

Report for: Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Item number:

Title: Work Programme Development

Report authorised by : Bernie Ryan, Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

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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 on issues of local importance where the Panel can add value.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

- (a) That the Panel agree that the areas, outlined in section 6.14 be considered for inclusion in the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme.
- (b) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to endorse (a), above, at its meeting on 21 July 2016.
- (c) That in respect of the priority work areas for 2016/17, the Chair of the Panel meets with appropriate Cabinet members and senior officers to clarify the work programme, before it is agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 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 suggestions put forward by each Panel, their capacity to deliver the programme, and officers' capacity to support them in that task.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The Panel could choose not to review suggestions for its future work programme however this could diminish knowledge of the work of Overview and Scrutiny and would fail to keep the full membership updated.

6. 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

- 6.1 Developing an effective work programme is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function.
- 6.2 The careful selection and prioritisation of work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility. A summary of what needs to be done to develop a successful work programme is provided below.

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

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 Corporate 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

6.3 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;
- 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.

6.4 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. 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.

Review of 2015/16

6.5 In order to assess the impact of last year's work programme each of the Panel Chairs, from 2015/16, were invited to a short de-briefing session with the Chair of OSC and the Performance, Programme and Scrutiny leads for the particular corporate priority that their Panel covered.

6.6 These sessions reviewed progress in the last year and flagged up matters requiring further attention. For example, there was an opportunity to look at how the priority dashboards had been used to shape the scrutiny work programme and how these could be used moving forwards. Some of the achievements from last year are highlighted in the table overleaf.

Summary of Achievements 2015/16

Corporate Priorities

- Regular briefings agreed for panel chairs, with priority, performance and finance leads, to support strategic understanding with work programme planning linked to corporate priorities.
- In-depth project work, linked clearly to the corporate priorities, concerning: Finsbury Park Events; Social Inclusion; Community Infrastructure Levy; Viability Assessments; Cycling; Community Safety in Parks; and Dis-proportionality in the Youth Justice System which have resulted in practical and achievable recommendations being made.

Positive and Beneficial Impact

- Thorough sessions on adult and children's safeguarding, plus briefing sessions for members and now joint work planning in hand with adults and children's safeguarding boards.
- Effective budget scrutiny with positive recommendations fully agreed by Cabinet, and forward planning to formalise budget monitoring at panels (see section 5.4).
- More focussed Cabinet member Q&As, with questions/KLOE determined in advance.
- New ways of working e.g. "scrutiny review in a day" sessions (Community Infrastructure Levy and Viability Assessments), and a range of site visits meeting staff and service users, including long-term unemployed people, young offenders, and adult service users. Members also gained first-hand experience of issues relating to cycling by touring the Borough on bikes.
- Rapid response e.g. review of Finsbury Park events with agreed recommendations developing policy and addressing resident concerns; review of action taken on various adult care concerns.

Wider Concerns / Practical Assistance

- Improved engagement with partners including police, CCG, and other NHS bodies; and a wide range of agencies, including key policy makers across London, such as the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner, and input from local MPs.
- Improved engagement with the public, both in developing the work programme and evidence gathering e.g. the Call for Evidence in relation to Finsbury Park Events.
- Learning from best practice from other local authorities through visits to Cambridge and Waltham Forest and witnesses who have attended scrutiny evidence gathering sessions (e.g. from Greenwich, Islington, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Southwark).
- Improved communication with local stakeholders, including press releases, coordinated through regular meetings with the Assistant Director of Communications.
- Improved engagement and involvement with wider scrutiny bodies such as the London Scrutiny Network.

- 6.7 Despite these positive developments difficulties remain, in some areas, in terms of prioritising, developing and maintaining an effective work programme.
- 6.8 On 6 June OSC agreed, to make greatest and most constructive input, 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. This will require using performance and financial information, on a regular basis, to shape and inform the work programme.

Activities to Support the Development of the Work Programme

- 6.9 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).
- 6.10 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 two week period from mid-May and generated approximately 70 individual qualitative responses.
- 6.11 Further to the completion of the survey, the Chairs of scrutiny bodies have met with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers to further discuss issues arising from the survey.
- 6.12 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 9 June.
- 6.13 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.
- 6.14 From these discussions, and items rolled over from last year, a number of issues have been prioritised for consideration in the Panel's future work programme. These are provided in detail in Appendix A and are also summarised below:

Priority Work Areas for 2016/17

- Affordable housing - Development Vehicle
- Private rented Sector – the introduction of selective licensing
- Temporary Accommodation – stage 1 – support to those in crisis and stage 2 – nature and level of support provided to those that may be homed out of borough.
- Regeneration of Tottenham and Wood Green
- Confidence in the local planning system
- Planning enforcement
- Tenancy Strategy
- High Streets
- Older Peoples Housing
- Leaseholders
- Flood Risk Assessment

Cabinet Members and Senior Officers

- 6.15 Before the final work programme is agreed by OSC, the Chair of the Panel will meet with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers. The primary purpose of such meetings will be to discuss emerging issues, to identify the value of each topic, and to consider how selections align with corporate priorities, objectives and outcomes. This will help ensure scrutiny processes are commensurate to desired outcomes (e.g. one-off report or more in depth investigations).
- 6.16 At this juncture, Cabinet members and senior officers are also invited to suggest additional topics where scrutiny could be beneficially involved, including:
- Any matters forming part of the Budget and/or Policy Framework which will require adoption in the coming year;
 - Any other strategies or policies which may benefit from scrutiny involvement;

- Items on the Forward Plan which may benefit from pre-decision scrutiny;
- Annual service reports or inspection reports.

6.17 These meetings also provide an opportunity for relevant Cabinet member(s) to agree dates, with the Chair, at which they will attend meetings for their Question and Answer sessions.

Monitoring the Work Programme

6.18 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 each panel meeting give an opportunity to discuss the scope and approach to the area of inquiry.

Member Learning and Development (MLD)

6.19 In terms of Overview and Scrutiny, Members require a number of skills. Various activities took place, during 2015/16, to support the delivery of the scrutiny work programme, including:

- Chairing Overview and Scrutiny: Developing and Improving Skills
 - o ½ day training delivered in August
- Mentoring for the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny
 - o This was tailored to each Chair and their identified requirements and took place during Autumn
- How to effectively challenge the Council and its partners on Child Safeguarding, including addressing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Various MLD sessions and site visits (specific to certain scrutiny projects)

6.20 Moving forwards, these activities, the broad range of generic skills required by all members and the topics included in the future scrutiny work programme, will need to be considered/reviewed as part of work that's taking place to develop a new Member Learning and Development programme. This will ensure scrutiny Members are properly equipped to undertake planned work during 2016/17.

7. Contribution to Strategic Outcomes

7.1 Activities to develop the future scrutiny work programme have taken place during May and June, with further work planned for July. The contribution scrutiny can make to strategic outcomes will be considered as part of this process, before the final programme is agreed by OSC on 21 July.

8. Statutory Officers Comments

Finance

- 8.1 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

- 8.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 8.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 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 OSC. Such reports can then be referred to Cabinet or Council under agreed protocols.

Equality

- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 The Panel should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them within its work plan, 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.

8.8 The Panel should ensure 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.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Priority Areas for Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985