



North Tyneside Council

Green Sub Committee

Monday, 3 July 2023

Tuesday, 11 July 2023 0.02 Chamber – Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY commencing at 6.00 pm.

Agenda Item	Page
1. Apologies for Absence	
To receive any apologies for absence from the meeting.	
2. Appointment of Substitute Members	
To receive notification of the appointment of any Substitute Members.	
3. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations	
You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to disclose any dispensations that have been granted to you in relation to any matters appearing on the agenda.	

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4. Work Programme 2023-24

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To give consideration to a report which sets out a suggested approach to the Sub-committee's work planning together with an initial information base to assist members to develop the Sub-committee's work programme for 2023-24.

The Sub-committee will also receive a presentation which sets out an overview of the remit of the Green Sub-committee and an outline of some of the policy areas covered in the report.

Circulation overleaf ...

Members of the Green Sub Committee

Councillor Sarah Burtenshaw

Councillor Michelle Fox

Councillor Louise Marshall

Councillor Jim Montague

Councillor Jane Shaw

Councillor Judith Wallace

Councillor Davey Drummond

Councillor Margaret Hall (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Ian McAlpine

Councillor Martin Murphy (Chair)

Councillor Joan Walker

Councillor Matt Wilson

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Meeting: Green Sub-Committee

Date: 11 July 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 Green Sub-Committee for 2023-24, together with an initial information base which the Sub-Committee may wish to utilise in considering and deciding on its outline work programme for 2023-24.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Sub-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 Green Sub-Committee in the coming year, including providing information to support the Sub-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 Sub-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 Sub-Committee's consideration

- (d) Using this information and the views of Sub-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 Sub-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. One of these sub-committees is the Green Sub-Committee.
- 3.4 The meeting of 11 July 2023 is therefore the first meeting of the newly created Green Sub-Committee. This provides a good opportunity for the Sub-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 Sub-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 their 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.

Taking these Ideas Forward

- 3.5 The Green Sub-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 Green Sub-Committee.
- 3.6 It must be emphasised that it is for the Green Sub-Committee to determine its work programme. However to aid the Sub-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 Green Sub-Committee, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Climate Emergency are the link Cabinet members. The Director of Environment (supported by the Director for Regeneration and Economic Development) will be the link Senior Leadership Team officers to provide ongoing and regular officer support to the Committee.
- 3.8 The Cabinet members and SLT lead officer have met with the Chair and Deputy 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**.

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: Green Sub-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 Green Sub-Committee

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(Agreed at Annual Council 18 May 2023)

Extract from Constitution

Part 3.5 – Terms of Reference of Council and Committees

Green Sub-committee

Membership – 12

Quorum – 3

Terms of Reference

In relation to the environment, energy use, climate change, carbon reduction, flood risk management and waste management, transport and the transport network, highways and road safety, safe walking and cycling, the Green Sub-committee will:

1. Scrutinise relevant budget monitoring and performance management information.
2. 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.
3. Conduct in-depth investigations in relation to topics of interest and concern to communities in North Tyneside.
4. Seek to involve communities in its work and reflect their views and concerns.
5. 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.
6. Monitor the impact of its reports and recommendations on service improvement.
7. On an annual basis undertake the challenge of the Cabinet’s budget and strategic planning proposals (see Part 4.7 – Budget and Policy Framework Rules of Procedure).
8. Unless in exceptional circumstances where the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee agree otherwise, submit any reports and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee prior to submission to Cabinet, Council, an individual or outside organisation.

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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 Green Sub-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 the Green Sub-Committee (the Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment and the Cabinet Member responsible for the Climate Emergency) and lead SLT officer (the Director of Environment) have met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the sub-committee and discussed potential policy areas which the Committee may wish to consider including in its programme of work for 2023/24.

It is suggested that the work programme should be considered by the Sub-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.

Policy topics which the Sub-Committee might wish to consider as an evidence and information base when deciding its programme of work for 2023/24 are set out below.

Green Sub-Committee – Potential Menu of Work Plan Items for 2023/24

1. [Waste Strategy Review](#) – (review could include food waste collections and developing a strategy to encourage circular economy / re-use shop; recycling of soft plastics, producer responsibility, deposit return schemes)
2. [Tree Planting Strategy Review](#)
3. [Biodiversity Action Plan review](#) / development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy
4. New housing and biodiversity
5. [Carbon Net Zero Plan](#)
Key areas of policy work around the carbon plan, such as;
 - A plan for heat decarbonisation

- Decentralised power, including power generation and battery storage
6. High Level Transport Strategies, Regional North East Transport Plan
 7. Cycling Strategy
 8. Parking Strategy
 9. Air Quality Strategy / Zero Emissions Strategy
 10. EV Charging
 11. Active Travel