

**Report for:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 2 October 2018

**Title:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme

**Report authorised by :** Ayshe Simsek, Acting 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 makes proposals for finalising the work plan for Overview and Scrutiny, including the Committee and its panels.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the results of the scrutiny survey and the feedback received from the Scrutiny Café be noted;

2.2 That the Committee and the scrutiny panels undertake further work to develop their work plans, including

- Identifying issues for review as well as “one off” items; and
- Finalising items for panel meetings taking place in October or November;

2.3 That final work plans for the Committee and panels for 2018-20 be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval; and

2.4 That Councillor Barbara Blake replace Cllr Amin on the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel with immediate effect.

## **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.

#### *Work Plan Development*

- 4.5 At its meeting on 4 June, the Committee agreed a process to develop a two year work plan for the Committee and its panels. 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. The Committee meeting on 23 July further developed this approach, which also included an on-line scrutiny survey.
- 4.6 The survey went live on 20 August and ran until 14 September. 191 responses were received. Suggestions within this for potential areas to be looked at in detail were combined with those from the Committee and its panels and discussed at the Scrutiny Café. This took place on 13 September and attracted over 50 people, including a large number of people from voluntary sector and community organisations.
- 4.7 A summary of the responses to the Scrutiny Survey and feedback received people who attended the Scrutiny Café for each of the areas covered by the Committee and its panels is attached to this report as Appendix A. A full summary of the response to the survey and the detailed notes of discussions that took place at the Café have already been shared with Committee Members but the attached summaries combine both for ease of reference.

#### *Finalising Work Plans*

- 4.8 Committee Members will therefore now have had the following to inform their decisions on the work plan for the Committee and panels:
- An outline of the Council's current priorities and plans;
  - Relevant performance information;
  - An opportunity to question the Leader and Cabinet Members;
  - The results of the scrutiny survey; and
  - An opportunity to discuss potential issues with a range of stakeholders at the Scrutiny Café.
- 4.9 More detailed work will now be required to finalise the work plans. In particular, consideration needs to be given to the following:
- How best to take forward the issues identified to date. For example, whether an issue is best suited to be dealt with through an in-depth scrutiny review or through a "one-off" item to a regular meeting. There are also routine items such as performance data, budget scrutiny and Cabinet Member Questions which may also provide a means of addressing issues;
  - Account needs to be taken to what other work may be taking place within the Council on issues raised so that any overview and scrutiny involvement complements rather than conflicts with this;
  - Some issues may have already been looked at recently by overview and scrutiny recently and consideration may need to be given as to whether to re-visit them and, if so, when; and
  - There may be some issues that have been raised on which overview and scrutiny is likely to have limited or no influence and therefore consideration needs to be given to where impact is likely to be the greatest in prioritising work.

#### *Next Steps*

- 4.10 It is proposed that the Chair and each of the scrutiny panel Chairs meets with relevant officers to discuss further the issues relating to the areas covered by the Committee and their panels that have been raised. This discussion should take place alongside agenda planning for the October and November round of meetings. To avoid further delay in starting the work plan, consideration can be given to including items on the agendas for these that have been raised to date as part of the work plan development process.
- 4.11 In respect of scrutiny reviews, the number that it will be possible for each scrutiny body to complete within the next two years will at least be partially dependent on the scale of the review that is planned. However, any more than 4 would probably be challenging to achieve within the time available. It is recommended that reviews are completed within individual years. This is because if reviews are not completed by the end of the year and there is a change in membership, continuity may be lost.
- 4.12 As mentioned previously, scrutiny is a flexible process. There are a wide range of options that can be used to approach issues and this does not just apply to review work. How each issue could best be approached should be given careful consideration, including "one-off" items that are placed on agendas for scheduled meetings. Key considerations could include;

- What format might work best?
- Will there be enough space to allow meaningful discussion?
- What evidence would best inform discussion and from what sources?
- How can the views of the community and service users be incorporated?

4.13 Draft final workplans will be submitted to the November round of Panel meetings for agreement and to the Committee meeting on 19 November for final approval.

#### *Monitoring*

4.14 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.

### **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:

## **8. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

N/A