

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

Overview and Scrutiny Panel	16 July 2024
By	Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy & MO
Cabinet Portfolio Member	Councillor Yates, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Key Decision	no
Decision classification	unrestricted
Call in status	n/a
Ward:	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 2024/25. 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 18 June 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

External Grant Funding Review Working Party

- 3.1 The External Grant Funding Review Working Party met last month and took evidence from Council officers from Regeneration, Finance and Community Services. They further agreed that two more meetings in July be arranged to enable the working party to meet with infrastructure organisations and local voluntary community organisations.

Scrutiny Review Topics

- 3.2 Last month the Panel agreed to review the current scrutiny scoring matrix for identifying scrutiny topics. This issue is covered elsewhere in the agenda for this meeting.
- 3.3 Current scrutiny topics together with update notes on work in progress and recently completed tasks are detailed in Annex 2. This list will be updated once a new prioritisation approach has been agreed by Members.

Watching Brief for Scrutiny Recommendations Forwarded to Cabinet

- 3.4 **Tourism Scrutiny Review Recommendations to Cabinet:** Cabinet considered the scrutiny review report at its meeting on 25 April 2024 and agreed that officers were going to study the report and recommendations and bring back the report in the third quarter of this year for Cabinet decision.

Cabinet Presentations at OSP Meetings

- 3.5 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.” Democratic Services were still to confirm if this presentation could be added to the 17 September Panel meeting.
- 3.6 Members also requested a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Parking in October.
- 3.7 The current Forward Plan that is detailed elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting is another source from which the Panel could request an officer report for their consideration.

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 Topics Scoring table

Annex 3 - OSP Pre and Post Decision Reviews

Background Papers

None

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Report Sign Off

Legal

Finance