

Establish the Overview & Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2023-24

Overview & Scrutiny Panel Panel	30 May 2023
Report Author	Committee Service Manager
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

This report sets out a framework for identifying activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for 2023/24 and asks the Panel to set out and agree their work programme.

Recommendation(s):

Members are being asked to provide guidance on the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2023/24.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report but elements of the suggested work programme may have financial and resource implications which would need to be managed within existing resources, or alternatively compensating savings found.

Legal

The role of scrutiny is set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000. The council must also have regard to the statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny from the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government when exercising its functions.

Risk Management

There are risks arising directly from this report.

Corporate

The work programme should help to deliver effective policy decision making by scrutinising executive decisions before, and at times after, implementation.

The working parties assist with the work of scrutiny as they would carry-out an in-depth study of any issue referred to the groups under their terms of reference. An active Scrutiny programme is part of good governance.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

No implications arise directly but the Council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.

It was important to be aware of the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration has been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by Council.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to Communities.

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report allows the Panel to establish the work programme for the period 2023/24. The work programme would help guide the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and would also provide officers with a reference point for planning appropriate levels of support for Scrutiny.
- 1.2 The current statutory guidance for the scrutiny function says, effective overview and scrutiny should:
 - Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
 - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;

- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services

1.3 With this in mind, Members may wish to ensure that the Panel work programme for the year provides opportunities for critical but constructive challenge to the Executive, articulate any concerns about matters that are the business of the council and strive for improved service delivery by the Council and other public agencies working in Thanet.

2.0 SETTING OUT A NEW WORK PROGRAMME

Scrutiny Review Topics

2.1 The previous Panel agreed on an approach for identifying scrutiny topics. This approach used a matrix which would be used to score and therefore prioritise topics to be scrutinised by the Panel as part of the work programme for the current year. If the list was not progressed through in the current year, any remaining topics would be carried over into the following municipal year. number of scrutiny review topics.

2.2 These review topics would normally be progressed through review projects carried out by a working party set by the Panel. However in other instances Members may choose to commission a one-off officer report which would address the issues raised by Members.

2.3 Annex 1 are the scrutiny scoring matrix notes that Democratic Services use to score the scrutiny topics once Members have identified the topics. Annex 2 is the scoring table, which then gets updated with work in progress notes.

Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

2.4 The Panel can request a Cabinet Member to make a presentation to the Panel on a topic of interest to Members. Members could identify a number of topics which would then be added to the work programme once, Democratic Services have confirmed that the Portfolio Holder would be available to attend a Panel meeting. Topics for presentation could also be identified and added to the work programme during the course of the municipal year.

2.5 Members could also identify subject items for presentation from the Forward Plan or any emerging topical issues which may have a significant public interest, where the Panel may feel that their contributions would enhance the decision making process.

2.6 Annex 3 is the current Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to use to identify items that they would like to engage the Cabinet on. However the current plan has two items. This is largely because it is an election year and a new Cabinet would time to set out their own work programme which would in turn leave to new decision items being added to the forward Plan from June 2023 onwards.

2.7 Annex 4 are the terms of reference of the Panel for Members reference.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 Members may choose to establish a detailed work programme at this May meeting.
- 3.2 The Panel could come up with an initial work programme and then build on it as the year progresses.

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Annex List

Annex 1: Scrutiny Scoring Matrix Notes

Annex 2: Scrutiny Scoring Matrix

Annex 3: Forward Plan

Annex 4: OSP Terms of Reference

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell, Director of Corporate Resources & S151 Officer

Legal: Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer