

Report for: Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel – 30 July 2024

Title: Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel - Work Programme

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report sets out how the foundations will be laid for targeted, inclusive and timely work by the Panel on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the overall approach for developing a work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Panels for 2024-26 as approved by the Committee at its meeting on 13 June and outlined at section 5, be noted; and

2.2 That, pending commencement of the finalised work programme, the Panel agree items for its next meeting, which will take place on 26 September 2024.

3. Reasons for decision

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny work planning process for 2024-26 is unlikely to be completed by the time of the next meeting of the Panel. The Panel therefore needs to agree provisional items for its next meeting, pending formal agreement of the work plan.

4. Describe the issue under consideration

4.1 As the previous two-year work programming cycle has come to an end, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the opportunity to develop a work programme for itself and the scrutiny panels that ensures the Council's scrutiny function is used to its best effect.

4.2 In previous years, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has held a "Scrutiny Café" that brought together Council officers and community and stakeholder

representatives to discuss the matters that they believe would merit further consideration from Overview and Scrutiny, based on the concerns and views of the community and the expected areas of priority for the Council and its partners. This has also been helpful in developing a good level of engagement with key external representatives and cultivating relationships that allow on-going ad hoc communication.

- 4.3 A “Scrutiny Café” event was set up during September 2018 to consider the responses to an online scrutiny survey in detail and other relevant matters. A large number of community and voluntary sector organisations attended, and the event took place at the Selby Centre in Tottenham. A second Scrutiny Café took place in March 2021, after the completion of the previous workplan. The process was delayed by lockdown and the pandemic. This was a virtual event, held on MS Teams due to the pandemic. It was informed by a second online survey, which took place just before the start of the pandemic in January 2020.
- 4.4 For the 2022-24 work programme, an online scrutiny survey took place over July and August 2022. The results of the survey then augmented a scrutiny café event on 16th September 2022. Invitations for the scrutiny café were sent out to a raft of community groups and VCS organisations in the borough. OSC members were also asked to spread the word of the event through their existing contacts and community networks. The outcomes of this process were used to put together the Overview and Scrutiny work plan for 2022-24.
- 4.5 A consultative Scrutiny Café event has been provisionally planned for Friday 20th of September. It is likely to be held in Alexandra House. Previous Scrutiny Café events took place during the daytime and were in person. Whilst this may exclude people who work full time or have caring responsibilities, representatives from community organisations may be in a position to speak on behalf of people unable to attend.
- 4.6 We also intend to run an online survey this time as well. This will be held over August and early September. These can be a very useful way of getting feedback from a wide group of people. They work best in providing quantitative feedback but are less effective on qualitative matters. The survey will provide the Scrutiny with feedback on the issues that residents feel should be prioritised as well as any specific matters that they think should be looked at in detail.
- 4.7 Given that it is likely that the process for creating a work programme will generate a large number of ideas, OSC have agreed that the work planning process will again develop a two-year work programme for 2024-26. This will provide a broad framework for the Committee and Panels to follow over their first two years, leaving some room for any highly significant matters that may arise. This process can be repeated in 2024, at the mid-point of the current administration.

5. Effective Scrutiny Work Programmes

- 5.1 An effective scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities:
 - Holding the Executive to account;

- Policy review and development – reviews to assess the effectiveness of existing policies or to inform the development of new strategies;
- Performance management – identifying under-performing services, investigating and making recommendations for improvement;
- External scrutiny – scrutinising and holding to account partners and other local agencies providing key services to the public;
- Public and community engagement – engaging and involving local communities in scrutiny activities and scrutinising those issues which are of concern to the local community.

5.2 Depending on the selected topic and planned outcomes, scrutiny work will be carried out in a variety of ways, using various formats. This will include a variety of one-off reports. In accordance with the scrutiny protocol, the OSC and Scrutiny Panels will draw from the following to inform their work:

- Performance reports;
- One off reports on matters of national or local interest or concern;
- Issues arising out of internal and external assessment
- Reports on strategies and policies under development or other issues on which the Cabinet or officers would like scrutiny views or support;
- Progress reports on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet or appropriate Executive body.

5.3 In addition, in-depth scrutiny work, including task and finish projects, are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and to make improvements. Through the gathering and consideration of evidence from a wider range of sources, this type of work enables more robust and effective challenge as well as an increased likelihood of delivering positive outcomes. In depth reviews should also help engage the public and provide greater transparency and accountability.

5.4 It is nevertheless important that there is a balance between depth and breadth of work undertaken so that resources can be used to their greatest effect.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6.1 The contribution of scrutiny to the corporate priorities will be considered routinely as part of the OSC's work.

7. Statutory Officers comments

Finance and Procurement

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Should any of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny generate recommendations with financial implications these will be highlighted at that time.

Legal

- 7.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 7.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.4 Under Section 21 (6) of the Local Government Act 2000, an OSC has the power to appoint one or more sub-committees to discharge any of its functions. In accordance with the Constitution, the appointment of Scrutiny Panels (to assist the scrutiny function) falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.5 Scrutiny Panels are non-decision making bodies and the work programme and any subsequent reports and recommendations that each scrutiny panel produces must be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such reports can then be referred to Cabinet or Council under agreed protocols.

Equality

- 7.6 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 7.7 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them within its work plan and those of its panels, as well as individual pieces of work. This should include considering and clearly stating;
- How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics;
 - Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate;
 - Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Haringey;
 - Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

7.8 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence. Wherever possible this should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

8. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Outline (draft) Work Programme 2024-26

9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A