

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-20



FOREWORD

I am delighted to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2019-20. The report contains a look at the key activities and successes for Overview and Scrutiny over the past year. The key aims of scrutiny work in the Council are to:-

- Provide healthy and constructive challenge
- Give voice to public concerns
- Support improvement in services
- Provide an independent review

In 2019/20, 54 scrutiny committee meetings were held and three quarters of all formal decisions were considered by a scrutiny committee. Key achievements where overview and scrutiny has made a difference this year include recommending an alternative route for the Spalding Western Relief Road which was then approved; responding to the Healthy Conversations public engagement exercise; recommending the Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, to lead the partnership response to the Wainfleet flood investigation; recommending a ban on the release of sky lanterns and balloons on the Council's land and property, with a decision to implement this ban due shortly; recommending changes to the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-30 which were accepted; and devising a new policy for roundabout sponsorship and advertising, which was later adopted.

On 7 May 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the new Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities. A review was established to examine the new guidance and the implications for Lincolnshire County Council, and assess the Council's existing scrutiny arrangements. The final report contains eight recommendations, including one around having closer relationships with contractors who deliver many of the Council's services, following big improvements in the Corporate Support Services Contract as a result of scrutiny working closely with Serco.

The end of the 2019/20 year has been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, resulting in a number of scrutiny committee meetings being cancelled. On 4 April 2020, the Government published Regulations to enable remote council meetings. The first formal virtual meeting will be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 30 April 2020. I look forward to chairing these meetings remotely for the foreseeable future to support the continuation of the democratic process in these unprecedented times. Virtual meetings will also provide an opportunity for scrutiny to engage better with the wider public in the future.

Should you want to know more about our overview and scrutiny work then please feel free to get in touch using the contact details at the end of the report.



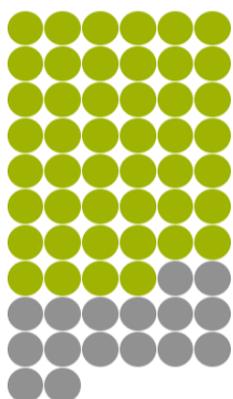
Councillor Robert Parker
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Overview and scrutiny is the process whereby non-executive councillors of the Council examine the authority's functions and services, plus those of partner organisations. 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the legislative changes that led to the establishment of the overview and scrutiny function in English and Welsh councils, a function of local authorities in which all non-Executive councillors are eligible to participate in. Joining them to scrutinise particular issues are parent governors, church representatives, councillors from the district councils and representatives from other local organisations.

Lincolnshire County Council has eight overview and scrutiny committees that consider new policies and strategies, existing policies to see how well they are working and performance information to check that the Council is meeting the standards that have been set.

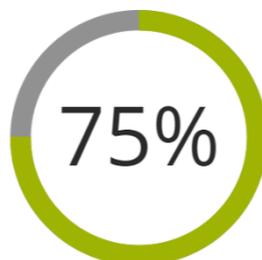
2019/20 SCRUTINY ACTIVITY SUMMARY



74%
of non executive
councillors are
involved in the
scrutiny process



Scrutiny Committee
meetings took place
in 2019/20



of all decisions were
considered through
the scrutiny process



232
scrutiny reports
considered
25%
of which were
pre decision
scrutiny

23% of items were Status / Update Reports
18% of items were Performance or Budget
Scrutiny
16% of items were Policy Development or
Consultation items

Outcomes



KEY OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

ONE YOU LINCOLNSHIRE – INTEGRATED LIFESTYLE SUPPORT *Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee*

The remit of the **Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee** includes the Council's public health function. On 1 July 2019, an integrated lifestyle support service was introduced in Lincolnshire, which brought together, under the **One You Lincolnshire** brand, services aimed at reducing the levels of tobacco-smoking; physical inactivity; obesity; and excess alcohol consumption. This followed the Committee's support for the service in October 2018.



Evidence has shown that the rates of obesity, physical inactivity and tobacco smoking in Lincolnshire are higher than the national averages. In addition, 22% of Lincolnshire adults consume alcohol at a level that poses a risk to their health. The service targets adults, who meet the criteria for support in making important lifestyle changes. It was estimated that **One You Lincolnshire** would reach approximately 17,000 people in its first year. Residents can access these services directly via www.OneYouLincolnshire.org.uk

The Committee is pleased with the progress of **One You Lincolnshire**. Not only will individuals themselves benefit by feeling healthier, but there would also in the long term be a reduction in demand for other services, as a result of this emphasis on prevention. Improved lifestyles and behaviours will reduce the incidence of conditions such as cardiovascular disease; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; musculoskeletal problems. Improvements in lifestyle can also reduce anxiety and depression.

RELEASE OF SKY LANTERNS AND BALLOONS ON COUNCIL LAND *Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee*

"The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend to the Leader of the Council that the County Council show local leadership and introduce a ban on the release of sky lanterns and balloons on all Lincolnshire County Council owned land and property." – March 2020

In March 2020 the **Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee** considered a request from the Leader of the Council to consider whether the Council should introduce a ban on the use of sky lanterns and balloons on all Lincolnshire County Council owned land and property.

The Committee acknowledged that Sky lanterns and helium-filled balloons can have an impact on woodland, farmland and wildlife, and can pose a fire hazard and cause issues from littering and pollution. The Committee supported work to promote environmentally friendly alternatives to balloons and lanterns releases.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF SPECIALIST PROVISION STRATEGY *Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee*

"The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Leader of the Council receives additional information and assurance regarding the costs and value for money of the new build scheme before he makes his decision." – Boston John Fielding Special School Capital Appraisal, January 2020

Following a review of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the Executive granted approval in November 2018 to implement the 'Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy'. The Strategy will make significant changes to all 14 Special Schools in Lincolnshire which will be able to meet "all needs" once implementation is complete. The **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee** is monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and in October 2019, the Committee was updated on the first ten months of delivery of the capital programme for the Strategy. The majority of schemes were still in their infancy with feasibility and early stages of design being the focus for the first cohort of schools.

In January 2020, the Committee considered the first two schemes for the Strategy. The proposed expansion of the capacity at the Lincoln St Christopher's School across two sites would ensure sufficient SEND provision for primary and secondary age children. The Committee heard from the Executive Headteacher for St Christopher's School who highlighted the support and excitement for the proposals from both staff and parents. The Committee was also enthusiastic about the proposals for the two sites and supported the recommendations to the Executive to implement the scheme.

The Committee also considered the proposed expansion and relocation of the Boston John Fielding School to provide a modern facility to meet "all needs" for 140 pupils. The Committee supported the capital appraisal for the new school, but raised significant concerns over the lack of detail in the report regarding the costs and value for money of the scheme, which would cost £13.2M. The Committee recommended that the Leader of the Council received additional information and assurance regarding the costs and value for money of the scheme before he made his decision.

Going forward, members of the Committee will be visiting their nearest special schools to gain an understanding of the current situation and what changes are planned for them to enable the special schools to meet "all needs".



VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) ENHANCEMENTS

Corporate Parenting Panel

"The Corporate Parenting Panel has championed Voices for Choices meetings taking place in more varied locations with improved activities being offered to young people, this recommendation has improved attendances in areas which previously had low uptake." – September 2019

The logo for Voices for Choices (V4C) features the letters 'V4C' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font with a yellow outline. The letters are set against a white, cloud-like shape with a soft, grey shadow.

Voices for Choices (V4C) is Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council with the aim to share experiences of being in care in Lincolnshire. All children in care are members of V4C, which brings them together for social activities and to share views on Lincolnshire care services.

Since September 2019, following a recommendation from the **Corporate Parenting Panel**, V4C meetings have been taking place in a range of external venues with different activities and experiences being offered to young people. The use of varied activities such as Escape Rooms, Bowling, Lazerquest and a visit to the North Sea Observatory have improved attendances in Boston, South Holland and East Lindsey.

CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN & ENERGY PROCUREMENT

Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee

"The Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended that the Leader of the Council approved the Council switching to 100% green energy as a way to meet the Council's carbon emission targets and support the Council's Carbon Management Action Plan" – May 2019

In May 2019, the **Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee** highlighted the need for the Council to consider switching to 100% green energy as part of the Council's local leadership role and carbon management responsibilities to promote renewable energy sources. The Committee recognised that the costs of failing to meet the Council's carbon emission targets by 2050 would be far higher than the estimated increase in energy bills moving to green energy.



The Scrutiny Committee highlighted buying green would also allow the Council to report that it emits zero emissions for the Council's electricity needs, supporting the Council's Carbon Management Action Plan.

The Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended that the Leader of the Council approved the Council switching to a 100% green energy mix.

2019 FLOOD EVENTS

Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee

"The Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee has requested to review the River Steeping Action Plan by 18 May 2020 and stressed the need for partners to work for long term sustainable solutions across Lincolnshire rather than quick fixes." – February 2020



Following a prolonged period of heavy rainfall in June 2019 there was widespread flooding across Lincolnshire, most notably a significant number of properties in Wainfleet were flooded. In the autumn of 2019 some areas in Lincolnshire saw 170% of its average rainfall and there were reported flooding events at Short Ferry and the Barlings Eau, Timberland Delph and Billingham Skirth amongst others.

The **Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee** has a role to show local leadership to understand the risks of flooding in Lincolnshire and the work being undertaken to mitigate the risks and impacts of flooding across the County. Members of the Committee visited Wainfleet and the surrounding area in September 2019, including Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station, Havenhouse Sluice, Wainfleet Water Recycling Centre and the Borough Sluice Complex.

The Committee met in February 2020 at the Storehouse in Skegness and welcomed local residents from Wainfleet to the meeting to hear the debate on the outcome of the Flood Investigation. **The Committee acknowledged that the report was not as clear as the public would like to see and recommended that the County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, lead the partnership response from the flood investigation and requested to see the action plan by 18 May 2020.**

The Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee also continues to work with multi agency partners, such as the Environment Agency, to monitor the progress of major schemes such as the Boston Barrier.

HEALTHY CONVERSATION 2019 ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire

Between March and October 2019, the NHS in Lincolnshire undertook the Healthy Conversation public engagement exercise on the future of local health services. This included the eight strands of the acute services review, each with an emerging option for future services.



www.lincolnshire.nhs.uk

In response, the **Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire** commented on each Healthy Conversation topic. The Committee also recorded its concerns on the reach of the engagement activity, given Lincolnshire's population of 700,000. As an example, the workshops in Boston and Grantham had limited places, allocated by ballot in each case.

A recurring theme in the Committee's comments was how easily patients would be able to access health services, as several options, such as those for in-patient oncology and haematology; and in-patient paediatrics, involved the centralisation of services to Lincoln. Public transport in Lincolnshire and the continuing poor performance of the non-emergency patient contract were key issues to be considered by the NHS.

The Committee was advised that if capital funding was not available, consultation on that item might be deferred, while consultation on other items, with either identified capital funding or no requirement for capital funding, would proceed, in line with NHS England rules and guidance.

The Committee's expectation is that for the full consultation, a leaflet would be sent to every household, which will lead to a better rate of response from the residents of Lincolnshire.



SPALDING WESTERN RELIEF ROAD

Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee

"The Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee supported proceeding with the Spalding Western Relief Road Scheme, but did not support the proposed 'route option three' and agreed to recommend 'route option four' to the Executive." – December 2019

The Spalding Western Relief Road was considered by the **Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee** in December 2019. The Committee welcomed local residents who presented a petition calling on the County Council to amend the route of the proposed Spalding West Relief Road.



The Scrutiny Committee supported carrying out of the Spalding Western Relief Road Scheme and the delivery of the Scheme in sections, but did not support the proposed 'route option three' and formally decided to recommend 'route option four' to the Executive, with an alignment through the Trojan Wood factory site to the west. **In January 2020, the Executive reviewed the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee and agreed to progress with Route Option 4, also known as the Trojan Wood route, for the Spalding Western Relief Road.**

The Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee has continued to monitor the progress of major projects such as the Grantham Southern Relief Road and the Lincoln Eastern Bypass as part of the Quarterly Performance report and Major Highways Scheme Update.

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES CONTRACT

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

"The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has reviewed the performance of the Corporate Support Services Contract information and commended the positive achievements made by the service." – December 2019



The Corporate Support Services Contract with Serco Limited covers a range of back-office services including Information Management & Technology (IMT), the Customer Service Centre, People Management services and Financial services. Since May 2017, the **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** has had IMT within its remit and has received quarterly updates on the performance of the Corporate Support Services Contract against the Key Performance Indicators or KPIs.

In May 2017, there were 30 KPIs out of the 41 which achieved the Target Service Level (Green rating), three achieved Minimum Service Level (Amber rating), five were below Minimum Service Level (Red rating), and three were in mitigation.

Over the past couple of years, the regular monitoring of the KPIs by the Board has resulted in the performance of the contract improving immensely. Since October 2017, only two KPIs were rated as Red, each KPI for one month only, and since July 2018 only one KPI was rated Amber, again for one month only. **In December 2019, out of the 40 KPIs now being monitored, 35 were rated Green and five were in mitigation.** The Board will continue to monitor the contract through the KPIs, particularly those that are in mitigation.

The Board has also been closely monitoring the implementation of the numerous key transformation projects being undertaken by Serco, which were then narrowed down to a top 20 priority IMT projects as agreed by the Board. Over the past few years, the number of outstanding IMT projects has significantly reduced and the 'fixing the basics' projects are nearing completion. The focus will now be shifted to the implementation of new projects, although the Board will continue to monitor any outstanding red and amber projects.

OTHER SUCCESSES

The **Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee** has continued to engage with **Network Rail**, and in October 2019 welcomed **London North Eastern Railway (LNER)** and **East Midlands Trains (EMT)** to discuss key services improvements in Lincolnshire. The Committee values the opportunity to engage with key rail partners and aims to continue to build a strong and positive relationship to better influence future service provision.



In 2019 the **Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee** recommended the need to support the farming sector through the current and coming challenging period of change.



The Committee has supported the work carried out by the **Lincolnshire Rural Support Network (LRSN)** and as a result of the work of the Committee, the **Lincolnshire Rural Support Network** received a **£40,000 grant from Lincolnshire County Council**. This grant has been used to support the farming and rural community during periods of anxiety, stress and problems relating to their families and businesses.

In September 2019 the **Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee** considered the outcome of the procurement process for '**Highways 2020**', the development of new contracts for the Highway Service. The Committee supported the recommendations to the Executive to award a contract for the delivery of the Highway Works to Balfour Beatty Group; Traffic Signals to Colas; and Professional Services to WSP UK. **The Committee expressed its thanks to officers for the early engagement with the Scrutiny Committee as well as the inclusion of members of the Committee on the project board.** Councillors highlighted the positive experience of being involved, as well as the detailed, open and robust work undertaken by officers as part of the Highways 2020 project.

The **Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee** visited the new **Lincoln Blue Light Campus** in July 2019.

WORKING GROUPS

Committees can establish working groups to work in a less formal way either working independently or in collaboration with Council officers. These working groups have responded to national consultations, reviewed existing policies and looked to develop new policies in conjunction with officers.

CCTV PARKING ENFORCEMENT OUTSIDE SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP

“The Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee recommended that the CCTV enforcement trial was ended, and additional Civil Enforcement Officer foot patrols was the preferred future direction...” – January 2020

The CCTV Pilot Scheme for Parking Enforcement Outside Schools Working Group took place during June, July and October 2019. The Working Group was clear that the safety of young people outside schools and greater parking compliance was the overall goal, and providing mobile patrols, being more visible at key times and offering greater Enforcement Officer coverage was the desired future direction.



The working group agreed that the trial was positive to undertake in order to gather evidence on effectiveness, but highlighted that the costs of rolling out the scheme further had been a key consideration. Other options considered to monitor school keep clear zones included increased CCTV vehicles, fixed CCTV and additional enforcement patrols.

In January 2020 the **Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee** considered the outcomes of the working group and recommended that the CCTV enforcement trial was ended and that additional Civil Enforcement Officer foot patrols was the preferred future direction, to ensure the safety of young people outside schools and offer greater Enforcement Officer coverage to keep areas outside of schools free from traffic.

CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP

"The Council approves the Corporate Leadership Team, working with the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and other stakeholders to develop the details of the Corporate Plan to include the vision, the strategic ambitions, how success will be measured and the strategic changes needed to fulfil the aspirations and expectations of Lincolnshire's communities" - September 2019

Following the County Council meeting in September 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board established a working group to work with officers and contribute to the development of the draft Corporate Plan for 2020-2030.

The working group met on three occasions between September and November 2019 to discuss the emerging draft content of the Corporate



Plan, and receive feedback from the external stakeholder engagement and from the Board who considered the draft Corporate Plan at its meeting in October. The working group made a number of suggestions for amending the draft content of the Corporate Plan. Feedback from the working group and the Board was provided to an informal meeting of the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive in November.

On 28 November 2019, the Board considered a further draft of the Corporate Plan along with the working group's feedback and agreed to make a number of recommendations to the County Council. These recommendations were in relation to amending the wording of the four ambitions to ensure that they were achievable and deliverable by the Council. In addition, feedback was provided by the Board on the design of the draft Corporate Plan regarding the diversity of the photos and how representative they were of the wider population and areas of Lincolnshire.

These recommended changes from the **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** were incorporated into the final draft of the Corporate Plan prior to its approval by the County Council on 11 December 2019.

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANELS

The Council has two scrutiny panels to undertake reviews that focus on a particular issue and consider it in greater detail than is possible at Committee. These reviews will typically last around six months and will include a mixture of interviews with relevant council officers, research of best practice elsewhere, meetings with service users and community groups, and consultation with wider parts of the community. These reviews culminate in a final report with recommendations which are then presented to a meeting of the Council's Executive.

REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The publication of statutory guidance for overview and scrutiny by the Government in May 2019 provided an opportunity to assess the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements.

After a clause by clause review of the guidance and the Council's arrangements, the Scrutiny Panel made eight recommendations. Some of the recommendations would need a decision by the County Council, while others are more operational in their nature, and could be implemented without formal decisions. In the first instance, the views of the Executive are required, prior to any further action.

Lincolnshire has had an *executive – scrutiny protocol* in place since 2017. Some revisions are proposed to this protocol, not only to align with the statutory guidance, but also to emphasise the early involvement provisions, as well as reflecting existing good practice. There are areas where deviations from the statutory guidance are also proposed.

No changes are recommended to the Council's existing overview and scrutiny committee structure, other than to the safeguarding scrutiny arrangements. Scrutiny committee time is a valuable resource, typically involving eleven councillors and several officers for up to three hours per meeting. As 31% of items at committee meetings led to a minute where the item is only 'noted', with no other action or comment recorded, there is a proposal for measures to reduce this. There are also proposals for training and development, so that scrutiny committee members can make the most of their meeting time.

There is satisfaction with the level of support provided for overview and scrutiny from the Council's officers, with suggestions on developing the understanding of overview and scrutiny; and raising its profile generally. Finally, there is a recommendation on the involvement of external organisations, which include, in line with the statutory guidance, a request for certain contractors to attend and provide information at committees.

ROUNABOUT SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING SCRUTINY REVIEW

The purpose of the scrutiny review was to consider the current policy for the sponsorship of roundabouts 'Request for Sponsorship of Highway Planting' which had been in existence since 1996 and develop the policy to enable effective management of roundabout sponsorship and advertising in Lincolnshire.

The review was undertaken between July 2018 and April 2019, which comprised eight non-Executive Councillors. The Scrutiny Panel examined the current guidance and data regarding the suitability of roundabouts in each District for sponsorship and advertising and approached each of the District Councils to find out what the current situation was with roundabout sponsorship across Lincolnshire. It discovered that currently only Boston Borough Council and City of Lincoln Council have sponsorship schemes in place, and feedback received highlighted that the size of the signage was too small to encourage businesses to sponsor or advertise on a roundabout.

The Scrutiny Panel final report highlighted that the Highways and Traffic Guidance for Sponsorship of Highway Planting was out of date and needed replacing. The Scrutiny Panel developed the "Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges" as a replacement and recommended it for approval to the Executive. The Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report at its meeting in July 2019 and the final report was then considered by the Executive in October 2019.

The Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT accepted all four recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel, and approved the new policy as the replacement for the Highways and Traffic Guidance on 23 March 2020.

The Scrutiny Panel also proposed that the County Council explores a countywide sponsorship scheme to cover those areas of the county where no other council scheme exists. This is currently being investigated through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) advertising framework.

The logo for Lincolnshire County Council, featuring the word "Lincolnshire" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "COUNTY COUNCIL" in a smaller, all-caps font below it. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic of a flower or leaf.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions regarding the overview and scrutiny process, or any of the work we have undertaken then please get in touch with one of the officers listed below.

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- Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
- Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Parenting Panel

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