

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 21st July 2016

Item number: 14

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

Report

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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 Following a wide ranging consultation exercise, this report outlines the indicative 2016/17 scrutiny work programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee:

- (a) Discuss and agree the indicative scrutiny work programme for 2016/17 attached at Appendix 1.
- (b) Agree, that during August 2016, in respect of the items agreed for inclusion in the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme the Chair of OSC, and Chairs of each Scrutiny Panel, meet with appropriate Cabinet members and senior officers to further clarify the work programme (section 5).
- (c) Agree the outline scoping documents **(TO FOLLOW)** for both the Development Vehicle and Temporary Accommodation Scrutiny Projects to ensure findings/recommendations can be considered during the Autumn.
- (d) Agree, that scoping and initial evidence gathering for the other scrutiny projects, agreed at (a) above, takes place during August/September, with scoping documents submitted to OSC in October for approval.
- (e) Confirm budget scrutiny arrangements for the budget setting process for 2017/18 (section 6).

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The 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.

Alternative options considered

- 3.2 Alternative options were considered and suggestions for inclusion have been prioritised in a number of ways. For example, over 100 suggestions, including those from members of the public (attached at Appendix 2), were discussed by scrutiny members, council officers, partners, and community representatives at the Scrutiny Cafe on 9 June.
- 3.3 In addition, suggestions have been prioritised following discussions with Cabinet Members, senior officers, and with input from scrutiny panel members during the first round of meetings.

4. Background information

- 4.1 Each year, the OSC is responsible for developing an overall scrutiny work programme, including work for its four standing scrutiny panels.

Selection and Prioritisation

- 4.2 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
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.

5. Activities to Support the Development of the Work Programme

- 5.1 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. Further to the completion of the survey, the Chairs of all scrutiny bodies met with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers to discuss issues arising from the survey.
- 5.2 From these activities, and work rolled over from last year, a summary of suggestions – attached at Appendix 2 – was prepared for discussion at the Scrutiny Cafe. This event took place on 9 June.
- 5.3 The aim of the Scrutiny Cafe was to bring together key local stakeholders (scrutiny members, council officers, partners, and community representatives) for round table discussions to further inform the development of the scrutiny work programme.
- 5.4 From discussions at the Scrutiny Cafe, a number of issues were identified for possible scrutiny involvement. These were further discussed, in late June / early July, by each of the panels during the first round of meetings.

- 5.5 From these activities a range of issues have now been prioritised for inclusion in the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme. These are summarised, by the relevant scrutiny body, at Appendix 1.
- 5.6 To ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's and Scrutiny Panels' time is effectively and efficiently utilised, once the indicative work programme has been agreed it is recommended that, during August, the Chair of OSC and the Chairs of each Scrutiny Panel, meet with appropriate Cabinet members and senior officers to further clarify the work programme.
- 5.7 Scoping reports **(TO FOLLOW)** for both the suggested Development Vehicle and Temporary Accommodation Scrutiny Projects will be considered by Committee on 21 July to ensure findings/recommendations can be considered during the Autumn.
- 5.8 It is suggested that scoping and initial evidence gathering for other scrutiny projects, outlined in Appendix 1, takes place during August/September, with scoping documents submitted to OSC, by the relevant Panels, in October for approval.

6. Budget Scrutiny Arrangements

- 6.1 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Constitution, Part 4, Section G) state: "The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall undertake scrutiny of the Council's budget through a Budget Scrutiny process". The procedure by which this operates is detailed in the Scrutiny Protocol.
- 6.2 In previous years OSC has tasked individual Scrutiny Panels with reviewing and providing comments on budget proposals relevant to their areas, with the full OSC taking a lead role for those areas not covered by a specific panel and overarching comments to Cabinet on the draft budget proposals. However, following approval of the Council's three year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February 2015, OSC considered its role in October 2015.
- 6.3 It was agreed that scrutiny of the 2016/17 budget, part of the approved MTFS 2015-2018, would be undertaken only by OSC. This took place in January 2016.
- 6.4 In order to cover the period of business rate devolution, work commenced on a new five year MTFS in May 2016. This will use the last year of the currently approved MTFS (2017/18) and will add a further four years (2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22). As a result, this will result in a new range of proposals for the latter four years being initially approved by Cabinet in December 2016.
- 6.5 With this in mind, and in view of the Scrutiny Protocol, a request has been made for a clear timetable to be provided to OSC in July 2016, in relation to the budget setting process for 2017/18. This is to ensure activity in this area is co-ordinated as part of the process for developing the overall scrutiny work programme.

- 6.6 Further information is provided under agenda item 10 (MTFS Planning). The Committee is asked to confirm budget scrutiny arrangements for the budget setting process for 2017/18 under this work programme item.

7. Monitoring the Work Programme

- 7.1 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 give an opportunity to discuss the scope and approach to the area of inquiry.

8. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 8.1 The individual issues included within the 2016/17 work programme were identified following consideration by relevant Members and officers of the priorities within Haringey's Corporate Plan (2015-18). Their selection was specifically based on their potential to contribute to strategic outcomes.

9. Statutory Officers comments

Finance and Procurement

- 9.1 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

- 9.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 9.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 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

- 9.6 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.

9.7 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.

9.8 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.

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 Indicative Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

Appendix 2 Suggestions for Overview and Scrutiny (Scrutiny Cafe)

11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 External web links have been provided in this report. Haringey Council is not responsible for the contents or reliability of linked websites and does not necessarily endorse any views expressed within them. Listings should not be taken as an endorsement of any kind. It is your responsibility to check the terms and conditions of any other web sites you may visit. We cannot guarantee that these links will work all of the time and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.