

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 14 October 2024

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Committee and 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 provides an update on the work planning process for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the four Scrutiny Panels following the recent Scrutiny Café engagement event.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the comments and feedback received from the Scrutiny Survey and the Scrutiny Café consultation event and gives consideration to including the priorities raised when developing the work programme for the Committee and the four Scrutiny Panels; and
- 2.2 That the Committee give consideration to the agenda items and reports required for its next meeting on 25th November.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is responsible for developing an overall work plan, including work for its standing Scrutiny Panels. In putting this together, the Committee will need to have regard to their capacity to deliver the programme and officers' capacity to support them in that task.

4. Scrutiny Café and development of Work Programme 2024-26

- 4.1 The Work Programme report considered by the Committee at its meeting on 13th June 2024 set out in detail the process for developing a scrutiny Work Programme for 2024-26. It also described the Scrutiny Café consultation event held in previous years that brought together Council officers and community and stakeholder representatives to discuss which matters 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 input was then used to help determine the priorities for previous Scrutiny Work Programmes.

- 4.2 The Scrutiny Café event to inform the 2024-26 Work Programme was held on 20th September 2024 at the Engine Room in Tottenham. A large number of community and voluntary sector organisations were invited, and the event was well attended.
- 4.3 An online Scrutiny Survey was also developed and went live in August and early September in the run-up to the Scrutiny Café event. The survey was promoted on the Council's website and social media channels, as well as being disseminated through various partnership networks in the local community. At the time of compiling the results, the Scrutiny Survey received 119 responses. The issues that respondents thought should be prioritised for each of the scrutiny bodies is included in the feedback from the Scrutiny Café attached as an appendix to this report. The Committee are invited to use the information received at the Scrutiny Café and the results of the Scrutiny Survey to help inform the work planning process for 2024-25 & 2025-26.
- 4.4 Participants at the Scrutiny Café were divided into five tables, each one orientated to a particular scrutiny body, namely: Adults and Health; Children and Young People; Climate, Community Safety & Environment; Placemaking & Housing; and the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Each table was chaired by the relevant chair of that body. During the Scrutiny Café, attendees were invited to put forward their issues of concern, and the areas in which they thought Scrutiny should look at as part of its work programme for the next two years. Attendees were then asked to prioritise the issues that had been put forward and suggest a top three.
- 4.5 A summary of the issues and priorities identified through the Scrutiny Café and Scrutiny Survey for each of the four Scrutiny Panels, and main Committee are provided as appendices to this report. These priorities should be carefully considered when the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels develop their respective Work Programmes. Not all of the priorities put forward can be Scrutiny Reviews. Members should note that there are other methods of including a particular topic in the work programme, short of undertaking a review, such as; questions to the Cabinet Member, and a one-off report to Scrutiny. Scrutiny can also undertake site visits and invite external participants to attend meetings and give evidence. Overview & Scrutiny Committee also has the ability to make recommendations to Cabinet, based on the outcomes of its meetings.
- 4.6 Following the October meeting of OSC, each of the four Scrutiny Panels will look at the feedback from the scrutiny café in relation to their respective areas and will use this information to develop their own work programmes. The work programmes for each of the panels will then come back to the November meeting of OSC for approval.
- 4.7 Overview & Scrutiny are due to consider the draft budget proposals relating to the Culture, Strategy & Engagement budget at its next meeting on 25th

November. The 2023/24 Annual Complaints report is also pencilled in for this meeting. Members should give consideration as to whether they are happy with this as a proposed agenda for the November meeting of OSC. The Committee should give consideration to suggestions for the other meetings scheduled in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

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 Key features of an effective work programme:

- A member led process, short listing and prioritising topics – with support from officers – that;
 - reflects local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Borough Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities
 - prioritises topics for scrutiny that have most impact or benefit
 - involves local stakeholders
 - is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues

5.3 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 (e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission);
- 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.

5.4 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.

- 5.5 In the past, Scrutiny has undertaken short, focused pieces of work, referred to as 'Scrutiny in a day'. It is 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 and the Corporate Delivery Plan 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 A – Feedback from the Scrutiny Café -Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix B - Feedback from the Scrutiny Café - Adults and Health Panel.

Appendix C – Feedback from the Scrutiny Café - Children and Young People Panel.

Appendix D – Feedback from the Scrutiny Café – Culture, Community Safety & Environment Panel.

Appendix E – Feedback from the Scrutiny Café – Placemaking & Housing. Panel.

Appendix F – Draft Work Programme for OSC.