



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



Our Vision for Activities

The Overview and Scrutiny function at East Suffolk Council aims to enhance the quality of life for all who live and work in the district by ensuring the provision of a safe, clean, attractive and prosperous environment for our communities.

Scrutiny aims to be objective, evidence-based, transparent and constructive and to reflect the interests and concerns of local communities.

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Foreword by the Chair

**Councillor Mike Deacon,
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair 2023/24**

The elections in May 2023 brought several changes for East Suffolk Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The first was the decision to appoint an Opposition Chair of the Committee and I was delighted to accept the invitation having been a Scrutiny Committee member for many years. I have been joined by 12 fellow Councillors, including nine brand new members who have enthusiastically embraced Scrutiny. One of these new members is my Vice-Chair, Councillor Dan Clery, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to him for his invaluable support. The whole Committee works together, cross-party, to support and facilitate this extremely important statutory function.

Another change introduced was amending our name from Scrutiny Committee to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to reflect that, whilst our main function is to scrutinise, we also have an important role in keeping an overview or "watching brief" of the Council's activities.

As Chair, I am proud to be able to present my first Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report which gives a retrospective record of the work we have undertaken, our activities, and achievements in the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as well as looking forward to possible activities in 2024/25.

The Committee's main priorities each year are as follows:

1. To act as a counterbalance that complements the decision-making powers of Cabinet in terms of the strategic direction of the Council.
2. To examine various areas of the Council's work and, in some cases, the work of partner organisations that have significance for our local communities and residents.
3. To scrutinise as a "critical friend" individual Cabinet Members on their key deliverables for the year, thereby enabling the Committee to identify if they can add any value to the pre-decision stages and the ultimate outcomes for the Council.

To meet these priorities, the Committee is scrutinising each new Cabinet Member in turn on the direction of travel for their portfolio and has undertaken reviews on specific topics, including matters that affect internal Council services and those it felt were particularly important to communities and residents including:

- Planning Affordable Housing Requirements
- Provision of Social Housing in East Suffolk
- East Suffolk Council's Environmental Strategy
- Rural Transport Services in East Suffolk

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has participated in this year's activities, particularly guest witnesses and partner representatives who have assisted us with our reviews.

Lastly, I hope this Report reflects what I feel has been a very productive year for the Committee and that you find it informative and interesting.

Mike Deacon

THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

What we do

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new set of “political management arrangements” for the running of Councils, including the formalising of executive arrangements for local government to be balanced by a strong scrutiny function to ensure decision-makers were held to account.

To carry out this scrutiny function, the arrangements included the power to do *anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area.*

The role and purpose of the Committee is to add value to the delivery of public services through providing strong but measured challenge both to the Cabinet and to external organisations where there are issues of public concern. It acts as a 'critical friend' to decision makers by beneficially examining the Council's policies, key decisions, and service provision to ensure they are appropriate, efficient, transparent, accountable and in the best interests of residents. Since 2010, several pieces of legislation have further emphasised the value of scrutiny within modern and effective government, including reviewing issues which lie outside the Council's responsibilities. This is achieved by having co-operative relationships between scrutinised bodies and the Committee.

Scrutiny is led by local, elected Councillors working with other local bodies and local communities to help the constructive improvement of services. Scrutiny uses open and transparent processes and is an influencing, rather than a decision-making, body. It provides co-ordinated reviews of policy and service performance in line with strategic objectives and corporate priorities. Its challenges are constructive and purposeful. It is objective, focused, and realistic in its reviews. These are evidence-based so demonstrating that scrutiny is credible and useful at adding value.

Scrutiny is a catalyst for positive change, promotes and acknowledges good practice and challenges under-performance.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is also the Council's designated **Crime and Disorder Committee** for the purposes of the Police and Social Justice Act 2006 (s19-22) and this requires the Committee to review community safety issues annually.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 (s190) gave Councils powers to scrutinise local NHS trusts, including Primary Care Trusts. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gave more powers to local government to scrutinise other public organisations, including bodies such as, for example, the Environment Agency. In 2023/24, the Committee did not specifically review any aspects of health provision, but the power remains available to do so as considered necessary.

Meetings of East Suffolk Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are open to the public and mostly held in the evenings. The Committee has endeavoured to engage with the wider community and to involve stakeholders at its meetings, as appropriate.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducts its proceedings in accordance with its Terms of Reference (as set out in Part C, Appendix A of the Functions and Responsibilities section of the Constitution) and the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (as set out in Part A, Procedure Rules, of the [Constitution](#)).

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny promotes the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government and has identified the following four principles of good public scrutiny:

- ***To provide a critical friend “challenge” to executive policymakers and decision-makers***
 - ***To enable the voice and concerns of the public***
- ***To be carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny role; and***
 - ***To drive improvement in public services***

The Principles of Good Public Scrutiny - What we do not do

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a wide ranging remit, however, there are some activities that we do not deal with such as:

- quasi-judicial matters eg Planning or Licensing, except if there were to be a significant system or procedural issue.
- issues that are, or should be, resolved by the separate corporate complaints procedure or through internal systems within Service Teams.
- vexatious or discriminatory issues or matters that are not of wider community significance, the latter being more appropriately pursued through the relevant Service Team, Ward Councillor or Cabinet Member with responsibility for the area in question.

In addition, the Committee does not become involved where there would be duplication of existing work, if the review would be untimely, or it would not lead to effective outcomes.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Membership 2023/24

The Committee comprises 13 Members and is politically balanced with 7 GLI, 3 Conservatives and 3 Labour Members. The Membership has slightly changed over the past year and I would like to thank Councillors Grey and Noble for their valued contribution to the Committee. The current membership is as follows:



Mike Deacon (Chair) (LAB)
Chair since May 2023



Dan Clery (Vice-Chair) (GLI)
Vice-Chairman since May 2023



Edward Back (CON)
Member since May 2019



Seamus Bennett (GLI)
Member since May 2023



Amanda Folley (LAB)
Member since May 2023



Louise Gooch (LAB)
Member from May 2019 to
May 2022 & from December 2022



Mark Jepson (CON)
Member since May 2023



Geoff Lynch (CON)
Member since May 2023



Stephen Molyneux (GLI)
Member since May 2023



Mike Ninnmey (GLI)
Member since April 2024



Sarah Plummer (GLI)
Member since May 2023



Ed Thompson (GLI)
Member since May 2023

GLI Vacancy since April 2024

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council's Constitution contains role descriptions outlining the purpose, duties, and responsibilities of the various members of Committees, as well as the qualities and skills required. They are designed to be used as a guide and a working document but are not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. These can be found within Part C, Appendix C, of the Constitution on our website.

In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules states that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must be a member of the opposition.

The Chair provides leadership and ensures the Committee is Member-led and has ownership of its work programme. S/he aims to develop positive relationships and encourages contributions from Members. The Chair also ensures the Committee works inclusively and that the role of scrutiny is conducted in an enabling environment.

Committee Members

Members of the Committee contribute actively at the meetings with fairness and impartiality. They will participate, as appropriate, in the collection and assessment of evidence to produce effective recommendations and follow up on any recommendations made. Committee members take an overview of all the activities the Council is involved in and can decide to scrutinise issues.

Partner and public involvement

The views of local people are of importance to the primary aim of scrutiny – *improving the quality of life for the local community*. Partners and the public can contribute specific expertise to topics being examined from the perspective of either a service provider or a service user. Their involvement adds value and strengthens the links with stakeholders.

The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also provides Members with additional opportunities to engage with groups within the community who may not readily get involved directly in the work of the Council. Therefore, it remains important for the Committee to be outward-looking and to consider how partners and the public might be involved in its work.

Such involvement may be through formal 'co-option' or invitations to representatives of groups to contribute expert knowledge or evidence, or to members of the public to contribute their views.

Scrutiny welcomes and encourages our partners as well as members of the public who live or work in the district to get involved and suggestions for the work of our Committee will be considered for their suitability. Please email our Scrutiny Support Officer Sarah.Davis@eastsuffolk.gov.uk in the first instance.

The Committee's Work Programme 2023/24

The Committee scheduled 10 meetings in its Work Programme and these were on the following dates:

20 July 2023
21 September 2023
19 October 2023
16 November 2023
21 December 2023 (this meeting was subsequently cancelled)
18 January 2024
22 February 2024
21 March 2024
18 April 2024
16 May 2024 (this meeting was subsequently cancelled)

Each year, the Committee has a number of reviews it must carry out such as the Budget (18 January 2024) as well as a requirement to sit at least once a year in its statutory role as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee (20 July 2023).

For the remainder of its meetings in 2023/24, Members decided to focus primarily on reviewing matters that affected Council Services and those issues that were deemed to be of particular importance to the district's communities and residents. Below is a brief summary of the key highlights of the Committee's discussions - the related full formal Committee reports and resulting minutes may also be viewed on the Council's [website](#):

20 July 2023 – East Suffolk Crime & Disorder Committee: Review of the East Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

Supported by a representative from the Police, the following key points were discussed:

- The key priorities of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Action Plan eg Hate Crime, Preventing Radicalisation, Modern Slavery, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Criminal Exploitation, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Volume Crime and Fraud.
- Projects supported by the CSP including a door chain project in Lowestoft, a Crimestoppers campaign at increasing reporting of domestic abuse and an "Ask for Angela" mystery shop.
- Funding for the CSP and the need for further funding.
- The Government's review of CSPs following their review of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Comms for projects, including the use of social media.
- Community Safety Action Plan for Sizewell C to mitigate the potential impacts of an influx of construction workers.
- The high levels of crime and ASB on the Gunton Estate and in Fritton.
- Engagement levels of Responsible Authorities.
- Visibility of policing on the streets.
- The Police no longer dealing with people with mental health problems.
- Policing rural communities.

Resolution(s)
That the report of the Cabinet Member for Community Health be noted and Officers provide Committee Members with information on the Gunton Estate and Fritton Anti Social Behaviour project and contact details for reporting Modern Day Slavery and Domestic Abuse.

21 September 2023 – Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences

Evidence was heard from trade representatives and the Committee discussed the following key points:

- Encouraging the trade to use electric vehicles.
- Customer abuse against drivers and fare dodging.
- The licence application fees and process, including timescales.
- The number and nature of enforcement issues dealt with by the Licensing Team.
- Engagement with the trade.
- The difficulty customers were experiencing in obtaining taxis at certain times.
- The training regime, including safeguarding.

Resolution(s)
<p>1. That the Licensing Committee be recommended to approve an increase in the number of Enforcement Officers to ensure adequate provision across the whole district.</p> <p>2. That the Licensing Committee consider the following matters raised during the Scrutiny Committee’s review into the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Regime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing ways to attract more drivers to the industry, including streamlining processes. • Consider ways to alleviate the financial burden for drivers applying for a Licence which could include providing grants, loan pay back schemes or staggering payments etc. • Review, and consider lobbying the Government and LGA in relation to, the recommendations contained within the Task and Finish Group report entitled the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Steps towards a Safer and More Robust System.

The Licensing Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s report on 16 October 2023 and decided the following:

RESOLVED

1. That a request for resources be made for an additional Licensing Enforcement Officer post.
2. That having considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, officers will not be directed to lobby the Government and Local Government Association (LGA) in relation to, the recommendations contained within the Task and Finish Group report entitled the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Steps towards a Safer and More Robust System.
3. That having considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, officers will not be directed to investigate the introduction of ways to attract more drivers to the industry, including streamlining processes.
4. That having considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, officers be directed to consider ways to alleviate the financial burden for drivers applying for a Licence which could include providing grants, loan pay back schemes or staggering payments.

19 October 2023 – Review of Affordable Housing Planning Requirements

Evidence was heard from several local developers and the Committee discussed the following key points:

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and timescales of when it would be reviewed.
- Definition of Affordable rent.
- Commuted sums and how they could be spent.
- The need for dedicated storage areas for all dwellings.
- The costs of building to Passivhaus standard.
- The different costs associated with developing sites and the impact this had on viability.
- The options for having 100% affordable housing schemes.
- The need to liaise with Registered Providers to encourage them to develop more in East Suffolk.

Resolution(s)
That the Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report and defer any recommendations until after the Review on Social Housing being held in November.

16 November 2023 – Review of the Provision of Social Housing in East Suffolk

Key points discussed:

- The policies within the Local Plans, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- The Government's formula for setting rents for social housing.
- The process used when anyone did not comply with their tenancy agreement.
- The demand for temporary accommodation.
- The standard of build for new Council properties.
- The sale of Housing Association stock and whether the Council would purchase them.
- The location of Council stock and the need to build more in the south.
- The criteria for homelessness and support for those that were facing eviction or sleeping rough.
- The support being provided to re-house St Peter's Court tenants.
- Encouraging communities to set up Community Land Trusts.
- The Gateway to Home Choice Scheme including the number of people on the Register.
- The need for more single person and flexible dwellings that allowed families to downsize.
- The differences between affordable housing and social housing in terms of rents.
- The requirements on developers to provide the same standard of build for the affordable housing.

Resolution(s)
<p>1. That Cabinet</p> <p>(a) explore innovative and creative ways to provide more affordable, efficient and environmentally friendly housing within East Suffolk.</p> <p>(b) review the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Local Plan documents in relation to affordable housing supply sooner rather than later and include environmental sustainability.</p> <p>(c) increase the target for providing Council housing stock from 50 to 100 units per annum.</p> <p>(d) lobby Government on changing the Right to Buy Scheme so that a higher percentage of the receipts can be made available to supply more housing stock.</p> <p>2. That Officers provide a response to the following queries raised by the Committee at this and the last meeting:</p> <p>(a) how many properties had been purchased by the Council since 2019 and how many remained empty?</p> <p>(b) the options, challenges and risks for providing 100% affordable housing developments in the district</p>

Cabinet considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations at their meeting on 5 March 2024 and decided the following:

RESOLVED

That Cabinet

1. Explore innovative and creative ways to provide more affordable, efficient and environmentally friendly housing within East Suffolk.
2. Review the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Local Plan documents in relation to affordable housing supply sooner rather than later and include environmental sustainability.
3. Increase the target for providing Council housing stock from 50 to 100 units per annum.
4. Lobby Government on changing the Right to Buy Scheme so that a higher percentage of the receipts can be made available to supply more housing stock

21 December 2023 – Review of Approach to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in East Suffolk – Meeting cancelled due to weather conditions

18 January 2024 – The Council's Budgets

Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2027-28

Key points discussed:

- Whether it was possible to measure the effectiveness of the budget in delivering the new Strategic Plan given it was unclear in terms of strategy, direction and priorities.
- CCTV equipment and monitoring arrangements.
- Whether the solar panel project was value for money or the funding should be spent elsewhere.

Resolution(s)
No recommendations were made.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2024/25 to 2027/28

Key points discussed:

- Rents, including the proposed increase.
- The costs of retrofitting
- Right to Buy sales.
- Rent arrears and the employment of Officers to support residents who were struggling with their rents as well as the new Safe Suffolk Renters Scheme.
- The need to continue the Empty Homes Officer post.
- More clarity was needed to ensure the Council was not overstretched financially if borrowing took place.
- The need for more temporary accommodation and support for those who were homeless.

Resolution(s)
That, having reviewed the Housing Revenue Account Budget, the Scrutiny Committee endorse borrowing to invest in housing as interest rates come down and the use of an arms length company, and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing investigate new ways to finance sustainable housing potentially using borrowing both new builds and retrofitting.

Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24

Key points discussed:

- The Council reserves.
- The continuation of the New Homes Bonus for a further year.
- The need to generate income in the future to fund services.
- East Suffolk Services Limited.
- The annual pay award.

Resolution(s)
That the Scrutiny Committee endorse Cabinet's recommendations to Full Council as follows: 1. Approves the draft 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in this report and summarised in Appendix A5 and notes the budget forecast for 2025/26 and beyond. 2. Approves a proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £186.57 for 2024/25, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%.

22 February 2024 – Review of East Suffolk Council’s Environmental Strategy

Key points discussed:

- How the Council was aiming to achieve net zero by 2030.
- The need to influence those who generated the other 99% of carbon emissions in the district.
- If the themes in the previous plan that were not in the new Strategic Plan would still be delivered such as “leading by example”

- The urgent need for an action plan and KPI's to show how the Strategy would be delivered.
- The need to create more allotment land across the district.
- The need for more EV chargers across the district.
- How the Council was working with partners to deliver the aims of the Strategic Plan.

Resolution(s)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That, as agreed, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment create an Action Plan with details of how the objectives will be achieved, the proposed outcomes, costings and KPIs for her top three priorities within the Environmental Theme of the Strategic Plan, to be reviewed by this Committee in September 2024 and the other five to be reviewed at a later date. 2. That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment also provide information to the meeting in September 2024 on how the Council was working effectively with partner organisations, especially statutory ones, to deliver the Environmental theme of the Strategic Plan. |
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21 March 2024 – Review of Partnership Working to Tackle Environmental Issues

Key points discussed:

- The diverse number of different partnerships the Council was involved in ranging from the Greenprint Forum to the Suffolk Waste Partnership etc
- The ambitions of East Suffolk's Amazing.
- The need for more joined up working to deal with flytipping quickly.
- The need to promote civic pride and encourage communities to get involved.
- The process for residents to register to undertake litter picks and obtain equipment.
- The resource challenges faced by ESSL to cover the whole district.

Resolution(s)

That, as agreed at the last meeting, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment report back to the 19 September 2024 Committee on any barriers to working in partnership to tackle environmental issues.
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18 April 2024 – Review of Rural Transport Services in East Suffolk

Evidence was heard from Transport East and Suffolk County Council representatives and the Committee discussed the following key points:

- The funding available for rural transport services.
- How the on-demand services being trialled within East Suffolk eg Katch and Buzzabout worked and were funded and would be re-launched/promoted.
- How the on-demand services would be evaluated to understand if the trials had been successful.
- The need to analyse the social value of providing rural transport services
- The role the Council wanted to play given it was not a district function.
- How early Planning interventions for new developments in particular could influence the take up and use of transport services.

Resolution(s)
<p>1. That the Scrutiny Committee be provided with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Terms of Reference for the Transport Working Group, including the aims and objectives of the Group and indicative timescales. • The social value of East Suffolk Council providing on-demand public transport eg Katch/Buzzabout. • How the on-demand services, including the app, would be marketed/relaunched. • How it was intended to attract more volunteer drivers for on-demand services. • The wider impact of the loss of public transport on a community such as car movements and air quality etc. <p>2. That the operators of East Suffolk’s on-demand public transport projects Katch/Buzzabout be encouraged to use vehicles that were as green as they realistically could be given the cost limitations.</p> <p>3. That Planning Officers be asked to encourage developers to include the provision of public transport at the earliest stage of new developments as possible.</p>

Cabinet Member Scrutiny Sessions

In addition to the above reviews, the Committee held scrutiny sessions with the new Cabinet Members regarding the direction of travel, aspirations and challenges they had with their portfolios as follows:

- 21 September 2023 – Councillor Caroline Topping – Leader of the Council
- 19 October 2023 – Councillor Kay Yule – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
- 16 November 2023 – Councillor David Beavan – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
- 18 January 2024 – Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money
- 22 February 2024 – Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte – Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
- 21 March 2024 – Councillor Paul Ashton – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, ICT and Commercial Partnerships
- 18 April 2024 – Councillor Toby Hammond – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport

Sessions with the following Cabinet Members were scheduled to take place in December 2023 and May 24 but were postponed following cancellation of those meetings. They will now be held in the 2024/25 Municipal Year:

Councillor Sarah Whitelock – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism

Councillor Jan Candy – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health

Councillor Tom Daly – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy & Climate Change

Member Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups

A Review of the Approach to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in East Suffolk was scheduled to take place on 21 December 2023, however, the meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. At their meeting on 22 February 2024, the Committee received the report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health and decided to set up a Task and Finish Group to investigate and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the working practices between the Council and Suffolk Constabulary for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) related non-crime issues, to ensure they worked effectively for the benefit of residents.

To date, the Task and Finish Group, which comprises 4 Committee members as well as representatives from Suffolk Constabulary, has met several times and their report is likely to be considered at the July 2024 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Membership of Outside Bodies

The Leader of the Council has requested that the Scrutiny Committee decide on the appointment of representatives to external forums with a scrutiny function. In July 2023, the Committee considered and appointed the following for the 2023/24 Municipal Year:

- **Suffolk County Council Joint Health Scrutiny Committee** – Councillor Ed Thompson as the primary representative with Councillor Janet Craig as the nominated Substitute.
- **Suffolk County Council Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Committee** – Councillor Jan Candy as the primary representative with Councillor Keith Patience as the nominated Substitute.

NOTE: This Outside Body was disbanded by Suffolk County Council in early 2024.

Call-ins and Councillors' Calls for Action

There have been no Call-ins or Calls for Action in the period of this report.

Training and Development

Given the very high number of Committee Members new to Scrutiny, it was decided to hold an inhouse session on 14 June 2023 to give Members a basic understanding of the principles of good Scrutiny which was supplemented by sessions with external trainers on 30 November 2023 - "Best Practice Scrutiny" and 11 January 2024 – Budget Scrutiny.

Budget

The Scrutiny Committee has an annual budget of £6000 and £4016.60 was spent in the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to evolve by regularly reviewing its processes and procedures to identify any areas for development so we can focus on the 'big things' where a positive impact may be delivered for the Council and residents.

The main focus in 2023/24 was developing the skills and knowledge of the new Committee members so there was minimal change in procedures, however, it was agreed to make changes to the process for determining the 2024/25 Work Programme to make it more inclusive. Accordingly, a joint workshop was held in June 2024 with representatives of Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team. The Workshop used the following as a basis for identifying suitable topics and further work is underway to scope them for inclusion on the 2024/25 Work Programme.

Key features of an effective work programme

A Member led process, shortlisting and prioritising topics – with support from officers – that:

- **reflects local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities**
 - **prioritises topics for scrutiny that have most impact or benefit**
 - **involves local stakeholders**
 - **is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues**