



Haringey Council

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| Report for: | Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – 29 June 2015 | Item Number: | |
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| Title: | Work Programme Development |
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| Report Authorised by: | Bernie Ryan, Assistant Director of Corporate Governance |
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| Lead Officer: | Clifford Hart, Democratic Services Manager, 020 8489 2920, clifford.hart@haringey.gov.uk |
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| Ward(s) affected: | Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: |
| All | N/A |

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 Developing an effective work programme is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well, it can help lay the foundations for targeted, inclusive and timely work on issues of local importance where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.
- 1.2 Throughout May and June a number of consultative processes have been employed to support the development of the scrutiny work programme with the final programme being agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 July 2015.
- 1.3 The aim of this report is to assist the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel in prioritising topics for inclusion in their work programme.
- 1.4 Scrutiny panels are non-decision making bodies. The work programme and any subsequent reports and recommendations that each panel produces must therefore be approved by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations



- (a) That the Panel agree that the items outlined in section 8 of the report be prioritised for inclusion in the 2015/16 work programme.
- (b) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to endorse (a) above at its meeting on 27 July 2015.
- (c) That, in respect of the items agreed for inclusion in the 2015/16 scrutiny work programme, the Chair of the Panel meets with appropriate Cabinet members and senior officers to clarify further the work programme.

4. Alternative options considered

4.1 N/A

5. Background information

“Scrutiny is based on the principle that someone who makes a decision...should not be the only one to review or challenge it.”

“Overview is founded on the belief that an open, inclusive, member led approach to policy review...results in better policies in the long run”

(Jessica Crowe, former Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny)

Principles

- 5.1 Expending resources on investigating an issue via scrutiny requires clear justification yet there are often difficulties in prioritising work. Some of the problems in developing and maintaining an effective work programme include:
- Agenda creep and losing sight of the key issues;
 - Diving into detail;
 - Focusing on minor points;
 - Going over old ground;
 - Lack of progress on identified issues;
 - Overlapping with the role of other committees;
 - Hobbyhorses;
 - Running out of time;



Haringey Council

- Political loyalty versus the independence of scrutiny.

5.2 To help overcome these barriers, the careful selection and prioritisation of work is essential if scrutiny is to be successful, gain buy in from senior officers and Cabinet, retain credibility and achieve added value.

5.3 The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified a number of features in planning an effective scrutiny work programme¹, which include:

- It should be a **member led process** (e.g. involvement of all non executive members, and members leading on the short-listing and prioritisation of topics – with support from officers)
- It should **reflect local needs, priorities and policies** (e.g. issues of community concern as well as those priorities identified in the Corporate Plan and proposals within the Medium Term Financial Strategy)
- It should **prioritise topics** for scrutiny involvement that have most impact /benefit
- It should **involve local stakeholders**; e.g. local residents, community groups, Residents Associations, partners, businesses, and service users.
- It **should be flexible** to enable scrutiny to respond to new or urgent issues as they emerge.
- **Having a meaningful discussion** about the work programme probably works better than a complex set of feasibility criteria, which may be over-bureaucratic and resource intensive.

6. Components of a scrutiny work programme

6.1 Overview and Scrutiny has a number of distinct functions which provide a framework for the activities of local scrutiny bodies. An effective scrutiny work programme should aim to reflect a balance of these activities;

- **Holding the Executive to Account** – questioning the Leader and Cabinet Members on issues within their portfolio and through pre- and post-cabinet decision scrutiny. For example, the operation of ‘Call-in’ procedures and ensuring meaningful input into the development of business cases relating to decisions made by Council in February.
- **Policy Review and Development** – assisting Cabinet by undertaking strategic reviews to assess the effectiveness of existing policies or to inform the development of new strategies;

¹ A Cunning Plan: Devising a Scrutiny Work Programme, Centre for Public Scrutiny, 2011



Haringey Council

- **Performance Monitoring** – identifying services that are not performing, investigating and making recommendations for improvement;
- **External Scrutiny** – scrutinising and holding to account those partners and other local agencies which provide 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.

6.2 In the context of these functions, and in accordance with the scrutiny protocol, a range of reports can be requested by scrutiny. Depending on the selected topic and the planned outcome, this could include:

- (i) Performance Reports;
- (ii) One off reports on matters of national or local interest or concern (e.g. Casey Report);
- (iii) Issues arising out of internal and external assessment (e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission);
- (iv) Reports on strategies and policies under development, or other issues on which the Cabinet or officers would like scrutiny views or support;
- (v) Progress reports on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet or appropriate Executive body.

6.3 In addition in-depth scrutiny reviews are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny work and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and to make improvements. Through the gathering and consideration of evidence from a wider range of sources, they enable 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. 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.

7. Prioritising and selecting issues for scrutiny involvement

7.1 There are a number of practical criteria which are used to assist in the prioritisation and selection of scrutiny topics. Selected topics should:

- Compliment the priorities and work of the Council and its partners
;
- Not duplicate work being undertaken elsewhere by the Council and its partners;
- Reflect the concerns of the wider community;
- Be practical and demonstrate a positive and beneficial impact.



Haringey Council

7.1 Throughout May and June consultation and engagement with local stakeholders took place to support the development of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme. This included:

- Public Survey - local residents and community groups;
- Scrutiny Cafe – non executive members, local partners and senior officers;
- Informal meetings with Cabinet Member and Senior Officers;

7.2 These activities have been used to guide and inform the selection of work programme items for each scrutiny panel.

8. Work Programme Development

8.1 Public engagement and involvement is a key function of scrutiny and local residents and community groups are encouraged to participate in all aspects of scrutiny from the development of the work programme to participation in project work (e.g. providing service assessments / service user insights).

8.2 To ensure issues considered by scrutiny are both important and relevant to the local community, an online survey was distributed to local residents, community groups and other local stakeholders to assess their views. This was administered for a three week period from mid-May and generated approximately 60 individual qualitative responses.

8.2 Further to the completion of the survey, the Chairs of all scrutiny bodies have met with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers to further discuss issues arising from the survey.

8.3 From these activities, and work rolled over from last year, a summary of suggestions – attached at **Appendix A** – was prepared for the Scrutiny Cafe that took place on 15 June.

8.4 The aim of the Scrutiny Cafe was to bring together key local stakeholders (non executive members, partners and senior council officers) for round table discussions to further inform the development of the scrutiny work programme. Discussions were themed around the council's corporate priorities.

8.5 From this discussion at the Scrutiny Cafe, a number of potential issues were identified for inclusion in the Panel's work programme for 2015/16. These are summarised below. These are linked to Corporate Priority 3, which covers the key areas that are covered within the Panel's terms of reference.

Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – Work Programme Areas for 2015/16



Priority 3 – “A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work”

| Suggestion | Priority | Comments |
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| <p>Major Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group identified two areas which they felt would merit an in-depth OSC project; (i) Joined up enforcement and (ii) cycling. • In terms of priority, it was agreed that joined up enforcement should be at a higher level than the cycling project. • Following discussion subsequent to Scrutiny Cafe event, it is now proposed that joined up enforcement should instead be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee rather than the Panel as the issue is cross cutting in nature. | | |
| Joined up enforcement | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could look at a number of issues, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How other boroughs were approaching the issue; ➤ Publicity and communication with residents; ➤ How to increase the perception of risk so the people were less likely to offend; ➤ Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and licensing; ➤ Anti social behaviour; and ➤ Progress with implementing recommendations of the previous scrutiny exercise on the issue. |
| Cycling | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could look at what could be done to increase the level of participation in cycling within the borough, which is comparatively low, and safety. As part of this, work could be undertaken to see how the issue was approached by boroughs with higher rates of participation. • It was also suggested that issues affecting pedestrians should also be looked at as part of this work. |
| <p>“One-off” items</p> | | |



| Suggestion | Priority | Comments |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group identified a number of smaller 'one-off our update reports' which the OSC should consider requesting officers to prepare and present over the course of the next 12 months |
| Community safety | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was considered that a number of issues and related suggestions could be looked at as part of the regular process of looking at the work of the Community Safety Partnership and consideration of crime statistics. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Violent crime; ➤ Prevention of violent extremism; ➤ The Neighbourhood Policing Model; and ➤ Community engagement. |
| Reducing waste | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could look at what could be done to change behaviour in order to reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal, including the balance between enforcement and encouragement. The fly tipping and maintaining front gardens suggestions could be incorporated into this piece of work. In addition, it could also look at what can be done to take levels of recycling to the next level. |
| Parks | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would also incorporate the suggestion regarding events in parks. It was felt that this could look at a number of related issues including facilities within parks, performance, events and asset management. |
| Violence Against Women and Girls | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was felt that this could build on the useful work that was undertaken by the Environment and Community Safety Panel last year and focussed on domestic violence and abuse and, in particular, the response of health services. One particular issue that could be examined was under reporting and how this could be addressed. Action taken by other boroughs could be looked at as part of this. |



| Suggestion | Priority | Comments |
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| <p>“May be”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was considered that, whilst the following items might have potential as items, it was unlikely that there would be space and time to address them. | | |
| Waterways | Low | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to waterways within the borough was felt to be in need of improvement as well as their upkeep. The lack of people accessing them and their condition was felt to encourage crime and anti-social behaviour. |
| Development and green space | Low | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could focus on maintaining a suitable balance between development, particularly for housing, and preserving green spaces for recreation and play. |

8.6 In addition, under agreed scrutiny protocols, Cabinet Members will be invited to attend relevant scrutiny panels twice each year to discuss issues within their portfolio area. The format of Cabinet Q and A is not prescribed and can be varied according to local agreement between the Chair and Cabinet member.

9. Monitoring

9.1 Once the work programme is agreed, there are both formal and informal systems in place to ensure effective monitoring of the work programme. Regular agenda planning meetings (with the Chair and senior officers) and discussion at Committee itself gives an opportunity to:

- Discuss the format, structure and priority of future items/meetings;
- Discuss the rules and procedures for formal meetings – ensuring clarity, consistency, and good time keeping;
- Discuss what other information is required, including the identification and of witnesses which may include external experts, service-users, community groups, amongst others;
- Consider options for getting out and about including site visits to other authorities and front-line service visits;
- Develop key lines of enquiry or a questioning strategy;



- Ensure the right people attend the right meetings at the right time;
- Follow up on any actions agreed, ensuring outcomes from recommendations;
- Consider member development needs to enable activities to be planned that take into consideration items included on the future work programme.

9.2 To assist in work programme development and monitoring, a new work programme template – attached at **Appendix B** - has been created to ensure the details and desired outcomes of items on the work programme can be kept under review.

9.3 In considering its future work plan, each scrutiny panel may wish to consider Haringey's Forward Plan. This provides 28 days notice of key decisions that the Cabinet is expected to take over the next three months, together with key decisions to be taken by individual Cabinet Members. The Forward Plan is updated and republished on a monthly basis and covers a period of three months.

10. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

10.1 The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on this report and can confirm there are no direct financial implications. Should any of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny generate recommendations with financial implications these will be highlighted at that time.

11. Comments of the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Legal Implications

11.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted on this report and can confirm there are no direct legal implications.

11.2 Under Section 21 (6) of the Local Government Act 2000, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to appoint one or more sub-committees to discharge any of its functions.

11.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the work programme and any subsequent reports and recommendations that each panel produces must be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

12. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

12.1 Overview and Scrutiny has a strong community engagement role and aims to regularly involve local stakeholders, including residents, in its work. It seeks to do this through:

- Helping to articulate the view of members of the local community and their representatives on issues of local concern.



- Bringing local concerns to the attention of decision makers and incorporating them into policies and strategies.
- Identifying and engaging with hard to reach groups.
- Helping to develop consensus by seeking to reconcile differing views and developing a shared view of the way forward.

12.2 The evidence generated by scrutiny reviews / committee work helps to identify the kind of services wanted by local people. It also promotes openness and transparency as meetings are held in public and documents are available to local people.

13. Head of Procurement Comments

N/A

14. Policy Implication

14.1 There are no direct policy implications. However, this report sets out how the work of Overview and Scrutiny will contribute and add value to the work of the Council and its partners in meeting locally agreed priorities.

15. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Suggestions for Overview and Scrutiny (Scrutiny Cafe Booklet)

Appendix B – Future Work Programme Template

16. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985