

Meeting: Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee

Date: 10 July 2024

Title: Work Programme 2024/25

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Service: Governance

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed approach to work planning for the Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee for 2024/25.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- (a) Note the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee, as agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 16 May 2024, set out at **Appendix A**; and the extract from the agreed Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-25, relating to the five key themes, set out at **Appendix B**
 - (b) Note the information set out in this report regarding Scrutiny work planning (including good practice guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny) and that Scrutiny tends to be most successful when it sets clear strategic objectives for its work
 - (c) Note that a link Cabinet member and a lead Senior Leadership Team officer have been identified to actively support the work and information needs of the Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee in the coming year, summarised at **Appendix C**
 - (d) Note that a potential timetable of suggested items, which the Committee may wish to consider when planning its initial programme of work for

2024/25, is included in this report for the Committee's consideration at **Appendix D**

- (e) 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 policy matters as the year progresses, and so that all Committee members can be involved in development of the work programme.

3. Introduction

Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) - Good Practice in Scrutiny Work Planning

- 3.1 The Authority's Scrutiny arrangements were reviewed by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) in 2023/24. The CfGS is a national body which specialises in promoting governance excellence within local authorities.
- 3.2 The CfGS recommend the following as good practice in Scrutiny work planning:
 - (a) **Involvement of all Committee members in work planning** – the CfGS highlight 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. Accordingly, all members of each scrutiny sub-committee should have a chance to influence that sub-committee's work programme; and further, sub-committee members should lead development of their committee's work plan, in order to have influence and ownership over committee activity.
 - (b) **Sufficient flexibility** – the CfGS note 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.
 - (c) **Involvement of Cabinet Members, and Senior Officer Support** – in their 2023/24 review, the CfGS commended the desire of the Elected Mayor and Chief Executive to fully support the scrutiny process. As part of that commitment, a link Cabinet Member, and a lead SLT officer, have been nominated to support each Scrutiny sub-committee.

(d) **'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.

3.3 Scrutiny tends to be most successful when it sets clear objectives for its work, and when it focuses on strategic matters which are likely to make a real difference.

Taking these Ideas Forward

3.4 The Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee's remit, agreed by Council on 16 May 2024, is attached as **Appendix A**.

3.5 An extract from the Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-25, showing the five key themes, set out at **Appendix B**.

3.6 It must be emphasised that it is for the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance 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.

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 C**. For the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee, the Deputy Mayor and the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance and Resources will be the link Cabinet Members. The Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Resources will be the link Senior Leadership Team members providing ongoing and regular officer support to the Committee.

3.8 These Cabinet members and SLT officers will meet regularly throughout the year with the Chair of Committee to provide information and suggestions on policy topics which the Committee may wish to consider when planning and revising its programme of work for 2024/25.

4. Appendices

Appendix A: Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee's Remit, agreed by Council on 16 May 2024

Appendix B: Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-25 – the five key themes

Appendix C: Scrutiny Support Arrangements 2024/25

Appendix D: Initial Information Base / Timetable of the 2024/25 work programme by the Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee