

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

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Panel</b> | 15 October 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):

1. Members are requested to review the Overview & Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2024/25;
2. The Panel is also agreed to agree to the updated scrutiny review topics priority list as detailed in annex 2 to the report.

## 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 meeting met on 9 September 2024 to consider the feedback from infrastructure bodies and local community voluntary organisations that attended the 22 July and 29 July meetings on the main ideas for the report. The working party has started drafting the report to present to the Panel on 15 October 2024.

#### **Scrutiny Review Topics**

3.2 The Panel agreed that two more topics on “Youth Services in the Thanet” and “Improving Biodiversity” be adopted and added to the updated scoring matrix for prioritising scrutiny topics. A review of the Youth Services in Thanet would focus on assessing what remains following KCC budget cuts and what is provided by other organisations across Thanet. It was hoped that this would identify where gaps and opportunities for improvement are. The other topic is on increasing biodiversity across the district. This would involve conducting an assessment of biodiversity across Thanet and what can be done to increase it. These items will then be ranked on the scoring matrix to determine their position on the priority list.

3.3 The Chair and Vice Chair were now working with Democratic Services to score the new topics against the set criteria for prioritising review topics. These are as detailed below:

- a. Poverty in Thanet and the extent of mitigation measures that exist currently;
- b. The potential benefits and challenges to TDC of contemporary business practices such as hot desking, working from home, customer relationship management and artificial intelligence;
- c. Combating littering, improving recycling, especially during holiday periods and festivals;
- d. Events, what TDC can do to improve its service to voluntary events organisers.

- 3.4 With reference to the priority list in annex 2 to the report, the Panel is being asked to agree the updated priority list and agree the next topic for review (as suggested by the score totals), now that the external grant funding review has been concluded.

### **Watching Brief for Scrutiny Recommendations Forwarded to Cabinet**

- 3.5 **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**

- 3.6 The Cabinet Member for Environment would be making a presentation on Improving recycling across the district to the Panel meeting on 15 October.
- 3.7 The Cabinet Member for Parking will attend the Panel on 19 November for a presentation on Parking.
- 3.8 The Cabinet Member for Community has been invited to make a presentation on “An overview of what TDC initiatives were for youth service provision in Thanet” at the 10 December meeting.
- 3.9 Members can refer to the Forward Plan that is detailed elsewhere on the agenda to identify items that they could request for an officer report.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Panel could agree to the updated scrutiny review topics priority list or suggest amendments.
- 4.2 Members may also choose to make updates to the work programme for 2024/25.

## **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

**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**  
**Finance**