

1. **ACTIVITIES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND THE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THEIR WORKPLANS**

**Submitted by:** Member Services Officer

**Portfolio:** All

**Ward(s) affected:** Non-specific

**Purpose of the Report**

This report provides an opportunity for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Health Scrutiny Committee to report on the activities of the individual committees.

**Recommendation**

**That the Committee receive updates from the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Health Scrutiny Committee**

**That the workplans for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Health Scrutiny Committee be agreed.**

**That the Committee consider how best to carry out Scrutiny of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.**

**Reasons**

This provides an opportunity on the agenda for the individual committees to report on their activities. Such reports will enable the Co-ordinating Committee to perform its role of overseeing scrutiny activity and ensuring that there is no unnecessary duplication in workload. Likewise, it provides an opportunity to ensure that committees are not trying to take on too much work.

2. **What activity should be included in a work programme?**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified four principles which are generally accepted as forming the basis of overview and scrutiny activity. These principles are:

- **Provide ‘critical friend’ challenge to Executives, as well as external authorities and agencies**
- **Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities**
- **Take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public**
- **Make an impact on the delivery of public services.**

These principles will form the basis of our evaluation of the effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny arrangements.

The overview and scrutiny committees will be responsible for setting their own work programme and in doing so they shall take into account the wishes of Members on that committee.

The overview and scrutiny committees will also respond, as soon as their work programme permits, to requests from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, the Council and/or the

Cabinet to review particular areas of Council activity. Where they do so, the overview and scrutiny committees shall report their findings and any recommendations back to the Cabinet and/or Council within 2 months of receiving it or as soon as is reasonably practical.

Once it has formed recommendations on proposals for development, the overview and scrutiny committee will prepare a formal report and the Chief Executive will submit it for consideration by the Cabinet (if the proposals are consistent with the existing budgetary and policy framework), or to the Council as appropriate (e.g. if the recommendation would require a departure from or a change to the agreed budget and policy framework)

The Council or Cabinet shall consider the report of the overview and scrutiny committee within two months of it being submitted to the Chief Executive or as soon as is reasonably practical

From time to time, ad hoc recommendations to the Cabinet may arise from discussion at meetings of the overview and scrutiny committees. These recommendations will be passed directly to the relevant Portfolio Holder who will be required to respond to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee within two months, or as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Portfolio Holder will invite the relevant overview and scrutiny committee Chair or Vice Chair to a meeting of the Cabinet to explain the reasons for the recommendation.

Overview and scrutiny committees may make proposals to the Cabinet for developments insofar as they relate to matters within their terms of reference

Overview and scrutiny committees may hold inquiries and investigate the available options for the future direction of the Council and may appoint advisers and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration.

### **3. Performance Management and Review**

Overview and scrutiny has a key role to play in helping to improve the performance of the Council, for example by looking at performance data, achievements against performance indicators or targets and also scrutinising external inspection reports. The Council's performance management framework provides a quarterly cycle of reporting of performance information to the Cabinet. Overview and scrutiny therefore has a performance monitoring and review role in respect of agreed action plans and can make recommendations thereon.

### **4. Holding the Cabinet to Account – this comprises two key aspects:**

- Scrutinising proposed decisions by the Cabinet collectively or individually through “call-in” procedures as specified in the Constitution
- Scrutinising the impact of decisions taken after they have been implemented.

### **5. External Challenge**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for a local authority's overview and scrutiny arrangements to develop a strong outward focus, encouraging participation from partners and the public. One aspect of this is external scrutiny – scrutinising the work and impact of external agencies on a Council's community. There may be other public agencies, such as health service organisations or voluntary and private sector organisations, which will also come under this activity.

The above encapsulate opportunities to work closely with and involve the Cabinet, officers, partner agencies and authorities, the public and its communities in overview and scrutiny activity whilst demonstrating how the function can contribute to improving both public services and the quality of life of our various communities.

## **9. Summary**

This report highlights the kind of Overview and Scrutiny activities that the Committee should be undertaking and also highlights a number of areas which the committee may wish to examine over the coming year. It is important to secure the development of Overview and Scrutiny and, more importantly, the involvement of Members in issues surrounding the authority's performance, finances and transformation agenda that a clear, flexible and realistic work programme is agreed.

## **10. Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

It is envisaged that the activity of the overview and scrutiny committees will lead to improved outcomes which support the overall priorities of the Council.