

Overview & Scrutiny Panel Chair's Report to Council

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| Council | 22 February 2024 |
| Report Author | Committee Service Manager |
| Status | For Information |
| Classification: | Unrestricted |
| Key Decision | No |
| Ward: | Thanet Wide |

Executive Summary:

This report summarises activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for 2023/24 and asks the Members to comment, make suggestions and note the OSP work programme.

Recommendation(s):

Members are being asked to comment on and note the report.

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 the following priorities:

- To keep our district safe and clean;
- To deliver the housing we need;
- To protect our environment;
- To create a thriving place;
- To work efficiently for you.

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 At each ordinary Council meeting, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel presents a progress update report on the activities of the Panel since the last Council meeting. This is in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1 of Part 4 of the Council Constitution. The report is subject to comment or debate by members.

- 1.2 This is an update to Full Council on the work of the Panel since the last Council meeting and allows for discussion of the Panel's planned activities, which hopefully strengthens the Council's scrutiny function.
- 1.3 This report follows on from the update report that was presented at Council on 7 December 2023.
- 1.4 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
- 1.5 With this in mind, Members may wish to comment on and offer suggestions regarding the Panel's work programme for the year.

2.0 THE WORK PROGRAMME

Scrutiny Review Topics

- 2.1 At the Panel meeting on 30 May 2023, Members put forward a number of topics and these were finalised at the July meeting. The matrix for scoring and prioritising review topics is attached as Annex 2 to the report. If the list is not progressed to completion during the current year, any remaining topics would then be carried over into the following municipal year.
- 2.2 The Panel agreed to investigate the following topics:
1. Impact of tourism
 2. Fly tipping and abandoned vehicles;
 3. Grant funding review.
- 2.3 The Tourism Working party was currently finalising its report before presenting it to the Panel in the first quarter of this year.
- 2.4 Annex 1 is the work programme and Annex 2 is the scoring matrix table. Annex 3 is the table that reflects the distribution of the OSP work programme.

Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

- 2.5 Members requested a cabinet member presentation on the Parking Strategy. The presentation was made by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods at the Panel meeting on 16 January 2024. An engaging discussion took place and the detail for that can be found in this link [OSP Minutes 2024.01.16](#)
- 2.6 Annex 1 is a current work programme and Annex 2 details the scrutiny review topics that are being actioned or are awaiting actioning. Annex 3 shows the distribution mix of the Panel's work programme which highlights pre decision and post decision

scrutiny work as well as cabinet member presentations and the work programming activities.

Key Decisions

2.7 There was now an arrangement between Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny panel that all key decisions need to be reviewed by the Panel before Cabinet approved such decision decisions. This would increase the role that non cabinet members play in shaping future key decisions and strategic decisions that are being made by the Council.

2.8 The following key decision items have been planned for review the Panel:

- Purchase of 2 by 7.5 tonnes road sweepers for TDC Cleansing - 15 February 2024 meeting;
- Changes to the statutory Instrument governing the level of fines for fly tipping, Breach of Duty of care - 15 February 2024 meeting;
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities externally funded project - approval for the grant and lease arrangements for the Margate Digital project- 15 February 2024 meeting;
- Spend of £261,032.00 to purchase fleet camera and tracker systems - 12 March 2024 meeting.

3.0 Options

3.1 Members are being asked to comment on and note the report.

3.2 Members may opt to make suggestions for the Panel to consider.

Contact Officer: Charles Hungwe, Deputy Committee Services Manager

Reporting to: Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Annex List

Annex 1: OSP Work Programme for 2023/24

Annex 2: Scrutiny Scoring Matrix Table for 2023/24

Annex 3 : OSP Pre and Post Decision Scrutiny for 2023/24

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell, Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer

Legal: Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy & Monitoring Officer