ins during the course of the year. Two resulted in a recommendation to Cabinet to reconsider their decisions, but neither resulted in any change.</p> <p>The Committee should carefully balance whether calling-in a Cabinet decision would make any difference to that decision against the time, effort and resource needed to hear the call-in.</p>