

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



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# Chair's Introduction

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**Councillor Blackman**

**Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – (OSMC) 2023/24**

Reflecting the authority's budget pressures, in 2023/24 the scrutiny function has been challenged to play a key role in holding the Executive to account as it seeks to return the Council to a more sustainable financial position.

In addition to scrutinising the proposed creation of a new NHS provider trust and substantial variations in NHS provision locally, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel has responded by increasing oversight of the Adult Social Care transformation programme and has commenced quarterly monitoring of the performance of Adult Social Care services and budgets.

The Children and Families Scrutiny Panel has sought to consider service areas where demand has increased with a view to challenging existing practice and process. SEND, Home to School Transport, placement stability and safeguarding re-referrals have been the focus of scrutiny from the Panel in recognition that if the quality of practice improves it can reduce demand, saving the Council money and delivering better outcomes for children and young people in Southampton.

Whilst continuing to scrutinise key decisions of the Executive, including the use of the call-in powers on two occasions, the OSMC has in 2023/24 committed significant agenda time to scrutinising the Council's finances, including the request for exceptional financial support from the Government. This Committee retains a key role in monitoring the budgetary position of the Council, and, with the Governance Committee, provides a critical role in supporting good governance at the Council. This task is more important than ever given the Council's financial predicament.

The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel has undertaken a much-needed review of the private rented sector in Southampton. Concerns about affordability, conditions and security of tenure were expressed by tenants in attendance at the meetings and via the survey undertaken for the Panel. The report identifies a number of opportunities to deliver better outcomes for renters in Southampton, particularly around a more proactive approach to enforcement by the City Council. I look forward to reviewing the Cabinet response to the report in the coming months.

I am pleased to report that, despite the majority enjoyed by the current Administration, all scrutiny members continue to be willing to engage in the process by asking questions of decision makers who remain willing to listen and provide answers. This has been tested at times in 2023/24, particularly when the OSMC considered the proposed closure of Holcroft House in front of a packed and impassioned Council Chamber. As it was stated in last year's report, such occasions continue to demonstrate the relevance of scrutiny and it remains a vital ingredient in local democracy that must be supported and valued.

I am grateful to members of the various scrutiny panels for their dedication and input throughout the year. I am also grateful to the local groups, national organisations, and individuals who have attended meetings, either in person or virtually, and provided evidence for elected members to consider. I am also appreciative of the continued support from council officers and Cabinet Members to effective scrutiny in Southampton. Long may this continue.

# The Purpose and Functions of Overview & Scrutiny

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## Decision making context

The Full Council of 51 councillors approves the policy framework which sets out the key policies and programmes for the main services provided by the Council. In February or March each year Council meets to set the Council Tax for the following year.

The Executive make decisions relating to services provided by the Council, except for those matters which are reserved for decision by full Council, and planning and licensing matters which are dealt with by specialist regulatory panels. The Executive is made up of a Leader, elected by Council, and their appointed Cabinet Members.

The Scrutiny function helps to inform the decision making process and improve the way the Council works. Scrutineers assess what impact the Executive's policies and plans will have on the city and its residents.

Scrutiny is a process for:

- Holding the Cabinet, chief officers and senior members of staff to account for the discharge of its functions by examining, challenging and, if necessary, requesting changes to executive decisions made but not yet implemented.
- Scrutinising and reviewing policies and practices within a cross-service remit, assisting in the development of such policies and practices and scrutinising policy outcomes – e.g. the implementation of strategic priorities.
- Reviewing decisions and policies made by the Executive and considering whether they are right for the city.
- Assessing the council's performance against its planned targets and monitoring critical success factors.
- Reviewing the work of other partnerships and public sector organisations in the city, particularly the Safe City Partnership and health providers and commissioners.
- Championing issues of local concern to residents and contributing to policy development and service improvement.

## Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)

The OSMC is a parent committee that manages the overview and scrutiny process and meets on a monthly basis. The membership of the OSMC is appointed for the municipal year at the Annual Council meeting in May.

There are a number of Scrutiny Panels that support the work of the Executive and the council as a whole. The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel carries out a work programme of scrutiny inquiries approved by the OSMC. These arrangements allow citizens to have a greater say in council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern. These member led inquiries lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

In addition the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertakes the statutory scrutiny of health and adult social care agencies in Southampton, and the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel scrutinises services for children and families in the city, including education.

The OSMC also monitors the decisions of the Executive and can 'Call-In' a decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate.

## Councillor Call for Action

Enables all councillors to refer single ward issues, or 'local government matters', to the OSMC.

## Scrutiny Panels 2023/24

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Children and Families Scrutiny Panel
- How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton? - Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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**Councillor Blackman**

**Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) - 2023/24**

## **Committee Members (March 2024)**

Councillor Moulton (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Evemy

Councillor Y Frampton

Councillor Galton

Councillor Lambert

Councillor Leggett

Councillor Dr Paffey

Councillor Quadir

## **Appointed Members – Church Representatives**

Mrs Catherine Hobbs

Mr Rob Sanders

Due to a number of special meetings and call-ins there were a record number of meetings of the Committee this year. The membership of the Committee was also noteworthy as, for the first time, members of the Administration comprised a majority on the Scrutiny Committee. Whilst this at times represented a challenge for opposition members it did not prevent the Committee from undertaking the essential role of the "critical friend" to the decision makers within the council and our local partners.

## **Council finances**

As expected, given the extent of the Council's financial challenges, scrutiny of expenditure, the medium-term financial strategy, transformation activity and savings proposals all featured regularly on Committee agendas in 2023/24. The OSMC committed to overseeing the quarterly financial outturns, and held special meetings, at times in confidential sessions, to scrutinise and understand the Executive's approach to balancing the budget in 2023/24 and future years.

Moving forward it is imperative that the Committee continues to hold the Executive to account as it works to reduce the considerable structural deficit that remains within the budget. Reflecting this, and the timescales involved, the focus of the Committee next year must be on challenging the implementation of the agreed savings proposals; delivery of the asset development and disposal programme; and the development and implementation of the transformation plan that is vital if residents are to receive acceptable services at a cost that the city can afford.

## **Holcroft House**

On three occasions in 2023/24, culminating in a call-in, the Committee considered the future of Holcroft House, a 34-bedroom residential home providing short and long term care for adults living with dementia.

At each meeting at which the future of Holcroft House was considered numerous relatives, carers, staff and advocates were in attendance and spoke passionately on this emotive subject. The Committee raised issues relating to the works required to Holcroft House, engagement with stakeholders and effectively supporting the movement of residents between care homes. However, following the Cabinet decision to close the residential home, the Committee were informed that all residents had been relocated and the building closed on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.



## **Portswood Broadway**

Following lively discussions on the issue in 2022/23, the Committees second call-in of the year related to proposals for a trial of a part time bus gate / motor vehicle restriction on Portswood Broadway, with measures to limit the impact on adjacent streets via an Active Travel Zone.

Once again residents and business operators attended the meetings in significant numbers to express their views and to raise concerns about the proposals that had been amended from the original scheme. As with the Holcroft House call-in, the Committee decided not to refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration but noted concerns related to disabled access and agreed that the issue should return to the Committee at the conclusion of the trial bus gate to enable the OSMC to review the results and to consider the effectiveness of the proposed Active Travel Zone.

## **Household Waste**

Whilst the Council's financial challenges and forward plan items occupied the majority of OSMC agendas this year, the Committee was still able to respond to issues that could not be foreseen as work programmes were planned.

Whilst scrutiny of the performance of Council services was limited in 2023/24, the exception, in response to significant disruption following changes to working practices, was the March 2024 discussion on household waste collection services.



The Committee were informed that the Council is working to resolve the current situation, clear backlogs and excess waste but raised concerns about the accuracy of the data being utilised to measure missed collections, the ability to report missed bins and the ramifications this dispute has for future transformation activity the Council must deliver in 2024/25 to balance budgets.

## **Strategies and Policies**

Besides the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Committee had the opportunity to contribute to a number of Council policies and strategies in 2023/24. This included the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy, the Adult Social Care Charging Policy, the Housing Allocations Policy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

To enable scrutiny to become key consultees, and to influence the Council's approach, OSMC continued to engage with the draft documents at an earlier stage in the process. This has allowed for more open discussions and the opportunity for stakeholders to attend meetings to advocate for specific actions.

## **Key issues for 2024/25**

As noted, I expect the Committee to continue to have regular and challenging discussions with Executive on the financial sustainability of the Council next municipal year. This remains the most pressing issue facing the Authority and requires the full attention of the scrutiny function.

Looking ahead, I would like to see Committee regularly holding the Executive to account for the delivery of objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan. The publication of Council wide performance data that can be scrutinised by the OSMC remains haphazard and echoing last year's report, this reflects badly on the Council and cannot be regarded as good practice.

# Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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## **Councillor Payne**

**Chair of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel – 2023/24**

### **Panel Members (May 2023 - April 2024)**

Councillor Houghton (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Allen

Councillor Cox (Jan 2024 – now)

Councillor Finn (May 2023 – Dec 2023)

Councillor Kenny

Councillor Noon

Councillor Wood

Growing demand and financial challenges, resulting in the need to transform and redesign health and care services, provided the common thread to HOSP agendas in 2023/24. Proposals presented to the Panel will see Trusts merging, new hospitals proposed, and mobile provision being employed to meet the needs of the population. Members have sought to consider each of these developments through the prism of the health outcomes in Southampton and the inequalities that remain prominent across the city.

## **The redesign of inpatient Older Persons Mental Health Services (OPMH)**

In June and October 2023, the Panel reviewed proposals to redesign OPMH services at Western Community Hospital. Whilst members were encouraged by the planned upgrade of the facilities to meet the needs of older people with a functional illness, the Panel expressed concerns about the loss of the organic dementia ward from the city, recognising the value of the amenity and the expected increase in demand for dementia services moving forward.

Following informed consideration of the issues, the Panel reserved the right to review the implementation and the impact of the proposals at a future meeting, especially if the transport support which has been promised does not prove to meet the expectations and needs of patients and their loved ones.

## **Proposed changes to acute hospital services in Hampshire**

In 2023/24 the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB) consulted on proposals to build a brand-new specialist acute hospital on either the existing Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital site, or at a new location near Junction 7 of the M3. Under the proposals Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester would see its A&E department downgraded to a doctor-led urgent treatment centre and would focus primarily on planned operations and procedures.



In recognition of the potential increase in usage of Southampton General Hospital because of the proposals, the Panel invited representatives from the ICB, Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust and University Hospital Southampton (UHS) to attend a meeting in February 2024. The Panel were encouraged by the involvement of UHS in the process but would not comment formally on a preferred option until the impact on health services in the city is better understood.

## **Project Fusion**

The Panel has continued to oversee Project Fusion, the programme of work to create a single new NHS Trust to provide community, mental health and learning disability services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The full merger has been postponed until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, but the Panel remains focused on seeking assurance that when the newly formed NHS Foundation Trust is launched, the



Southampton local operating system will have the flexibility and financial protections required to deliver high quality services that meet the needs of the residents of Southampton.

### Adult Social Care (ASC) – Performance and transformation

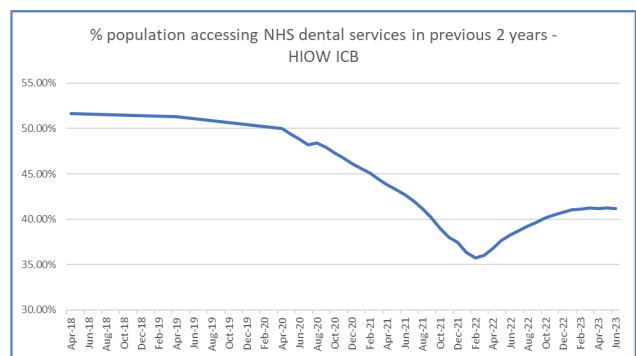
Understandably, given the increasing complexity and demand for services and the requirement to transform provision to generate improved outcomes and significant financial savings, scrutiny of adult social care has been a vital issue for the Panel this year.

Following the approach adopted by the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel, members have committed to reviewing performance information on a quarterly basis and, subject to the quality of the dataset, utilise the indicators to hold decision-makers to account.

Performance is being scrutinised alongside transformation activity to better understand the progress being made and the impact on adults requiring social care support and what improvements can be delivered. Foundations have been laid to deliver better outcomes through the ‘Ambitious Futures’ transformation programme at a cost more in line with our statistical comparators. However, the Panel is keen to see the speed of the improvements increase to modernise our working practices to ensure the Council is providing the right care at the right time. This will enable the authority to manage demand more effectively, modernise, and reduce costs, resulting in better and more sustainable services.

### NHS Dentistry

Access to dental services provided by the NHS continues to be a challenge nationally and locally. In Southampton, whilst access to NHS dental services care is improving there are several on-going issues which have been compounded by workforce challenges. Dental practices have found it difficult to maintain their workforce to deliver NHS services. Many dentists opt to work fewer days on the NHS to focus more of their time on private work and in some cases, dentists are either leaving the NHS or deciding not to join at the start of their career.



Additional capacity has been procured in Southampton and the ICB has identified extra resources across Hampshire and Isle of Wight for several short-term initiatives, including the launch of a new mobile dental service to provide care for people experiencing health inequalities. The success of these initiatives, and the wider issue of oral health, will be the subject of further scrutiny in 2024/25.

### Key issues for 2024/25

Agenda planning has enabled consideration by the Panel in 2023/24 of each of the key components of the health and care system in Southampton – Primary care, mental health services, acute services, community services, dental care, adult social care, and public health. Unfortunately, the Ambulance Service was unable to attend when requested and this, given the critical CQC inspection in 2022, will be a priority for the next municipal year.

Reflecting the pressures identified, adult social care is likely to remain a major issue for the Panel. Other potential topics include water quality and supply, and how the funding awarded to Southampton through the Health Determinants Research Collaboration can be utilised to improve understanding of how decisions impact on health and inequalities, helping to inform decisions going forward.



# Children and Families Scrutiny Panel



**Councillors A Bunday / Barnes-Andrews**

**Chairs of the Children & Families Scrutiny Panel – 2023/24**

## **Panel Members (March 2024)**

Councillor Lambert (Vice-Chair)

Councillor J Baillie

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cox

Councillor Mintoff

Councillor Webb

## **Church Representatives**

Mrs Catherine Hobbs

Mr Rob Sanders

At the start of the municipal year Ofsted provided Children’s Services, the Council, and the city with a much-needed boost by recognising the substantial improvements to services for children and families in Southampton since 2019. In rating the Council’s Children’s Services good, with outstanding leadership, the regulator noted that the: *‘Impressive strategic and operational leadership, aligned with corporate and political commitment, has provided a clear vision, ambition and energy which has garnered the confidence and commitment of key partners. There is a collective momentum to continue to improve services and outcomes for children across the city.’*

In 2023/24, reflecting the feedback from Ofsted, the Panel has sought to challenge services to maintain the momentum and to work with partners to translate improved processes into outcomes that will benefit our children and deliver a safer, stronger, healthier, and more prosperous city.

## **Quality of practice**

The Panel continues to use performance data to scrutinise children’s services in Southampton. This detailed analysis of monthly data remains pivotal to holding services to account for the outcomes experienced by vulnerable children and young people across the city and helps to identify areas where additional focus is required.



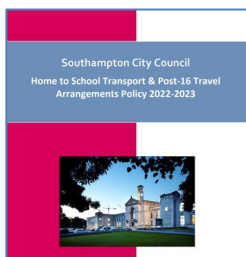
Despite a reduction in temporary staff and a comprehensive training programme being embedded, the monthly performance report informed the Panel that the quality of practice delivered by Children’s Services was not providing consistent, high-quality services. Following probing by the Panel the Executive Director informed members that by the Autumn an improvement in the quality of practice would be evident. The Panel scrutinised this measure at each meeting and were reassured to see that by October 2023, 59.3% of audits undertaken rated quality of practice as good with 33.3% rated as requiring improvement. This improvement is encouraging and needs to be maintained as improving quality of practice is fundamental to reducing demand, reducing re-referrals into safeguarding services and lowering the cost of services provided.

## **Placement stability**

As referenced in last year’s report, placement stability is recognised to be a key factor in enabling positive outcomes for Looked After Children. For this reason, and the financial benefits to the Council, the Panel continued to champion the development of new children’s homes in Southampton to enable more of our looked after children to be accommodated in the city. Progress delivering this corporate priority will continue to be monitored by the Panel in the next municipal year.

## **Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Home to School Transport**

The increasing number of SEND children in Southampton, and the challenges associated with providing sufficient SEND places in schools within the city, and transporting children with SEND to school, was the focus of discussion by the Panel in November 2023.



The Panel welcomed the new School Travel Service Policy and the ambitious programme to expand SEND provision in the city. Nationally, both of these issues are placing significant additional financial pressures on local authorities, and Southampton is no exception. Delaying the provision of suitable SEND places in the city risks increasing the costs associated with out of city placements but value for money must be achieved given the scale of the investment proposed.

## **Post 16, elective home education, school attendance and NEETS**

Two meetings of the Panel were employed to consider the growing challenges impacting upon education outcomes in the city. The customary meeting in September to consider educational attainment also included discussions on elective home education, where the number of children educated outside of the school system continues to rise, school attendance, where the rate of overall absence remains above national comparators, and NEETS (not in education, employment or training), where Southampton has a higher rate than our statistical neighbours.

The January 2024 meeting revisited an issue that used to be, given attainment levels, an annual event. Principals and Headteachers of the providers of post 16 education in the city were in attendance to discuss further education provision and performance in Southampton. The Panel recommended that providers in the city worked collaboratively to develop a strategy with the objective of attracting more Southampton students to remain in the city for post 16 study. It is anticipated that Principals and Headteachers will be invited to attend a meeting of the Panel next year to discuss attainment levels as well as progress against the members recommendation.

## **Youth Justice Services**

Due to concerns about the levels of youth-on-youth violence in the city over the past year, the Panel invited representatives from Children's Services and Hampshire Constabulary to attend a meeting to discuss the performance of Youth Justice Services in Southampton. The Panel were encouraged about positive feedback from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation Services on a recent visit but, reflecting poor performance relating to children in custody, education outcomes and serious youth violence, the Panel requested that the item returns to a future agenda to review progress.

## **Key issues for 2024/25**

Whilst the Panel will continue to have oversight of safeguarding services, following the assurance provided by Ofsted on the direction of travel for safeguarding services in the city, the Panel should seek to focus attention on areas where risk remains high, and outcomes need to improve.

Expectations are that, with concerns about early years provision, attainment, attendance, SEND, elective home education, and Post 16 provision, education issues will feature more prominently next year. The Panel will also need to have regular discussions with the Cabinet Member and Senior Leadership Team on the services transformation programme, particularly the Family Safeguarding Model. Delivery of the transformation programme, and agreed savings proposals are fundamental to the service's ability to meet the challenging budgets set for 2024/25 and beyond.

Next year the Panel should also challenge the service to improve outcomes for children in Southampton. This year performance has stabilised and, in some areas, improved. The expectation must be that next year performance will improve at speed across a range of outcomes.

# Scrutiny Inquiry Panel



**Councillor Windle**

**Chair of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – 2023/24**

## Panel Members (March 2024)

Councillor Evemy (Vice-Chair)

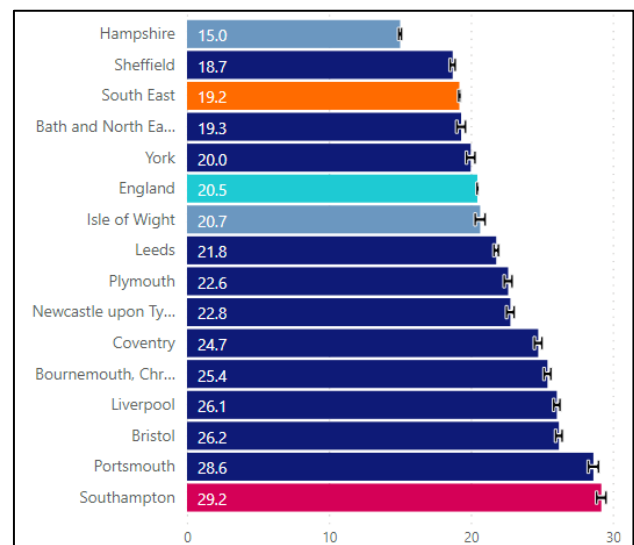
Councillor Blackman

Councillor McEwing

Councillor Powell-Vaughan

In Southampton the private rented sector accommodates a significantly higher percentage of households than the national average. Data from the 2021 Census identified that 29.2% of Southampton’s households lived in private rented sector accommodation. This is the highest out of Southampton’s comparator cities and has increased from 24.9% in 2011.

In June 2022 the Government published ‘A Fairer Private Rented Sector’ White Paper. In the foreword to the report, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, stated that: *‘Everyone has a right to a decent home. No one should be condemned to live in properties that are inadequately heated, unsafe, or unhealthy. Yet more than 2.8 million of our fellow citizens are paying to live in homes that are not fit for the 21st century..... The reality today is that far too many renters are living in damp, dangerous, cold homes, powerless to put things right, and with the threat of sudden eviction hanging over them.’*



Tenure of household – Private rented percentage of households, Southampton and ONS Comparators: Census 2021

Given the importance of the private rented sector in Southampton; concerns about housing conditions and affordability; impending new legislation and inconsistencies in approaches adopted by councils enforcing existing regulations, the OSMC recommended at the September 2023 meeting, that an inquiry focussing on getting a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton be undertaken by the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel.

## Consultation

The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook the inquiry over 4 evidence gathering meetings. The Panel received information from a wide variety of organisations including Generation Rent, Southampton Tenants Union, iHOWZ Landlords Association, The National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA), Bristol City Council, London Borough of Newham, the Environment Centre, Citizen’s Advice Southampton, the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and officers from Southampton City Council.

## Findings and conclusions

Information presented to the Inquiry Panel identified that:

- As rents in Southampton continue to rise, without accompanying improvements to housing quality, and the supply of rental properties tightens, access and affordability continues to be a serious challenge for renters in the city.

- Nationally the private rented sector offers the most expensive, least secure, and lowest quality housing relative to other tenures. The problems associated with the private rented sector nationally are equally, if not more, prominent in Southampton.
- There are, however, positive developments that can give renters hope. The Renters (Reform) Bill that is being debated in Parliament presents a genuine opportunity to address a number of the challenges experienced by renters in Southampton:
  - The proposed abolition of Section 21, and the transition from assured shorthold tenancies to periodic tenancies should increase security of tenure for renters.
  - The proposals to limit rent increases to once a year, increase the minimum notice landlords must give of a rent increase, and end the use of rent review clauses in tenancy agreements should ensure that rent increases become more predictable.
  - Applying the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, the Property Portal, Property Ombudsman and providing local councils with stronger enforcement powers can help work towards meeting the target of reducing the number of non-decent rented homes by 50% by 2030.
- A number of the desired improvements are however predicated on actions delivered in Southampton by the City Council and partners. Fundamentally, the cost of renting is dependent on a number of demand and supply factors:
  - By increasing the supply of houses, particularly social and affordable housing, it can help to help improve housing affordability, particularly for low-income households.
  - By working effectively with landlords & tenants to prevent evictions it can aid stability.
  - By developing a more proactive approach to enforcement it can improve housing conditions and standards for tenants in Southampton.
- These actions are not a quick fix and require investment and commitment from the Council. However, as explained by the Expert Advisers to the Panel, the advantages of the approach described above will result in better outcomes for tenants, the Council and the city.

## Recommendations

The final report, approved by the Panel on 18<sup>th</sup> April, contains 10 recommendations in total which, if fully implemented, the Panel believe will contribute to getting a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton.

The recommendations reflect key issues presented during the inquiry relating to:

- The affordability of renting in Southampton's private rented sector
- Security and stability in the private rented sector
- Housing conditions in the private rented sector in Southampton
- Enforcement of private rented sector housing regulations.



## Cabinet

The inquiry report is scheduled to be presented to the OSMC and Cabinet in June 2024. A formal response from the Executive to the recommendations is expected to be considered by Cabinet in the summer.

The final report of the Inquiry Panel can be accessed here:

[How do we get a better deal for private sector renters in Southampton? - Final Report](#)

# Getting Involved

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## How can I get involved?

There are a number of ways in which the public and interested organisations can get involved:

- **Attend a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee or a Scrutiny Panel**

Scrutiny meetings are held in public and anyone is welcome to attend to listen to proceedings. Meetings are currently usually held in the Civic Centre. Only on rare occasions, when certain types of confidential information is being discussed, are members of the public not allowed to attend. A number of scrutiny meetings are also live streamed on the Council's website.

- **Raise issues with your Councillor and request Overview and Scrutiny to consider as part of Councillor Call for Action.**
- **Provide written evidence to a scrutiny inquiry**

Scrutiny inquiries can consider written evidence and members of the public, community groups, or other key stakeholders can write in to bring evidence to the attention of Inquiry Panel members. Inevitably, scrutiny inquiries have only a limited amount of time so they may not be able to hear oral testimony from all interested people.

Written evidence provides an alternative way to receive evidence from key stakeholders, policy makers, service providers, service users and community groups. Written evidence may put forward a particular perspective of the issue being considered, or may highlight evidence to help the investigation. It can also put forward questions for witnesses which may be taken up by members of the Panel during the discussion.

**Address:** Democratic Services – Municipal, Floor 1, Civic Centre

**Email:** [mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 023 8083 3886

Details of forthcoming scrutiny meetings, agendas, reports and minutes can be obtained from the City Council's website at: [Scrutiny at Southampton](#)

### The 4 Principles of Effective Scrutiny

