



19 June 2019

COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 JUNE 2019

A meeting of the Communities and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at 6pm on Thursday 27 June 2019 in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Rugby.

Councillor Tom Mahoney
Chair of Communities and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 11 April 2019 and 16 May 2019.

2. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of:

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

4. Finance and Performance Monitoring 2018/19 Year-End – please refer to report from Cabinet 24 June 2019 and RPMS
5. Universal Credit Update
6. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Any additional papers for this meeting can be accessed via the website.

Membership of the Committee:

Councillors Mahoney (Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Mrs Brown, Cade, Douglas, Eccleson, Leigh Hunt, Keeling and Long

If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533591 or e-mail veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have any special requirements for access please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Universal Credit Update
Name of Committee:	Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2019
Contact Officer:	David Wortley, Community Advice and Support Manager, Tel 01788 533440
Summary:	This report updates the Committee on the impact of Universal Credit within the Borough.
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Risk Management Implications:	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
Environmental Implications:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Equality and Diversity:	There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee - 27 June 2019

Universal Credit Update

Public Report of the Head of Communities and Homes

Summary

This report updates the Committee on the impact of Universal Credit within the Borough.

1. Background

The implementation of Universal Credit commenced in November 2013, initially this was for claimants who were single and making a new claim for benefit. Since then both the number of cases and the complexity of cases has increased along with the impact on local residents. In May 2016, Universal Credit Full Service commenced. This means that most residents who make a new claim for benefit or have a relevant change of circumstances are now required to apply for Universal Credit.

2. Current Position

The Department for Work and Pensions has published the following data for Rugby, as at February 2019:

3,747 households have a current live application for Universal Credit, of these cases 3,467 households are receiving payments. The following breakdown is also provided:

Single applicants	1,483
Single applicants with a child	1,429
Couples	96
Couples with a child	463

(the reason for the discrepancy in numbers is not reported)

3. Impact of Council Tenants

The rollout of Universal Credit continues to have an impact on our own tenants who need financial help with housing costs or day to day living expenses.

The following table shows the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears during the last year:

	April 2018	October 2018	March 2019	May 2019
Tenants in receipt of Universal Credit	634	644	695	708
Accounts in Credit	87	111	178	229
Accounts in Arrears	547	533	517	479
Total Arrears*	£455,747	£435,687	£449,523	£423,328
Average Arrears	£833	£817	£869	£883

*This figure includes any arrears prior to receiving Universal Credit.

4. Universal Support/Help to Claim Service

Funding was provided by the Department for Work and Pensions to the Council to assist residents who required help to make their initial claim for Universal Support, or needed help to move from weekly to monthly based budgeting. The Council entered into formal contracts with both Citizens Advice and Benn Partnership Centre to provide these services on behalf of the Council.

During the course of the contract, the Council, Citizens Advice, Benn Partnership Centre and the Department for Work and Pensions developed a close working relationship to increase take-up of the service and quarterly meetings were held to resolve issues and promote closer working relationships.

In 2018, the Department for Work and Pensions advised Local Authorities that they would be entering into a national contract with Citizens Advice to provide assistance to clients.

The aim of the Help to Claim service is to assist clients from the point of making their claim for Universal Credit through to receipt of their first payment. They will assist clients:

- to make their initial claim
- to provide the additional evidence
- to access advance payments
- by providing budgeting support to prepare for their first monthly payment
- to maintain their Universal Credit Journal
- to access support from Citizens Advice for other issues

Within Rugby, a face to face service is available between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday. There is also a national telephone helpline available between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

Citizens Advice in Rugby has assisted 51 clients during April and May. In addition to providing help with Universal Credit, clients also received help with support regarding debt, rent and council tax arrears and accessing charitable support.

5. What has changed in the last year

In April 2018, responsibility for rent collection for both current and former tenants was moved into the Revenues Services Team, a Tenancy Sustainment Officer has also moved across into the team with a focus on rent collection. This has enabled rent to be collected in conjunction with council tax and other money owing to the Council. Bringing these areas together means that we can work with clients holistically and agree a single repayment arrangement covering all monies owing to the Council rather than individual teams chasing the same person.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that direct payments by the Department for Work and Pensions made in respect of rent are being received quicker. This is in part due to the Council now being able to verify rent details and request direct payments via an online portal. Around 80% of requests for rent verification are received via the portal.

Clients are still reporting that they find the process for claiming and maintaining their claim via an online portal confusing. They also find it confusing that payments made direct to the council in respect of their rent are not made at the same time that payment of the personal allowance is received by the client.

The Housing Service, Revenues Team and Community Advice and Support Team continue to work in partnership with external agencies to resolve issues not only for our own tenants but for all residents of the Borough and bring issues to the attention of Department for Work and Pensions colleagues as necessary.

Name of Meeting: Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 June 2019

Subject Matter: Universal Credit Update

Originating Department: Communities and Homes

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20
Name of Committee:	Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2019
Contact Officer:	Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01788 533591
Summary:	The report updates the committee on the progress of reviews within its remit and details the overview and scrutiny forward work programme for 2019/20.
Financial Implications:	There is a budget of £500 available in 2019/20 to spend on the delivery of the overview and scrutiny work programme.
Risk Management Implications:	There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
Environmental Implications:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Equality and Diversity:	No new or existing policy or procedure has been recommended.

Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee - 27 June 2019

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Public Report of the Head of Corporate Resources and CFO

Summary

The report updates the Committee on the progress of task group reviews within its remit and details the overview and scrutiny forward work programme for 2019/20.

1. SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Following the joint chairs' meeting on 29 May 2019, the review topics identified for inclusion in the 2019/20 work programme are:

Communities and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Description
Special Expenses Scheme	The inaugural meeting of the task group took place on 11 June 2019 where a programme of work and dates of future meetings were agreed. A questionnaire has been circulated to all parish councils as part of the evidence gathering for the review. The next meeting is scheduled for 3 July.
Review of Housing Maintenance/Repairs	Light-touch review to be scheduled

Environment and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Comments
<i>Parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre</i>	A review on the theme of parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre was carried out as a light-touch review by the former Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A report providing additional information requested on the use of ANPR and parking enforcement will be presented to committee on 15 July 2019 to enable members to consider any medium or longer-term recommendations.

Topic	Comments
<i>Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Rainsbrook Avenue</i>	The topic will be included in the work programme once the outcomes of a public consultation, to be approved by Cabinet, are known. The review will consider the evidence and the draft PSPO aimed at tackling a specific anti-social behaviour issue.

2. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The content of each committee's work programme has been agreed by the Chairs and a copy of the future work programme is appended. Committee members are invited to suggest items for inclusion.

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

In late 2018, a decision was made by the scrutiny chairs not to hold the annual scrutiny work programme workshop. The workshop was not well attended and in response to this, a fresh way of informing the work programme and engaging with the public and external partners was explored. The process is in development but some steps have been taken. A new tool, a review checker, has been introduced. The tool will be used to narrow down suggestions prior to a shortlist being discussed with heads of service. Following the discussion, agreed topics will be added into the work programme. A copy of the review topic selector flowchart is attached at Appendix 2.

The aim of the new way of working is to engage with stakeholders throughout the year via platforms such as the Council's website, Facebook, listening posts, appropriate events such as WCAVA's Our Rugby, Our Future. This will provide scope within the work programme for scrutiny to be more reactive and timelier by addressing matters as they come to light.

2.2 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETINGS

In line with the new overview and scrutiny arrangements, approved by Council on 23 April 2019, there will be no joint meeting with the portfolio holders but each portfolio holder will be invited to attend at least one committee meeting during the year to discuss performance and future strategy or any relevant topics on the committee agenda.

The joint meeting on **18 November 2019** has provisionally been allocated the topic of Commercialisation, Collaboration and Partnerships. The focus of the meeting is yet to be confirmed but the following may be covered:

- Commercial Strategy
- Exploring commercial activity, subscription packages of services, collaboration with other public-sector bodies, shared service and trading
- Rugby Borough Council relationships with partners and their value

The joint meeting with the Leader and Executive Director arranged for **28 January 2020** will take the form of the usual question and answer style meeting.

3. CONCLUSION

The committee is asked to:

- note the progress in the task group reviews; and
- agree the future work programme for the committee.

Name of Meeting: Communities and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 June 2019

Subject Matter: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Originating Department: Corporate Resources

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink
1	Agenda Item 9 – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/885/brooke_overview_and_scrutiny_committee

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

- *A work programme report will be a standing item on each committee agenda.*
- *Each portfolio holder will be invited to at least one committee meeting during the year to discuss performance and future strategy.*

Environment and Growth 15 July 2019

Topic	Description
Encouraging the Community to Adopt Healthy Lifestyles	Notice of Motion referred from Council on 27 September 2018
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Understanding of building regulations, safety standards and existing issues with HMOs based on licensing and enforcement
Review of parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre	Draft review report

Council 18 July 2019

Topic	Description
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19	Annual report on the work of scrutiny

Communities and Resources 5 September 2019

Topic	Description
Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Q1	Monitoring of finance and performance
Employee Wellbeing	Progress report

Environment and Growth 3 October 2019

Topic	Description
Air Quality Monitoring	Annual review
Notice of Motion – Reduce Plastic Waste at the Council	Progress report

Communities and Resources 24 October 2019

Topic	Description
Special Expenses Scheme	Draft review report on the conclusions and recommendations

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 November 2019

Topic	Description
Commercialisation, Collaboration and Partnerships	Commercialisation Strategy. Exploring commercial activity, subscription packages of services, collaboration with other public-sector bodies, shared service and trading. RBC relationships with partners and their value.

Environment and Growth 9 December 2019

Topic	Description
Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Q2	Monitoring of finance and performance

Joint OSC 27 January 2020

Topic	Description
Leader and Executive Director (Q&A)	Discussion on performance and future strategy with Leader and Executive Director

Communities and Resources 6 February 2020

Topic	Description
Finance and Performance Monitoring 2019/20 Q3	Monitoring of finance and performance

Environment and Growth 24 February 2020

Agenda to be agreed by Chairs

Communities and Resources 19 March 2020

Topic	Description
Communities and Homes Portfolio Holder	Discuss performance and future strategy in relation to the portfolio

Environment and Growth 2 April 2020

Topic	Description
Crime and Disorder	Annual review

ITEMS TO BE ALLOCATED**Communities and Resources**

Topic	Description
Review of Housing Maintenance/Repairs	Light-touch review

Environment and Growth

Topic	Description
Materials Recovery Facility	Pre-decision scrutiny of options

Overview & Scrutiny Topic Selection Flowchart

