

Report To:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Date:	20 FEBRUARY 2020
Heading:	SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2019/20		
Portfolio Holder:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda. Each year, the Workplan is revised and refreshed with new topics for review. This report aims to focus Members on progress against topics already approved.

The Scrutiny Workplan is a live document and consultation on potential topics will be continued throughout the year with Service Directors, Third Tier Officers, and Members. Community engagement will also form part of the ongoing consultation process. All suggestions received will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

When approving topics for the Scrutiny Workplan, Committee Members are asked to consider the criteria within the scrutiny review terms of reference. The Scrutiny Workplan needs to be sound, informed, and flexible with topics that will add value to community wellbeing and the work carried out by the Council and its partners.

Members should also note that consultation on topics for inclusion on the 2020/21 Scrutiny Workplan will begin in March 2020.

Recommendation(s)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the items currently agreed on the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20.
- b. Receive an update on the progress of review topics on the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda. At each meeting of the Committee, progress on the Workplan is discussed and new topics are considered for approval.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered. Agreeing the Scrutiny Workplan is part of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules of Procedure outlined within Ashfield District Council's Constitution

Detailed Information

Topics Approved for the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20

The Scrutiny Workplan was approved at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 June 2019. Appendix A details those topics approved, progress, and which Panel will be reviewing the subject.

What is the Scrutiny Workplan?

Scrutiny in Ashfield follows a work programme approved annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The work programme is a rolling plan of in-depth reviews, undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels A and B. Alongside topic reviews, standing items are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

These standing items are:

- Crime and Disorder
- Performance
- Budget
- Scrutiny Workplan

The Scrutiny Workplan outlines areas of work to be scrutinised over the next year by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels. Any topics added to the Scrutiny Workplan should have anticipated outcomes that will add value to services delivered by the Council and its partners, and improve quality of life in Ashfield.

In recognising that there is a need for flexibility within the Scrutiny Workplan, it is suggested that the number of items initially placed on the Workplan should be limited to no more than eight topics.

Sources of Workplan Topics

There are many sources where topics for scrutiny review can be identified, including:

- Issues of community concern
- Service delivery concerns
- Review, audit, and inspection outcomes
- Issues relating to Council outcomes, objectives, and priorities
- Partnership objectives
- The Forward Plan

- Performance
- Budget
- Improvement plans

Selecting a Workplan Topic

Scrutiny Workplan topic selection should be stringent, and Committee Members should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best and most effective Workplan. This means having clear terms of reference in mind and considering many different sources of information to help inform the Workplan.

This involves approving topics:

- Of community concern
- That contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities
- With defined objectives and clear outcomes
- That adds value to the Council's overall performance
- That has potential impact for more than one section of the District's population
- With adequate resources available to carry out a review
- That has not been reviewed recently

A common pitfall for Overview and Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the Workplan that are unsuitable for review due to different factors.

It is advised that Overview and Scrutiny Members avoid topics that are:

- Unmanageable
- Purely for informational purposes
- Have limited anticipated outcomes
- Fail to add value to service delivery
- Fail to improve community wellbeing and quality of life

Scrutiny has limited time and resources meaning the Workplan has to be manageable. It is impossible to include every topic suggested throughout Workplan consultation. Effective and successful scrutiny is about reviewing a beneficial topic that the Committee or Panel can add value to.

The selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function. A clear topic selection process ensures in-depth and effective reviews, resulting in impactful recommendations and improvements.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Scrutiny Workplan should include issues based on performance, priority objectives, and community concerns - many of which contribute to the Council's corporate priorities, vision, and outcomes contained within the Corporate Plan, such as:

- Health and wellbeing
- Economic regeneration
- Place and communities
- Organisational improvements
- Housing

Legal:

Consultation with Members on items for the Scrutiny Workplan is in accordance with the procedure rules set out within the Council's Constitution.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None.
General Fund – Capital Programme	None.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None.
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Without monitoring the Scrutiny Workplan, there is a risk that items added might not be beneficial, and can fall outside of Scrutiny's remit and become unmanageable.	The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda, ensuring Members have the opportunity to monitor the Workplan and any reviews carried out as a result of being approved for the Workplan.

Human Resources:

There are no immediate HR implications identified within this report. Any HR implications discovered as part of a scrutiny review will be adequately considered and addressed as part of the scrutiny review process.

Equalities:

There are no immediate equality implications identified within this report. Any equality implications discovered as part of a scrutiny review will be adequately considered and addressed as part of the scrutiny review process.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

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