

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JUNE 2024

Work Programming Report, 2024-25

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 June 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Cassie Beckley, Democratic Services Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report outlines the process to be taken by the Committee in formulating its work programme for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendation to the Committee:

1. To consider the scopes set out in Appendices A-D of the report and determine which, if any, should be included within the Committee's Work Programme for the 2024/5 municipal year; and
2. Determine whether any topics arising from additional submissions from Members (if any), should be included in the Committee's Work Programme.

Work Programming Report, 2024-25

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations could materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all corporate priorities, due to the Committee's recommendations on its work programme topics. The Committee considers alignment with the strategic priorities as part of the scope of any reviews undertaken.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations could support the achievement of all the Council's cross-cutting objectives due to the Committee's recommendations on its work programme topics.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Risk Management	See Section 5 of the report.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Head of Finance

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing, however should the Committee choose too high a workload, the current staff resources may not be sufficient. See section 5 of the report for further information.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Legal	<p>In accordance with Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) the Council is operating under Executive Arrangements.</p> <p>These arrangements must include provision for the appointment of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review and scrutinise executive decision made, or other actions taken (LGA 2000, Section 9F) and work programming supports this function.</p> <p>In order to be effective, Government Guidance strongly advises that a work programme be agreed by the Committee.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. Any impacts identified arising from topics chosen for the work programme will be reported to the Committee.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Crime and Disorder	No impacts identified.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Procurement	No impacts identified.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. Any reviews that come forward from the scopes will consider Biodiversity and Climate Change impacts, if relevant.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are able to undertake pre-and-post decision scrutiny, reviews and policy development. To properly support and structure the Committee's work over the 2024-25 Municipal Year, a Work Programme needs to be agreed.

2.2 It is important that the Committee sets its own work programme, with Statutory Guidance stating that:

'Effective scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the Committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority. To have this kind of impact, scrutiny committees need to plan their work programme, i.e. draw up a long-term agenda and consider making it flexible enough to accommodate any urgent, short-term issues that might arise during the year'.¹

2.3 A virtual workshop was held with the Committee Members on 28 May 2024. The workshop covered:

- Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny
- Review of 2023-24 Work Programme
- Review of submitted scopes
- Suggestion Session
- Next Steps

The aim of the workshop was for the Committee Members to discuss the work programme topics it proposed to take forward for the 2024/5 municipal year and the scope of the work to be undertaken in respect of each topic.

2.4 During the workshop, it was explained that reviews were assigned 'weightings' which were established in last year's work programme. These served as a guide to select topics and informed how many reviews would be advisable to keep a balanced workload:

- 3-4 Light reviews OR
- 1 Medium review, 2 Light Reviews OR
- 2-3 Medium Reviews (depending on review remit) OR
- 2 Heavy Reviews.

¹ [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities)

- 2.5 During the workshop, the Committee considered the scopes from last year's work programme, attached as Appendix A-B but favoured the idea of a fresh start with new review topics.
 - 2.6 Following the workshop, revised scopes for the new topics submitted were considered and these are attached as Appendices C-D, with greater focus being placed on the review's priority, scope and deliverability. Members also requested that further work be done on the initial scopes to help define them better. This has been included in Appendices C-D.
 - 2.7 If agreed by the Committee to form part of their work programme, the proposal would be to undertake the CIL and Section 106 review first (Appendix C) and to carry out further work on the Planning Enforcement review (Appendix D) to better define the outcomes sought and information required.
 - 2.8 At the workshop the Committee Members highlighted that the administration programme was not yet known and capacity needed to be retained within the work programme to allow them to be responsive to the work of the Cabinet.
 - 2.9 The Committee is asked to decide which of the reviews it proposes to include in its work programme for this 2024/5 municipal year. The work programme will be presented at each meeting and reviewed in September 2024 to make sure it is still appropriate.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1 – Select 2 reviews.

On the basis of the outcome of the workshop and content of the scopes, it is recommended that the Committee select 2 to take forward. The workshop's clear preference was for the scopes set out in Appendices C-D.

This will ensure the reviews are focused, well-planned and supported, with flexibility for the Committee to undertake pre-and-post decision scrutiny, alongside its Crime & Disorder Committee function. This work could be supported sufficiently by the Democratic Services Team.

3.2 Option 2 – Select a different number or makeup of reviews.

This is not recommended, as it could mean that the Committee would not complete the work across the year, given the number of scheduled meetings and officer support currently available. Capacity also needs to be retained to be responsive to the work of the Cabinet.

3.3 Option 3 – Do Nothing.

Failing to identify a work programme and items for review is not recommended as this would greatly reduce the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Option 1 (as outlined in point 3.1) is the preferred option for the reasons outlined above.

5. RISK

5.1 The risks associated with Option 1 have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework.

5.2 The risks associated with Options 2 and 3 are that the Committee is unable to complete all of the reviews included within its work programme. This could lead to a mid-year work programme review, rushed reviews and/or a reduction in the quality of support provided by Democratic Services.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Informal consultation took place with the Committee at an OSC Member Workshop held on 28 May 2024.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Once the Committee has chosen the topics for inclusion within its work programme, work to commence the reviews will begin.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: ITS Review Scope
 - Appendix B: Health Inequality Review Scope
 - Appendix C: CIL and Section 106 Review Scope
 - Appendix D: Planning Enforcement Review Scope
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils and Combined Authorities: [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities)