

Report for: Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, 22 June 2017

Title: Scrutiny Work Programme Development 2017-18

Report authorised by : Michael Kay, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

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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 scrutiny can add value.

2. Recommendations

(a) That the Panel notes the work that was completed during 2016/17, attached at Appendix A.

(b) That the Panel consider an update from officers on work relevant to the Panel's terms of reference;

(c) That the Panel agree the areas outlined at Section 4.6, for inclusion in the 2017/18 scrutiny work programme, providing any further comment they wish;

(d) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to endorse (c), above, at its meeting on 17 July 2017.

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. Approach

4.1 As this is the final municipal year of this administration, it is suggested that the Panel focus its efforts on ensuring work undertaken to date is concluded, rather than begin new areas of work that may not be completed before the 2018 election.

- 4.2 Prior to the end of the previous municipal year, the Overview and Committee agreed that there would be little value in holding another ‘Scrutiny Café’ event with stakeholders given each Panel had already identified work it could undertake this year.
- 4.3 Individual scrutiny panels will need to develop work programmes according to their own priorities and remaining work from the previous years. This will involve engagement with officers, and other stakeholders, at the first meeting. Prior to any review work being commenced, it is expected that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider and approve scoping proposals as usual.
- 4.4 Panel chairs will also continue to hold briefing sessions on Corporate Priorities with priority, performance and finance leads to support strategic understanding and enable work programmes to be linked to corporate priorities.
- 4.5 Over the past year, the OSC undertook efforts to ensure effective financial scrutiny at each of the three stages –budget setting, expenditure monitoring, outturn reviewing. These efforts included training for Members, scrutiny of in-year expenditure and the positive response of Cabinet to Scrutiny recommendations in the setting of the MTFs.
- 4.6 The following sets out the expected issues to be considered at Panel meetings in the next year. This is based on the updates requested in the last municipal year, and the assumption that the process for scrutiny of budget setting will run the same as last year (though the recent restructure of the Senior Leadership Team and establishment of a new Chief Finance Officer post, to be recruited to, may mean this is subject to change):

2 October	Selective Licensing Update Other items TBC
7 November	An update on the financial performance of P4 and P5 Services - Budget Monitoring (Timing TBC) Other items TBC
19 December	Budget Scrutiny
13 March	Other Items TBC
Other Items Timings TBC	To consider how the Council is performing against housing supply commitments within the policy framework (suggested by OSC as part of the Sale of Land at Kerswell Close Call-In – minutes available here) The work of the Decision Panel, how it operates and how this could be improved Older People Housing - not just the Supported Housing Review

- 4.7 Panel Members are encouraged to suggest additional matters they would like to pursue. As usual, the Panel can use the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in identifying matters for consideration on a more immediate timescale.

<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RP=110&RD=0&J=1>

- 4.8 There is currently no proposal for a general training offer for Scrutiny Members, as has occurred in previous years with financial scrutiny and chairing skills. However, as ever, Members are invited to make any requests for training direct to Democratic Services or to discuss shared needs in an informal meeting.

5. Background – Good scrutiny practice

“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

- 5.1 Developing an effective work programme is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. The careful selection and prioritisation of work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility.
- 5.2 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
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- 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 (e.g. Casey Report);
- 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. 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 Panel's work programme development.

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 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.
- 7.8 The Panel 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 – Completed Work Programme from 2016/17

9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A
