

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 23 July 2018

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme

Report authorised by : Ayshe Simsek, Acting Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

Lead Officer: Rob Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer
Tel: 020 8489 2921, E-mail: rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report makes proposals for the further development of the work plan for Overview and Scrutiny, including the Committee and its panels.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee consider and identify provisional items to consider for inclusion in its draft work plan for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and, in particular, the next meeting of the Committee on 2 October 2018.

2.2 That the proposed work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny for the forthcoming two years be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 2 October.

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 this task.

4. Background

Introduction

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for developing an overall scrutiny work programme, including work for its four standing scrutiny panels. Careful selection and prioritisation of its work is important if the scrutiny function is to be successful in achieving outcomes.

4.2 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; and
 - Public and community engagement – engaging and involving local communities in scrutiny activities and scrutinising those issues which are of concern to the local community.
- 4.3 An effective work programme should;
- Reflect local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities;
 - Prioritise issues that have most impact or benefit to residents;
 - Involve local stakeholders; and
 - Is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.
- 4.4 Scrutiny work can be carried out in a variety of ways and use whatever format that is best suited to the issue being considered. This can include a variety of “one-off” reports as well as in-depth scrutiny review projects that provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and recommend improvements. 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.

Budget scrutiny

- 4.5 An important part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to undertake scrutiny of the Council’s budget. The procedure by which this operates is detailed in the Scrutiny Protocol. In previous years, the Committee has tasked individual scrutiny panels with reviewing and providing comments on budget proposals relevant to their areas, with the Committee taking a lead role for those areas not covered by a specific panel and providing overarching comments to Cabinet on the draft proposals.

Monitoring

- 4.6 Once the work programme is agreed, there are both formal and informal systems in place to monitor the work programme. Regular agenda planning meetings with the Chair and senior officers and discussion at Committee will provide an opportunity to discuss the scope and approach to each area of inquiry.

Proposed Approach

- 4.7 At its meeting on 4 June, the Committee received and approved a report outlining the proposed approach to the development of a two year work plan for the Committee and its panels, which also provides sufficient flexibility to add any matters of significance that may arise within this time. This included measures to ensure that the views of residents and stakeholders are taken into account in developing, including the setting up of a “Scrutiny Café” event.
- 4.8 After consultation with the Chair, this approach has been developed further. It will not be possible to arrange the Scrutiny Café event until September. However, waiting until the Scrutiny Café has taken place to consider issues for inclusion in the work plan is likely to cause delay in Overview and Scrutiny

commencing its work as the first two rounds of panel meetings are scheduled for early September and early October.

- 4.9 The following is therefore proposed in order that Overview and Scrutiny is able to begin its work in a timely manner;
- All Panel Chairs will meet informally with relevant directors and Cabinet Members before the August recess for a preliminary discussion about priorities and challenges for the year ahead and potential areas for their Panels to focus on;
 - The September round of Panel meetings will consider provisional items for inclusion in work programmes and, in particular, items for their October meetings. This will be informed by the following items on each Panel agenda:
 - An overview of service areas covered;
 - A performance update on the Corporate Priorities that each Panel covers; and
 - Cabinet Member Questions. This to focus, in particular, on key priorities within portfolios
 - Scrutiny Café outcomes to be fed into the draft work plan before it is submitted to O&S for approval on 2 October.

Committee's Work Plan

- 4.10 In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also need to consider its own workplan for the year. Initial proposals will be considered at this meeting. The Committee will receive a State of the Borough report, which will help give context to the discussion. In addition, the Leader and the Chief Executive will be attending the meeting to report on the current and future priorities, which will help further inform the process.
- 4.11 In developing the workplan, the Committee may wish to identify items and prioritise that may be suitable for in depth review. These can be dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits. They will be subject to further development and scoping and project planning. It is proposed that the Committee consider issues that are "cross cutting" in nature for review i.e. ones that cover the terms of reference of more than one of the panels. It is also proposed that reviews are completed within the same year that they are started to ensure continuity as there is the potential for the Committee's membership to be subject to change at the end of the Municipal Year.
- 4.12 The Committee began a review on Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks last year. A report on the progress made with this is attached elsewhere on the agenda. This review will need to be completed before any new review by the Committee is started. The Committee has also indicated that it wishes to review the Scrutiny function. As referred to at the last meeting, the current protocol was agreed in 2012 and does not represent current practice in some areas. It is therefore suggested that, as part of its work programme, the Committee include some time for a review of scrutiny procedures.

- 4.13 In addition to in-depth reviews, the Committee will also wish to consider “one-off” items. These will be dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Committee. There are already some regular and routine items which are normally in the Committee’s work plan, such as budget scrutiny, budget monitoring and performance monitoring. As usual, the Committee will use the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in identifying matters for consideration on a more immediate timescale.
- 4.14 A particular priority will be determining potential items for the Committee on 2 October as reports for this will have to be prepared before the workplan for Overview and Scrutiny and its workplan is finalised.

5. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 5.1 The contribution of scrutiny to the corporate priorities will be considered routinely as part of the OSC’s work.

6. Statutory Officers comments

Finance and Procurement

- 6.1 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

- 6.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 6.3 In accordance with the Council’s Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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

- 6.6 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.

6.7 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.

6.8 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.

7. Use of Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Outline Work Plan for Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2018/19

8. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A