



North Tyneside Council

Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee

Friday, 9 June 2023

Monday, 12 June 2023 0.02 Chamber – Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY commencing at 6.00 pm.

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To give consideration to the Committee's work programme for the 2023-24.

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Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee

Councillor Jim Montague (Chair)
Councillor Lewis Bartoli
Councillor Davey Drummond
Councillor Tommy Mulvenna
Councillor Andy Newman
Councillor Willie Samuel
Councillor Matthew Thirlaway
Councillor Matt Wilson

Councillor Debbie Cox (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Liam Bones
Councillor Margaret Hall
Councillor Martin Murphy
Councillor Pat Oliver
Councillor Jane Shaw
Councillor Judith Wallace

Ms Fiona Burton – School Governor Representative
Mr Stephen Fallon – Church Representative
Rev Michael Vine – Church Representative

Meeting: Overview, and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee

Date: 12 June 2023

Title: Work Programme 2023-24

Author: Allison Mitchell, Head of Governance

Service: Governance

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed approach to work planning for the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee for 2023-24, together with an initial information base which the Committee may wish to utilise in considering and deciding on its outline work programme for 2023-24.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- (a) Note the information set out in this report regarding Scrutiny work planning, including good practice guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny
 - (b) Note that link Cabinet members and lead Senior Leadership Team officers will actively support the work and information needs of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee in the coming year, including providing information to support the Committee's work planning, at regular intervals during the year
 - (c) Note that link Cabinet members and lead senior officers have been invited to submit suggestions on current and upcoming policy matters which the Committee may wish to consider when planning its initial programme of work for 2023/24; and that a list of suggested Scrutiny topics for 2023/24 is included in this report for the Committee's consideration

- (d) Using this information and the views of Committee members, decide an outline work programme for the year; and agree that work programming will be included as a standard agenda item at each future meeting of the Committee in order that the work programme can be flexed as necessary in response to emerging matters as the year progresses.

3. Introduction

Background – Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Review

- 3.1 The Authority's Scrutiny arrangements have recently been evaluated and restructured, following an external Scrutiny Improvement Review undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). The CfGS is a national body which specialises in promoting governance excellence within local authorities.
- 3.2 The CfGS report was considered in full by the former Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 21 March 2023. The report is referenced in 'background information' below and can be accessed [here](#).
- 3.3 Following consideration of the CfGS report the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee proposed that the number and remit of scrutiny committees in North Tyneside should be restructured. This proposal was considered by the Constitution Task Group in April 2023 and reported to Annual Council on 18 May 2023. At that meeting Council agreed a new structure for Scrutiny, creating the new Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee and five specialist sub-committees aligned to the Council Plan.
- 3.4 The meeting of 12 June 2023 is therefore the first meeting of the newly created Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee. This provides a good opportunity for the Committee to consider its approach to work planning, the information and input it will need to enable effective work planning, and the initial areas on which the Committee may wish to focus its work plan during 2023-24.

CfGS – Good Practice Recommendations regarding Work Planning

- 3.5 In their Scrutiny Improvement Review the CfGS made several 'good practice' suggestions around Scrutiny work planning. These included:
 - (a) **A clearer focus on democratic accountability of the Executive** – the CfGS commented that scrutiny of the Mayor and Cabinet Members should form a

key part of the work plan, and the Mayor and Cabinet Members should regularly attend scrutiny to answer questions on items falling within their portfolio responsibilities. Cabinet Members are also able to provide valuable information to support the identification of Scrutiny topics by the Committee and the Scrutiny work planning process.

- (b) **Involvement of all Committee members in work planning** – the CfGS stated that work planning is key to ensuring that Scrutiny stays focussed on strategic issues where it can make an impact, whilst making the best use of time and resources. It went on to suggest that all members of each scrutiny Committee should have a chance to influence that committee’s work programme; and further, that committee members should lead development of the Committee’s work plan, in order to have influence and ownership over committee activity.
- (c) **Sufficient flexibility** – the CfGS noted that work planning is an on-going process and not just a one-off event. Whilst identification of a list of topics and priorities is sensible there will need to be flexibility in the work plan and time set aside to regularly revisit the relevance of topics in meetings as the local context changes.
- (d) **Senior Officer Support** – the CfGS highlighted that the Mayor and Chief Executive both expressed a strong desire to support scrutiny and confirm that its role is central to open, transparent decision-making and accountability in the council. The CfGS commented that “buy-in at the most senior political and officer level is crucial to improvement and therefore highly valued”. In addition to the identification of link Cabinet members, , the commitment of the Authority’s Senior Leadership Team to supporting the scrutiny function of the Council has been made clear. These officers possess a breadth of policy context for the organisation which will be a valuable information source for Scrutiny.
- (e) **‘Less is More’** – the CfGS stated that “there is evidence that when scrutiny focuses on fewer things of greater importance, more is achieved”. This would be worthwhile to consider when developing the scrutiny work plan. The CfGS also recommended considering the introduction of selection criteria to identify appropriate topics for the work plan, and bringing discussion of the work plan to the beginning of meetings, so emerging or changing priorities can benefit from considered discussion.

- 3.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Terms of Reference, agreed by Council on 18 May 2023, are attached as **Appendix A**. This sets out the remit and focus of the Committee.
- 3.6 It must be emphasised that it is for the Committee to determine its work programme. However to aid the Committee in this process, some initial activity to identify potential work plan topics has been undertaken, outlined below.
- 3.7 For each Scrutiny Committee the links with lead Cabinet portfolios and Directorates of the Authority have been identified. These links are summarised in the diagram of Scrutiny Support Arrangements attached as **Appendix B**. For the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee, the Deputy Mayor, and Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources, will be the link Cabinet Members. The Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Resources will be the link Senior Leadership Team officers to provide ongoing and regular officer support to the Committee.
- 3.8 These Cabinet members and SLT officers have been invited to meet with the Chair of Committee to provide information and suggestions on policy topics which the Committee may wish to consider when planning its programme of work for 2023/24. Those suggestions are summarised in **Appendix C**.
- 3.9 In respect of the five Scrutiny sub-committees the link Cabinet members and lead Directors for each of those committees are meeting with the Chairs of those committees and providing a similar evidence base relevant to the scope and remit of those committees. More information on those topics and the work programmes decided by the sub-committees can be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee as this preparatory work with the sub-committees is finalised.

4. Background Information

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, Scrutiny Improvement Review Letter
(published in the Agenda for Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 21 March 2023) – see [here](#).

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Terms of Reference, agreed by Council on 18 May 2023

Appendix B: Scrutiny Support Arrangements 2023/24

Appendix C: Initial Information Base and Suggested Work Plan topics to support decisions on the 2023/24 work programme by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee

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Extract from Constitution**Part 3.5 – Terms of Reference of Council and Committees****1 Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee**

Membership – 15 (plus 2 parent governor and 2 church representatives)

Quorum – 4

Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee will:

Overall Scrutiny Functions

1. In relation to the delivery of the Council Plan, back office services, workforce development, customer satisfaction and community engagement:
 - a) scrutinise relevant budget monitoring and performance management information;
 - b) contribute to the decision making process by examining key policy issues and making reports and recommendations on them to the Elected Mayor, Cabinet and or other relevant decision makers prior to decisions being made;
 - c) conduct in-depth investigations in relation to topics of interest and concern to communities in North Tyneside,
 - d) seek to involve communities in its work and reflect their views and concerns;
 - e) present evidence based recommendations to the Elected Mayor, Cabinet and partner organisations to support them in the formulation of their future plans, strategies and decision making; and
 - f) monitor the impact of its reports and recommendations on service improvement.
2. On an annual basis, co-ordinate and undertake the challenge of the Cabinet's budget and strategic planning proposals (see Part 4.7 – Budget and Policy Framework Rules of Procedure).
3. Consider any issues referred to it under a 'Councillor Call for Action'.
4. Where a petition has requested it, require a relevant senior officer to appear before it to give evidence (see Part 5 – Petitions Scheme).
5. Review the steps that the Authority has taken in response to a petition in accordance with the Authority's petitions scheme (see Part 5 – Petitions Scheme).
6. Review or scrutinise decisions made by the Elected Mayor, Cabinet or Cabinet Members but not implemented and to recommend that the decision be reconsidered or to arrange for the review to be undertaken by the Council (see Part 4.9 – Call In Rules of Procedure).

7. Receive an annual report from the Elected Mayor on the Cabinet's priorities for the coming year.

Finance Scrutiny Functions

8. Undertake scrutiny of revenue and capital budget, and related performance management monitoring information, and any proposals that impact upon the Authority's revenue or capital budgets, and make recommendations, as appropriate, including recommendations for internal audit investigations, to the Cabinet.
9. Review the effectiveness of arrangements for budget monitoring within the Authority and report, as appropriate, to the Cabinet.
10. Liaise with the Authority's external auditors in relation to the budget monitoring processes and any other financial matters.
11. Undertake specific reviews to examine the Authority's arrangements for ensuring the efficient and effective use of financial resources and then report its findings, along with any recommendations, to the Cabinet. In carrying out such reviews, the committee must have regard to any key objectives contained in the Budget or Council Plan.
12. Examine and challenge how the Authority is using its resources to deliver positive outcomes for local people in a way that provides value for money.

Co-ordinating Functions

13. Co-ordinate the formulation and delivery of the overview, scrutiny and policy development work programme, setting out a programme of work for itself and its sub-committees.
14. Review the effectiveness of the Authority's overview, scrutiny and policy development arrangements and, if necessary, make recommendations to Council on the appointment of its sub-committees.
15. Make recommendations to Council on the appointment of co-opted members and their term of office.
16. Where matters fall within the remit of more than one sub-committee the Committee will decide which of these will take the lead responsibility for such matters.

17. Consider requests from the Council or the Cabinet to examine and report on particular issues and in doing so decide on the method and timetable for responding to such requests.
18. Consider and either approve or reject any reports and recommendations made by a sub-committee for submission to Cabinet, Council, an individual or outside organisation unless in exceptional circumstances, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee agree otherwise.

Policy Development Functions

19. Consider any policy or legislative changes that will impact on the development of the overview, scrutiny and policy development function.
20. Oversee the Authority's involvement in external overview, scrutiny and policy development activity, including the regional scrutiny network.
21. Oversee and promote public involvement in the overview, scrutiny and policy development process.
22. To receive any nominations for the award of Freedom of the Borough and make recommendations as appropriate, in accordance with the adopted Freedom of the Borough procedure, to Annual Council.
23. Identify any training, development and support for members carrying out their overview, scrutiny and policy development functions.
24. Liaise with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet, the Authority's senior management team, the Audit Committee and partner organisations to ensure the committee and its sub-committees have appropriate access to relevant information and support.
25. Approve the contents of an annual report summarising the performance of the overview, scrutiny and policy development arrangements over the previous year together with its proposed work programme for the year ahead for submission to the Annual Council meeting.

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Scrutiny Support Arrangements

Overview and Scrutiny Coordination and Finance Committee

Chair – Cllr Jim Montague

SLT Lead – Jackie Laughton & Jon Ritchie

Link Cabinet Members – Cllr Carl Johnson & Cllr Anthony McMullen

CARING Sub Committee

Chair
Cllr Jane Shaw

SLT Lead
Eleanor Binks

Link Cabinet Members
Cllr Janet Hunter
Cllr Karen Clark

Subject
Adult Social Care
Health

FAMILY FRIENDLY Sub Committee

Chair
Cllr Erin Parker-Leonard

SLT Lead
Julie Firth

Link Cabinet Members
Cllr Peter Earley
Cllr Steven Phillips

Subject
Education
Children’s Services
SEND

GREEN Sub Committee

Chair
Cllr Martin Murphy

SLT Lead
Sam Dand

Link Cabinet Members
Cllr Sandra Graham
Cllr Hannah Johnson

Subject
Waste
Environment
Carbon reduction
Transport
Safe walking and cycling

SECURE Sub Committee

Chair
Cllr Andy Newman

SLT Lead
Peter Mennell

Link Cabinet Member
Cllr John Harrison

Subject
Housing
Community safety
Inequalities
Equality and diversity

THRIVING Sub Committee

Chair
Cllr Matt Wilson

SLT Lead
John Sparkes

Link Cabinet Members
Cllr Carl Johnson

Subject
Regeneration
Skills
Leisure
Tourism and culture

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**Initial Information Base and Suggested Work Plan topics for 2023/24 –
For Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Consideration**

As set out in **Appendix B**, link Cabinet Members and lead Senior Leadership Team (SLT) officers have been identified to support the work of each Scrutiny Committee.

The link Cabinet Members for Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee (the Deputy Mayor, and Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources); and lead SLT officers (the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Resources) have been invited to meet with the Chair of Committee and outline potential policy areas which the Committee may wish to consider including in its programme of work for 2023/24. It should be noted that Our North Tyneside Plan topics and specific strategies/policies may initially be considered by the relevant Sub-Committee.

This suggested work plan is based on reports which are known to be required and associated timings, but with room left in agendas for topics to evolve over the course of the year/reports back from task and finish groups as these are established.

It is suggested that the work programme should be considered by the Committee as a standing agenda item at each meeting in order that this is up to date and able to respond to emerging themes during the year.

12 June 2023

- Consideration of Work Programme topics for 2023/24
- Consideration and agreement of Terms of Reference for first proposed Task and Finish Group – Emergency Care in North Tyneside

17 July 2023

- 2022/23 Financial Outturn (June Cabinet report)
- Technical Partnership update (commercial focus)

4 September 2023

- Finance and performance (July Cabinet report)
- Mayor's Annual Report (date tbc; this may sit better in October)

9 October 2023

- Finance and performance (September Cabinet report)
- Cabinet's budget planning process including budget engagement (September Cabinet report)
- Emergency Care in North Tyneside Task and Finish Group feedback (date tbc)

11 December 2023

- Finance and performance (November Cabinet report)

15 January 2024

- Budget study group feedback and recommendations to Cabinet

12 February 2024

- Finance and performance (January Cabinet report)

4 April 2024

- Finance and performance (March Cabinet report)
- Scrutiny Annual Report