

## **This is an open report**

**Report to:** Cabinet  
Council

**Date of Meeting(s):** Thursday, 24 November 2022  
Wednesday, 7 December 2022

**Subject:** Annual Scrutiny Report 2020/21 and 2021/22

**Report of:** Brendan Whitworth, Assistant Director - Legal (Monitoring Officer)

**Contact Officer:** Kay East (01942 827113)

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder and area:** Councillor Nazia Rehman, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Transformation

---

### **Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief overview of the role of the Council's Scrutiny Committees whilst providing a snapshot of the areas of scrutiny activity undertaken by the Committees during the 2020/21 and 2021/22 municipal years.

### **Link to Corporate Priorities:**

Our People: Together we feel happy, safe, included and look out for each other:

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people
- Communities that care for each other

Our Place: Together we are proud of our towns and look after our environment:

- Vibrant town centres for all
- An environment to be proud of
- Embracing Culture, Sport and Heritage

Our Future: Together we will build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive:

- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well-connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all

### **Wards Affected:**

All

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is requested to endorse the Annual Report for 2020/21 and 2021/22 for approval by Council.

The Council is requested to accept the Annual Report for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Implications:**

**What are the financial implications?**

n/a

**Is budget release necessary (Capital Expenditure Only)?**

n/a

**What are the legal implications?**

n/a

**What are the staffing implications?**

n/a

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason). If not required, then a relevance check needs to be completed.**

EIA not required – Relevance Check is attached

**What are the property implications in terms of reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?**

n/a

**What are the Corporate Parenting Implications?**

n/a

**Risks:**

None

**Sustainability/Environmental implications:**

n/a

---

Has the Assistant Director - Legal (Monitoring Officer) (Brendan Whitworth) confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the Director Resources and Contracts (Deputy Chief Executive)(Paul McKeivitt) confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

---

**What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):**

There are no alternative options, as an annual report is required to be produced to report the activities of the Scrutiny Committees to the Cabinet and Council

**Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?**

This report does not involve a key decision as Council approval is required.

The Non-Key decision made as a result of this report will be published within **two working days** and cannot be actioned until **five working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 6 December 2022, unless exempt from call-in.

This item is included on the Forward Plan.

---

**There are no background papers for this report.**

---

<b>Directorate Sign-off:</b>	Brendan Whitworth
<b>Date:</b>	15 November 2022

Please list any appendices:

<b>Appendix number or letter</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	Scrutiny Committee Work Plans 2020/2021
B	Scrutiny Committee Work Plans 2021/2022

## Introduction

Scrutiny is a process that ensures that decisions taken by the Council and its partners reflect the opinions, wishes and priorities of the Wigan residents and is carried out by Elected Members, who have the ability to understand and promote the concerns of their local residents.

It is a Councillor driven, non-party political process that is designed to support and enhance the Council's decision-making function by scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet, Portfolio Holders and senior officers, whilst also examining the Council's delivery of services and performance.

The Scrutiny Committees do not make decisions, but try to influence those who do, by considering the major issues affecting the borough and making recommendations about how services, programmes of work and decisions can be improved.

Wigan Council has four Scrutiny Committees. These are:

- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Confident Council Scrutiny Committee
- Confident Places Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Each of the four committees scrutinise the Council's functions in relation to their relevant directorate, with the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee also scrutinising the activities of the Council's Public Health function and NHS bodies, which have responsibility for commissioning and providing health care services.

At the start of each municipal year, each Scrutiny Committee is required to set a work plan for the forthcoming year, consisting of items that will be brought to the committee at each of its meeting during this period.

These items have been identified and proposed via a range of sources, with these sources including but not limited to:

- Scrutiny Committee Members;
- Directors;
- Assistant Directors;
- Relevant Service Managers;
- Programme Manager; and
- Scrutiny Officer.

This report aims to provide a brief snapshot of scrutiny activity undertaken by during the 2020/21 and 2021/22 municipal years undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

The full work plans for each committee for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 municipal years are provided for information at the attached Appendices A and B.

## **Municipal Year 2020/21**

### **Background**

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, which seriously disrupted the Council's work streams and delivery of services. The pandemic also disrupted the Council's committee meeting schedule. As such, meetings were postponed or cancelled, which caused a deal of uncertainty in relation to the work plans for the Scrutiny Committees.

During this period of disruption, the work streams and the priorities within the Council's directorates were under constant review in order to react appropriately and responsibly to the crisis, prioritising relevant areas, work streams and projects in the response to the pandemic.

Due to the disruption, the work plans for the Scrutiny Committees were set on a meeting-by-meeting basis, with a degree of fluidity in relation to matters that arose during the year, or items that need to be delayed or replaced with newer, more pertinent items over the period of response.

The areas of work and items that were scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committees can be found attached at Appendix A.

### **Virtual Meetings**

During the 2020/21 municipal year, as with all the Council's committee meetings, Scrutiny Committee meetings were held virtually, with Members attending via Teams Live, with the committee members required to learn new skill sets in relation to technology and participating in online meetings.

### **Joint Meetings**

In August 2020, a meeting of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee took place, to which Confidential Council Scrutiny Committee members were invited. This was due to the areas being discussed being pertinent to both Committees.

The Committees considered a report and presentation of the Director – Strategy, Innovation and Healthier Wigan Partnership, which provided an update on the development of the Community Resilience Model in response to COVID-19.

The Community Resilience operating model was built on the Council's existing foundations for place-based working, and how it had been developed and embedded during the pandemic, with resources from across the Council, partners, elected members and our local communities.

The Committees discussed areas such as the importance of maintaining telephone services to support those unable to access digital services; the strengthening of work with partner organisations to source the details of residents with complex needs, to ensure that the Council fully supported all residents via the central welfare offer; readiness to step the model back up should a future wave of COVID-19 occur; strategies considered to support homeless residents placed in temporary accommodation for the duration of the pandemic and gaining an understanding of the pathways to more sustainable housing; and how Elected

Members could support the future neighbourhood arrangements, and track and trace arrangements in the borough by maximising the use of their local networks.

The Committees endorsed and supported the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the new Community Resilience operating model and the opportunities to build new working practices into the future neighbourhood arrangements. The Committees also requested Homelessness Services and COVID-19 be reconsidered by the relevant Committees later in the year, as the pandemic situation unfolded.

## **Call In**

During the 2020/21 municipal year, two decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Environmental Services were called in and brought before the Confident Place Scrutiny Committee. These decisions and the outcome of the call-in process are highlighted below:

### **Confident Places Scrutiny Committee - 22 October 2020**

#### **Decision: Wigan Statement of Community Involvement 2020**

“The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Environmental Services approves the revised Wigan Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), 2020.

The Council’s current Statement of Community Involvement needed to be updated ahead of scheduled consultation on the publication version of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework in November/December and to be in accordance with COVID-19 Regulations. This would enable the Council to amend its consultation methods so the public can engage on planning matters in a safe and accessible manner.”

Councillor Winstanley had stated that the reasons for calling in the Portfolio Holder decision were as follows:-

1. that there was no reference to Elected Members or of the desirability of including Elected Members in pre-application discussions; and
2. that the Statement of Community Involvement be amended to include Elected Members in the pre-application discussions.

Following presentations and questioning of all parties present and involved in the decision and call in, the Committee supported the original Portfolio Holder decision as published on 2 October 2020.

### **Confident Places Scrutiny Committee - 15 February 2021**

#### **Decision: Planning Local Enforcement Plan**

“The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Environmental Services approves the Planning Local Enforcement Plan, dated January 2021, to be brought into operation as soon as practicable, and operated thereafter as the basis for the Council’s activity in respect of planning enforcement matters”

Councillor Winstanley had stated that the reasons for calling in the Portfolio Holder decision were as follows:-

1. The decision to accept written only objections online to Planning breaches is potentially discriminatory on the grounds of age and socioeconomic grounds.

Following presentations and questioning of all parties present and involved in the decision and call in, the Committee supported the original Portfolio Holder decision as published on 19 January 2021.

## **LGIU Training**

During the 2020/21 municipal year, LGIU Scrutiny training in relation to Questioning Techniques was offered to all members of Scrutiny Committees.

The programme had been developed by the LGIU for Councillors who wanted to develop their questioning skills, particularly relating to Scrutiny, and focussed on:

- Awareness of the different types of questions;
- Avoiding poor practice questions;
- Probing skills;
- Voice and tonality; and
- Active listening skills.

## Municipal Year 2021/22

**Confident Council:** *decisions, functions, projects, programmes and services relating to the Deal for the Future, falling within the corresponding Cabinet portfolios, managed by the Resources Directorate, of a corporate nature or not specific to any of other the Scrutiny Committees).*

### **Chairman's Comments:**

*"The recent few years have been difficult with the presence of COVID which has restricted the Confident Council Scrutiny Committee meeting face to face.*

*Using Teams, the committee was able to carry on and scrutinise a variety of agenda items. During this time no Scrutiny Committee visits took place.*

*The Committee is now back to meeting in person.*

*The Work Plan for 2021/2022 is as varied and interesting as in previous years.*

*Last year the areas covered ranged from Anti-social behaviour to a report on Haigh Hall and Pennington Flash. The Committee scrutinised, gave views and suggestion to the relevant reports.*

*One aspect of coming out from COVID, are the reports about how the Council has coped with the pandemic. Our workforce have done a marvellous job but as a Committee we needed to scrutinise what was being done to support staff - Confident Council have had reports on "Return of the Workforce/Staff Working Arrangements" and "Supporting Attendance and Employee Wellbeing."*

*These reports came as the Council was just getting back after COVID. Since then and 12 months later there has been an updated report brought back to the Committee with suggestions/comments made by the committee being take on board.*

*I would like to thank Confident Council Scrutiny Committee members for their input into all reports that have come to Committee."*

At the beginning of the Municipal year the Committee looked at Community Wealth Building and the work that had been carried out by the Wigan Borough Partnership since its launch in September 2020.

Members scrutinised the development of the Community Wealth Building approach in Wigan and questioned how the Council could do more to ensure the approach was embedded across all Council Services and highlighted the need to work alongside local businesses and the voluntary sector.

Following discussions, the Committee endorsed the local approach to Community Wealth Building and welcomed the proposals to challenge inequality and support Wigan Borough's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the main focuses of the Committee was the wellbeing of the Council's workforce, particularly following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the affect it had on working arrangements for staff and how the staff were dealing with this. The Committee received two reports during the municipal year relating to staffing.



Members received an update in relation to the return of the workforce and staff working arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic. The arrangements ensured a new approach and a cultural shift that embraced digital and blended approaches to support the key organisational priorities.

The Committee endorsed the plans, new approach and the cultural shift in relation to reimagining how the Council works but recognised that the workforce project needed to be an ongoing project to enable the needs of all individuals to be met. The Committee also requested that Members continued to be kept informed of Senior Officer starters and leavers.

The Council's leisure services and greenspaces were also a priority for the Committee. The Committee reviewed and monitored the progress made within the Leisure and Wellbeing Services following the transfer from Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) to the Council on the 1 April 2021.

It also received an update on the progress made with the development and implementation of the major investment programmes scheduled for delivery at Haigh Woodland Park, Haigh Hall, and Pennington Flash.

The Committee endorsed the progress made with the integration of Leisure and Wellbeing Services and suggested ideas for improvements and asked that these be considered when taking the service forward. One of the requests of the Committee was that a review of all parks/play areas across the borough be carried out, in addition to the major parks. The Committee also requested an update on the major investment programmes in 12 months' time to enable Members to monitor the progress of these developments.

A special request came from the Committee for a plaque to be placed on the lodges in remembrance of the Lodge Keepers, James and Elizabeth Higson, who lived there from 1884 – 1909.

The new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021 – 2024 was reviewed by the Committee along with the Domestic Abuse Service Community Contract, which had been in place for 12 months. Following their examinations and scrutiny of the proposed strategy, the Committee welcomed and endorsed the work being undertaken and recognised the importance of partnership working to tackle this issue. Members did however share concerns around the shortage of housing, with over 13K people currently on the housing register waiting for a Council house and how this would impact domestic abuse victims.

The rising cost in energy prices was a cause for concern for the Committee. A report on the Council's current position and the actions being taken with regard to the rise in energy prices across the United Kingdom (UK) was presented to the Committee. Members made suggestions on how to help mitigate the issues that the Council and its residents were facing in relation to the rise in energy prices and asked that these be considered by the relevant Director.

**Health and Social Care:** *decisions, functions, projects, programmes and services relating to the Deal for the Future, falling within the corresponding Cabinet portfolios and managed by the Director for Adult Social Care and Health, including scrutiny of the Health Service under Section 7 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and associated regulations*

### **Chairman's Comments:**

*"During 2021/22, COVID-19 was once again a topic of concern which affected many of our residents.*

*As Chair, I would particularly like to thank Dr Kate Ardern and the team involved for their clear and detailed information regarding COVID-19 rates in the borough.*

*In addition to the issues surrounding COVID-19 a wide range of reports were considered by the committee including, Care Home support, Supported Employment and strategies concerning Mental Health awareness.*

*Looking forward it would be useful and informative for the members of the committee to take part in site visits to meet some of our service providers.*

*I would like to thank everyone involved with the committee for working together to improve Health and Social Care for all."*

During the Course of the 2021/2022 municipal year, the Committee kept a strong focus on the impact of COVID-19 and how the vaccination programme was being rolled out. The Director - Public Health and the Associate Director – Primary Care, Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), detailed updates and provided information on the key developments and statistics on the work being undertaken in relation to COVID-19 within the Wigan Borough at each of the Committee meetings. The Committee reviewed the statistics provided and monitored the progress that was being made in relation to COVID-19.

An important issue to the Committee was the support that care homes received during COVID-19 and beyond. The Committee examined a report which provided an overview of the support offer available to Wigan's care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenge was also given on what measures had been taken to ensure the well-being of residents placed in care homes outside of the borough.

Following the Members' questions and challenge, the Committee endorsed the work that was being undertaken in relation to care home support during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee shared the concerns of Healthwatch, Wigan and Leigh on the issues and challenges that local people were experiencing with accessing NHS dentistry services.

Healthwatch - Wigan and Leigh had been working with Healthwatch colleagues across Greater Manchester to gather evidence in relation to the issues and challenges, due to the recognition of this matter not being restricted to the Wigan Borough.

It was highlighted that an urgent review of how the dentistry service was commissioned and funded was required and how it was unacceptable that patients could easily book a private appointment but could not receive an NHS appointment.

The transformation and recommissioning of Supported Living Services also saw support and challenge. The reconfiguration of the services ensured the best support and experiences for people with disabilities living in their own home in their local communities in Wigan.

The Committee endorsed the work that was being undertaken to transform the Supported Living Service; and requested feedback from service users who had experienced a change of service provider due to the transformation and recommissioning of the service.

Members of the Confident Council Scrutiny Committee were invited to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2022 for the consideration of the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and Empty Homes Strategy.

The purpose of the Housing Standards Enforcement Policy was to address the legal responsibilities, policies, principles, and priorities that Wigan Council would adhere to, when undertaking enforcement action in relation to private sector housing and certain related matters of public health. The Empty Homes Strategy provided the framework for taking a different approach to bringing empty homes back into use.

The Committees acknowledged the current demand pressures for affordable quality housing and endorsed the reasons for introducing a formal Housing Standards Policy; and the approach to bring empty homes back into use as outlined in the Empty Homes Strategy, prior to its approval by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 March 2022.

The Committee monitored the progress made since the transfer of Wigan's Mental Health Services from Northwest Boroughs Healthcare NHS FT (NWB) to Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS FT (GMMH) on the 1 April 2021. Concerns were raised around the number of young people suffering with early stages of mental health and questioned what more could be done to support parents, carers and schools. The long waiting times for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was also highlighted as an issue, Members questioned whether there was a way that help, and support could be identified quicker for those in need.

**Confident Places:** *decisions, functions, projects, programmes and services relating to the Deal for the Future, falling within the corresponding Cabinet portfolios, or managed by the Places Directorate*

#### **Chairman's Comments:**

*"The committee has collaborated very well with the officers again this year. However, this has been helped by the manner in which members are given reports for the meetings, with reports made more concise, data put in the appendices to ensure members were able to read and absorbed the information. This has led to more active engagement during the meetings and both members and officers have commented in a positive manner over the way the work has improved.*

*Now we are able to have face to face meeting again we have focused on the major needs of the Directorate - Climate, Clean air, transport, and cycling, walking paths, housing and conservation planning for our towns along with flood prevention.*

*All of the above have been positive work projects and all are very relevant to the improvement of our borough.*

*We needed to recognise that the majority of the work linked together. Climate change is impacting on our health and wellbeing. This in turn is affected by clean air needs so the walking and cycling became a priority. At the same time flood risk, due to the peaks in rainfall had to be addressed and like the other items will be a major focus in the coming meetings.*

*Housing is a continuing problem due to predominantly a lack of funding from Central Government. We have spent years selling our stock under the right to buy but as the money does not reflect current build costs and the vast majority does not get returned to the Council and this in turn leads to an ever-growing shortfall in social housing.*

*Wigan Borough are making inroads by finding funding which is far better than a lot of authorities and our officers should be praised for the way they are managing this. Confident Places will continue to work to improve the environment in which we live, and the members are all committed to this.”*

Climate change was a strong focus of the Committee, and it received regular progress reports throughout the year. The Committee offered challenge on the work that was being undertaken across the Borough on Climate Change and reviewed the Council's climate action themes. At the first meeting of the municipal year, it received an update on the action taken on the climate crisis, including updates on each of the six climate action themes, and reviewed the priority actions on climate change for the next 12 months.

The Committee examined and endorsed the Annual Climate Change Progress Report prior to it being considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 2 September 2021.

The Committee were consulted on the proposed programme for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and were cited on the emerging 'Planning for Health' SPD and 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' SPD prior to its formal public consultation.

This gave Members an opportunity to contribute to the up-and-coming SPDs and question officers on its development. Although the Committee endorsed the emerging SPDs, Members raised concerns around the exclusion of off-street parking within the programme and to the lack of progress on a residential design guide.

The Committee reviewed and monitored the performance of the Council's Highways and Network Management Group in managing and maintaining the borough's highway infrastructure, aligned to the Department of Transport (DfT) national approach for using Highway Asset Management and evidencing the Council's annual self-assessment, prior to the publication of the 'Asset Management Annual Report 2021/22'.

The Committee were consulted on Flood Risk Management Plan and gave comment and gave challenge on the works that had been undertaken and were planned for the borough by the Environment Agency (EA) in partnership with Wigan Council. The Committee highlighted its areas for concern and received reassurances from officers.

Following the examination of the report the Committee recommended that the Council:

- responded to the Consultation and support the Environment Agency's proposals for those schemes located within the borough;
- as the Local Lead Flood Authority, continued to support the partnership working arrangements that have been developed with the Environment Agency; and

- continued to work with the Environment Agency to develop flood risk management schemes and funding bids to deliver future schemes that will ensure that the borough adapts and becomes more resilient to future flood risk and climate change.

The Committee also recommended that the Planning section examined any requests from developers to build new houses where flooding is likely.

The Council's Cycling and Walking Programme was reviewed by the Committee, the approach for the programme development and its delivery and the associated proposals relating to activation and behaviour change and monitoring and evaluation was presented to Members.

Members made comment on the programme and offered suggestions to officers to help improve and develop the programme further. The Committee requested that Members be kept informed and cited, and priorities agreed, prior to any publication of newly designed cycling and walking routes.

An overview of the Purple Flag accreditation scheme and the Council's progress to date with its ambition to receive accreditation for Wigan Town centre was presented to the Committee. Members felt it was a priority for residents to feel safe when visiting our town centres at night and was fully supportive of the council's submission for this prestigious award.

The Purple Flag accreditation was managed by the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) and aimed to raise standards and broaden the appeal of towns and city centres at night. Purple Flag status was awarded to towns or cities that could demonstrate excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy, and which are diverse, vibrant, safe, attractive and welcoming.

Purple Flag accredited towns have all reported a consistent increase in footfall and a decrease in crime and anti-social behaviour within the night-time economy. It also provided a raised profile and an improved public image for the location and a more successful mixed-use economy in the longer term.

The Committee suggested that following the submission and successful award for Wigan Town Centre, there be an opportunity for the other larger town centre across the borough to be put forward for the accreditation.

**Children and Young People:** *decisions, functions, projects, programmes and services relating to the Deal for the Future, falling within the corresponding Cabinet portfolios and managed by the Director for Children and Families*

### **Chairman's Comments:**

*"Throughout 2020/2021-2021/2022, we have seen significant continued transformation and evolvments in both the way we work as an authority and transformation within our teams, positive results in bringing about change, streamlining delivery and enabling smarter planning.*

*We have had positive outcomes within many of our directorates, along with significant improvements. There have also been unanticipated bumps along the way – without negative effects on our most vulnerable.*

*The Committee have offered significant constructive challenge within each of the service area items put before them, highlighted in the attached work plans.*

*We are pleased to report significant change has taken place for the better via a transformational and challenging work plan continuing to evolve as we transform the delivery models.*

*Particular highlights over the last year have been an opportunity to forge a stronger and robust forward plan working collaboratively with key stake holders, residents, community groups and staff, not forgetting the invaluable contributions from our army of volunteer organisations and individuals, along with the dedicated service directors and their teams.*

*All this is not forgetting the opportunity to meet with so many wonderful residents and service users, getting first-hand lived experiences, particularly good use of technology, ensuring we continued to scrutinise using online means due to 'lockdown' restrictions, and latterly when restrictions lifted face to face meetings once again.*

*A personal highlight for me as Chair, was for the committee to have positive changes to our care leaver support scheme to better enable our care leavers for their futures. True accounts and scrutiny of the offer we deliver at the coal face. This is an essential component in auditing that 'we are doing what we say'".*

A priority of the Committee was to monitor the workings of the Wigan's Deal for Children and Young People Board and examine what progress it was making, the Committee received regular update on this area throughout the municipal year. The Committee also reviewed the progress that was being made on Children's Services Improvement Plan.

In addition to this, the Committee also received the Children's Services 20/21 Annual Performance Data, which provided information on the progress and an overview of the performance of Children's Social Care services in Wigan, in the reporting year of 2020/21

The Wigan Deal for Children and Young People's Board had now taken responsibility and provided scrutiny for the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan and provided oversight and accountability to the rest of the authority and the partnership and met on a six-weekly basis.

The Committee's input and discussions, along with information and assurances from officers around social workers caseloads, then allowed the Committee to support the the recent developments of the Wigan's Deal for Children and Young People Board, and support and endorse the progress of Children's Services Improvement Plan and Children's Social Care Improvement Plan.

The Committee had the opportunity to consider and comment on the findings from the inspection of Youth Justice Services in Wigan undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspector of Probation (HMIP) in April 2021.

The inspection focused on three domains; the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of Out of Court Disposal work. HMIP used the same inspection gradings as Ofsted, and overall Wigan was rated as 'Good'.

The Committee were pleased with the rating and congratulated the service on the 'Good' rating during the recent inspection of Youth Justice Services in Wigan undertaken by Her

Majesty's Inspector of Probation (HMIP); and endorsed the work being undertaken by the Targeted Youth Support team.

During the year, the Committee received Annual Reports for the period of 20/21 for the following three areas:

- Annual safeguarding
- Together for Adoption
- Fostering

Members monitored progress by highlighting and commenting on the good performance and areas for improvement for each of the services before endorsing the Annual Reports.

Another focus area for the Committee was the Council's offer for Care Leavers and the work undertaken to improve outcomes. The offer had been substantially developed over the last 12 months based on feedback from the current Care Leavers and Members received a report on how this offer had been developed.

The Committee made a number of key points on the developed offer and sought reassurances around how long care leavers had to wait if they required support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and what other mental health support was available to them and on how many care leavers (18-year-olds) were awaiting accommodation and what were their living arrangements whilst waiting for their new accommodation. Following Members discussions, the Committee were then able to support the developed offer and endorse the work being undertaken.

A repeated area of focus for the Committee was the work that the Council was undertaking in relation to people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Committee received 2 progress reports during the year on this focus area.

One update report provided Members with an update on the number of people in the borough who were NEET and gave an overview of the planned continued improvements through the implementation and monitoring of the NEET Reduction Strategy. Members examined the new provision in the borough to support those who were NEET and questioned how the Council was working with Bridge Greater Manchester (GM) to support schools and young people. The Committee endorsed the key areas of work that was being undertaken to support the NEET Reduction Strategy.

## **Supporting Scrutiny**

### **Officer Support**

The Council's Scrutiny Officer has continued to try to ensure the reduction of the number of reports being submitted to the Scrutiny Committees for information and update only, now ensuring that reports and information of this nature be provided to the committee outside of the meeting in the form of briefing notes. This helps certify that the reports presented to the committee have a purpose and assist in strengthening pre-decision reporting to Scrutiny Committees.

The option of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups which enable selected committee members to undertake a more detailed look at specific issues were still available as a means to investigate items and it is hoped that these reviews will continue to produce positive outcomes and recommendations.

In supporting the Scrutiny Committee function, Programme Managers from the Council's Programme Office and officers from the Joint Intelligence Unit have also continued to assist the Scrutiny Officer in scheduling issues contained with the work plans for each Committee and provide relevant information, data and guidance and a strong link to each Council directorate.

### **North West Scrutiny Support Officers Network (NWSSON)**

The NWSSON continues to meet three/four times per year, allowing Officers supporting Scrutiny to come together to discuss common issues and problems relating to Scrutiny, share good practice and provide feedback/consultation from the North West to the National Scrutiny Networks Forum organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

### **North West Strategic Scrutiny Network**

The role of this group is to support Councillors in their development of their Scrutiny function role, share good practice and advice and highlight local and national drivers. All Chairman and Vice Chairman are members of the North West Strategic Scrutiny Network (established by North West Employers).



## **Looking Forward**

### **Executive Decisions:**

Following a meeting with the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the four Scrutiny Committees in February 2022, it was agreed that for the Municipal Year 22/23, an extract from the Executive's Forward Plan (relating to the service area/s of the relevant Scrutiny Committee) would be included on each of the Scrutiny Committee agendas, to keep Scrutiny Members informed of the important decisions that are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet/Portfolio Holders) over the coming months.

This would provide the Committee with the opportunity to request an item that is included on the Executive's Forward Plan to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting, if it was felt necessary.

### **Performance Monitoring:**

Chairmen and Vice Chairmen were also keen to reinstate a regular and consistent approach to performance monitoring reporting to each of the Scrutiny Committees, to enable Scrutiny Members to carry out this important function.

Quarterly Performance Monitoring reports have now been included in each of the Committees workplan for 2022/23, to reflect this.

### **Finance Monitoring:**

In addition to performance monitoring, it was also agreed to include quarterly finance monitoring reports for each of the Directorates, on each of the Scrutiny Committees' workplans, to enable scrutiny to monitor the budget of said relevant Directorates.

### **Scrutiny Briefing E Mail/Newsletter:**

It is important that Members are kept up to date with what is happening across the relevant Directorates, and in the past, Scrutiny have often received update reports that just require noting or endorsing. These updates are now sent to Members by the means of a Scrutiny Briefing E Mail/Newsletter.

This enables the Scrutiny Members to receive information from Directorates in a timelier fashion, and ask questions or comment on the reports outside of the usual committee cycle. It also allows Committee agendas to concentrate on items that the Committees can then influence and provide recommendations/add value to.

### **Vote of Thanks:**

The Chairmen of all the Scrutiny Committees would all like to express their continued thanks in what has been a very difficult and busy two years, to all officers for their support and commitment in relation to their service areas and all four Scrutiny Committees.

## Appendix A – Scrutiny Committee Work Plans 2020/2021

Committee	Month	Item
Children and Young People	July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020/2021</li> <li>• Update on Schools and the Covid 19 Response</li> <li>• Performance Data – ChAT/Monthly Performance</li> </ul>
	August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted Focused Visit January 2020 and Children’s Services Directorate Response</li> </ul>
	November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2020/21</li> <li>• Children's Social Care Quality Performance Plan - Wigan Deal for Children and Young People Board</li> <li>• Workforce Strategy</li> <li>• Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)</li> </ul>
	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Strategy</li> <li>• Sufficiency Annual Report</li> <li>• Annual Fostering Report</li> </ul>
	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update from Wigan's Deal for Children and Young People's Board</li> <li>• Performance and Quality Report</li> <li>• Safeguarding Annual Report</li> </ul>
	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership performance in supporting children’s mental wellbeing through COVID</li> <li>• Complex Safeguarding</li> <li>• Education Outcomes</li> </ul>

Committee	Month	Item
Confident Council	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Council Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2020/21</li> <li>• Covid 19 - Budget Update</li> </ul>
	August 2020  August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Disposal of Non-Strategic Sites</li> <li>• Joint meeting of the Health and Social Care and Confident Council Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Care Home support during COVID 19 and beyond</li> </ul>
	October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Council Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2020/21</li> <li>• Our Future Workforce</li> <li>• Community Wealth Building: Vision &amp; Principles</li> <li>• Directorate Performance</li> </ul>
	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Account Replacement</li> <li>• Medium Term Financial Plan</li> <li>• Workforce Wellbeing</li> </ul>
	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report IT for Councillors Update</li> <li>• Estates Strategy</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> </ul>
	March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety Priorities</li> <li>• Open Water Safety Policy</li> <li>• Cyber Security Update</li> </ul>

Committee	Month	Item
Confident Places	July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Places Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020/2021</li> </ul>
	August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways Annual Report:</li> <li>• Safe Walking and Cycling:</li> <li>• Town and District Centres: an update</li> </ul>
	October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Places Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2020/21</li> <li>• Wigan Council Outline Climate Change Strategy – Net Zero Carbon Vision 2038</li> <li>• Adaptation &amp; Resilience Update</li> <li>• Naturalisation of the Borough</li> </ul>
	October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of Community Involvement 2020 - Call In</li> </ul>
	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary Planning Documents Update</li> <li>• Economic Vision / Growth for Businesses</li> <li>• Refreshed Work and Skills Strategy</li> </ul>
	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Stock Condition / Housing Estate Programme</li> <li>• GM Air Quality Plan and Wigan's Local Air Quality Plan</li> <li>• Parking Review</li> </ul>
	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Local Enforcement Plan - Call In</li> </ul>
	March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of New Homes</li> <li>• Transport Infrastructure</li> </ul>

Committee	Month	Item
Health and Social Care	July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020/2021</li> <li>• Covid 19 Outbreak Management Plan</li> </ul>
	August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint meeting of the Health and Social Care and Confident Council Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Care Home support during COVID 19 and beyond</li> </ul>
	October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2020/21</li> <li>• Flu Vaccination Programme</li> <li>• Appointments for Access to A&amp;E</li> <li>• Wigan Outbreak Plan</li> </ul>
	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthier Wigan Partnership</li> <li>• Care Homes Resilience</li> <li>• Impact of COVID 19 on BAME Community</li> <li>• Performance Data</li> </ul>
	February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wigan Borough Armed Forces HQ Update</li> <li>• Healthwatch Update</li> <li>• COVID 19 Vaccination Programme</li> <li>• Update on Mental Health Services in Wigan Borough</li> </ul>
	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation of Adult Social Care - Day Opportunities</li> <li>• Adult Social Care Performance: Spotlight on hospital discharge services</li> <li>• Carers and Carers Charter</li> </ul>

## Appendix B – Scrutiny Committee Work Plans 2021/2022

Committee	Month	Item
Children and Young People	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2021/2022</li> </ul>
	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2021/2022</li> <li>• Update on the Wigan Deal for Children and Young People’s Board</li> <li>• Outcome of HMIP YOS Inspection</li> <li>• SEND Priority Plan</li> <li>• School Organisation Strategy</li> </ul>
	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Services 20/21 Annual Performance Data</li> <li>• Annual Safeguarding Report 20/21</li> <li>• Childcare Sufficiency</li> </ul>
	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together for Adoption Annual Report (including data)</li> <li>• NEETs / Post 16 Options (including T levels)</li> <li>• Review of School Improvement</li> <li>• Fostering Annual Report</li> </ul>
	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Leavers</li> <li>• Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Report</li> <li>• Update from Wigan’s Deal for Children Board</li> </ul>
	April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and Post 16 Transition</li> <li>• Report of the Principal Social Worker</li> <li>• The Child’s Journey through our Services</li> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Working Group</li> </ul>

Committee	Month	Item
Confident Council	June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Council Scrutiny Committee Proposed Work Plan 2021/22</li> </ul>
	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Council Work Plan 2021/22 Report</li> <li>• Community Wealth Building</li> <li>• The Council's Handling of Information Requests</li> <li>• Parklife Football Hubs</li> </ul>
	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASB/Community Resilience (One Year On)</li> <li>• Return of the Workforce / Staff Working Arrangements</li> <li>• Haigh Hall / Pennington Flash Update</li> </ul>
	November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Asset Transfer</li> <li>• Reservist Model</li> </ul>
	January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Budget 2022/23</li> <li>• Supporting Attendance and Employee Wellbeing</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Strategy and Community Support Contract</li> </ul>
	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Management</li> <li>• Be Well/Leisure and Wellbeing Services (One Year On)</li> <li>• Performance Report</li> </ul>

Committee	Month	Item
Confident Places	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Confident Places Scrutiny Work Plan Report 2021-22</li> <li>• Our Adaptation and Resilience Action Plan 2021-2026</li> <li>• Our Air Quality and Transport Action Plan</li> </ul>
	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident Places Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2021/22</li> <li>• Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis</li> <li>• Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)</li> <li>• Historic Environment Strategy – Implementation</li> </ul>
	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways Annual Plan</li> <li>• Climate Change Strategy – Our Natural Environment Action Plan</li> </ul>
	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Risk Management Consultation - Wigan Council Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA)</li> <li>• Climate Change Strategy - Our Sustainability and Consumption Action Plan</li> </ul>
	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on the Economic Vision</li> <li>• Walking and Cycling Update</li> </ul>
	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purple Flag</li> <li>• Climate Change Strategy - Our Community Engagement and Wellbeing Action Plan</li> <li>• Delivery of New Homes</li> </ul>



Committee	Month	Item
Health and Social Care	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee Proposed Work Plan 2021/22</li> </ul>
	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2021/22</li> <li>• Adult Safeguarding - Performance Report</li> <li>• COVID -19 Update (including Vaccination Programme)</li> </ul>
	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Safeguarding</li> <li>• Care Home Support During and Beyond COVID-19</li> <li>• COVID 19 Update (including Vaccination Programme)</li> </ul>
	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to an NHS Dentist</li> <li>• Performance Report - Community Social Ca</li> <li>• COVID 19 Update (including Vaccination Programme)</li> <li>• Transformation of Supported Living</li> </ul>
	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and Empty Homes Strategy</li> <li>• Health Improvement Review</li> <li>• Covid-19/Health Protection Update</li> </ul>
	April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS FT Services (12 months on):</li> <li>• Supported Employment</li> <li>• Early Intervention Performance Report</li> <li>• COVID-19 Update</li> </ul>

**Relevance Check**

**Budget Reduction/Service Area:** Legal  
**Service Lead:** Brendan Whitworth  
**Date:** 15 September 2022

**In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?**

N/A

**If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service you provide?**

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? NO