

# Review the Overview & Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2024-25

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Panel</b>	18 June 2024
<b>By</b>	Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy & MO
<b>Cabinet Portfolio Member</b>	Councillor Yates, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
<b>Key Decision</b>	no
<b>Decision classification</b>	unrestricted
<b>Call in status</b>	n/a
<b>Ward:</b>	Thanet Wide

## Purpose of the Report

This report summarises activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for 2024/25 and asks the Members to comment, make suggestions and note the OSP work programme.

## Recommendation(s):

Members are requested to review the Overview & Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2024/25.

### 1. Summary of Reasons

1.1 The Panel's work programme helps the committee to deliver effective scrutiny of executive decision before, and at times after, implementation. The programme assists the Panel to come up with realistic workload as measured against existing resources.

### 2. Background

2.1 This report allows the Panel to review the work programme for the period 2023/24. The work programme helps provide a framework for reporting progress regarding the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and would also provide officers with a reference point for planning appropriate levels of support for the Panel. This report follows on from the one that was considered by Members on 15 February 2024.

2.2 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

- 2.3 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. Members could also consider including in the work programme matters they would like to investigate on any matter that they feel affects the welfare of the local communities

### **3. The Work Programme**

- 3.1 At its first meeting for the 2024/25 municipal year, the Panel agreed its work programme as detailed in Annex 1 to the report and further agreed to progress the scrutiny review work that was not completed in the previous year (2023/24). That meant the work of the External Grant Funding Review Working Party would proceed during this year.

- 3.2 The Panel agreed to increase the membership size of this working party to seven members who are as follows:

Councillor Austin (Chair)  
Councillor Davis  
Councillor Fellows  
Councillor Pope  
Councillor Manners  
Councillor Edwards  
Councillor Will Scobie

- 3.3 The Panel further agreed in principle the draft terms of reference that were proposed by the working party and these are attached as annex 5 to the report. They asked the sub group to bring back to the June Panel meeting the draft terms reference in written form for final approval.

#### **Scrutiny Review Topics**

- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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.

- 3.5 Annex 2 are the scrutiny scoring matrix notes that Democratic Services use to score the scrutiny topics once Members have identified the topics. Members had previously

expressed an interest in reviewing the approach for identifying scrutiny topics. That would mean updating the current scoring matrix notes. Some steer is required from the Panel which Democratic Services and the Chair would use as the framework for reviewing the approach. Annex 3 is the current scoring table, with update notes on work in progress and recently completed tasks.

### **Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings**

- 3.6 The Panel agreed that a request for a Cabinet Member presentation be made to the Leader of Council to present on “ How the Council has made progress as measured against the five new Corporate Priorities.” This presentation could be added to either the 18 June or 16 July Panel meeting.
- 3.7 Members are also encouraged to identify subject items for presentations 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.
- 3.8 The current Forward Plan is detailed elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.
- 3.9 At the previous meeting, the Panel requested Democratic Services to draft a protocol for setting up working parties that the committee could use each time a new working party is being set up and assigned a project task. A draft is attached as Annex 4 to the report. Members' comments and a decision are sought on whether the Panel would like to adopt the protocol.
- 3.10 Annex 6 highlights the distribution of the Panel ‘s work activities between pre-decision and post decision scrutiny, work programming activities as well as work related to how the Panel engages Cabinet through Cabinet Member presentations..

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Members may choose to amend the work programme for 2024/25 that was agreed at the May meeting.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 No consultation has been undertaken because it is not required for this report.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **6.1 Finance and Resources**

- 6.1.1 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.

### **6.2 Legal and Constitutional**

6.2.1 The role of scrutiny is set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000. Paragraph 2 of that executive arrangements of a Local Authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committee has the power to:

- a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- d) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- e) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

6.2.2 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. In relation to the planning of work, paragraph 6 of the statutory guidance provides the following:

- a) 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.

6.2.3 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'.

### **6.3 Council Policies and Priorities**

6.3.1 This report relates to the following corporate 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

### **6.4 Risk**

6.4.1 There are risks arising directly from this report.

### **6.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity**

6.5.1 There are no climate change and biodiversity implications arising directly from this report.

## **7. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 It is 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.

## **8. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community impact**

- 8.1 The Scrutiny Panel has a duty to act as a Crime and Disorder Committee to review any community safety matters affecting the local communities and submit any recommendations on any corrective action that should be considered by the Council. In drafting its work programme the Panel ought to consider including crime and disorder items as part of its work activities during any municipal year.

## **9.0 Subject History**

- 9.1 The Panel implements all its activities as defined in the work programme that was established at the May meeting and reviews progress as measured against that work programme.

## **Appendices**

Annex 1 - OSP Work Programme 2024/25  
Annex 2 - Scrutiny Review Scoring Matrix Notes  
Annex 3 - Scrutiny Review Topics Scoring table  
Annex 4 - Draft Protocol for establishing a working party  
Annex 5 - OSP Pre and Post Decision Reviews  
Annex 6 - External Grant Funding Review Working Party Draft TORs

## **Background Papers**

None

**Report Author(s) Contact:** Charles Hungwe, Deputy Committee Services Manager  
**telephone:** 01843 577186  
**email:** [charles.hungwe@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:charles.hungwe@thanet.gov.uk)

### **Report Sign Off**

**Legal** Ingrid Brown (Head of Legal and Democracy & Monitoring Officer)

**Finance** Matthew Sanham (Head of Finance and Procurement)