

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**30 MARCH 2023**

### **WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK, 2019/23**

Report from: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

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#### **Summary**

This report advises Members of the provisional work programme for 2023/24 and allows them to adjust it in the light of latest priorities, issues and circumstances and provides an opportunity to shape and direct the Committee's activities over the year.

The report also provides an overview of the Committee's work over the last four years.

1. Budget and Policy Framework
  - 1.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility for setting its own work programme (Chapter 4 – Rules, paragraph 21.1 (xv) General terms of reference).
2. Background
  - 2.1 The Committee's provisional work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year is attached at Appendix 1. One of the Committee's functions is to provide guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Appendix 2 sets out the work programmes for other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
  - 2.2 At this Committee's last meeting on 25 January, there was support for the idea proposed at the previous agenda planning meeting that this final work programme report of the municipal year should include a review of last four years, including the structure and content of the work programme, an update on Task Groups and any outstanding matters and actions, to serve as a handover document to the incoming Committee for 2023/24. This is attached at Appendix 3.

### 3. Agenda Planning Meeting

- 3.1 An agenda planning meeting took place on 1 March attended by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson.
- 3.2 At the meeting, the provisional work programme attached at Appendix 1 was discussed, focusing on the Date to be Determined section. With regard to the attendance of Portfolio Holders to be held to account on performance against their portfolio, Members were in favour of retaining the practice that had been in place over the past two years, whereby two committee meetings had been exclusively reserved for the attendance of two Portfolio Holders at each meeting. These had been the first and third meetings of the municipal year, in June or July and October. Members considered that this arrangement had worked well as it had allowed for in-depth discussions with Portfolio Holders without extending the length of the meeting or allowing insufficient time for the consideration of other items. To enable this arrangement, it had been necessary to move some quarterly Council Plan and Risk Register and Budget performance monitoring reports to the subsequent meeting.
- 3.3 However, in view of the local elections, and the possibility of new Portfolio Holders being in post for the new municipal year, Members at the agenda planning meeting considered that it would be impractical to retain this arrangement for 2023/24 or to programme the attendance of Portfolio Holders early in the year. It was therefore proposed that the attendance of Portfolio Holders be provisionally programmed throughout the year, starting from the October meeting. The 2023/24 Committee could then consider whether it wished to reintroduce the previous arrangement adopted by the current Committee, from 2024/25.
- 3.4 It was proposed that, subject to the views of the 2023/24 Committee, Portfolio Holders be invited to attend the meetings provisionally arranged for 26 October, 30 November, 1 February, and 4 April, subject to their availability and the number of other items scheduled for those meetings. It was suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Resources be invited to attend the April 2024 meeting, after the Council's budget for 2024/25 had been set.
- 3.5 The Committee's consideration of quarterly Council Plan and Risk Register and Budget monitoring reports was raised at the agenda planning meeting, in relation to officer attendance at meetings. At present these reports incorporated performance information on all Council services, rather than just those specified within the Committee's Terms of Reference, to reflect the Committee's role in providing guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, including guidance on priorities for scrutiny activity. This had resulted in Members understandably raising issues in relation to services for which there was no officer representation at the meeting. It had therefore fallen to those officers attending the meeting to respond, or to commit to seeking a response outside the meeting.

3.6 Options to address this issue include:

- Requesting that senior officers from all Directorates attend meetings of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although this might be considered to be unreasonable given that they might have recently attended a meeting of a different Overview and Scrutiny committee at which the matter had already been discussed.
- Including only information on the services within the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference in Council Plan and Risk Register Performance Monitoring Reports to the Committee.
- Continuing to include information on all services in these monitoring reports with the Committee referring any matter which falls outside of its Terms of Reference to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny committee, where the relevant senior officers would be in attendance, for further scrutiny.

3.7 Members at the agenda planning meeting suggested that this issue be considered by the Committee in the new municipal year.

3.8 Of the other items listed in the work programme at Appendix 1 under Date to be Determined, it was suggested that the long-standing item on Complaints Handling be deleted as this was being dealt with at the Member User Group.

3.9 It was reported that the Staff Survey was currently going through Divisional Management Teams, and it was anticipated that an Action Plan would be considered by Corporate Management Team in April. It was therefore proposed that it be provisionally added to the items for the meeting of the Committee provisionally scheduled for 13 July and this is reflected in Appendix 1.

## 4. Forward Plan

4.1 The latest Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions was published on 6 March 2023.

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=453&T=4>

4.2 The items that are relevant to the Business Support O&S Committee are set out below so that Members have an opportunity to identify any further items they wish to consider as pre-decision scrutiny (where dates permit) other than those already programmed.

Title of Decision	Anticipated Decision Date
<p><b>Household Support Fund</b></p> <p>This report will ask the Cabinet to approve the disbursement of the grant for the 2023/24 Household Support Fund.</p>	4 April 2023
<p><b>Risk Strategy Annual Review</b></p> <p>This report will provide details of the Council's Risk Strategy and Plan. This report is due to be considered by the Audit Committee on 16 March 2023 and is due to be considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2023.</p>	4 April 2023
<p><b>Cabinet Advisory Groups</b></p> <p>This report will seek approval of the establishment of the Cabinet Advisory Groups for 2023/2024.</p>	13 June 2023
<p><b>Kyndi - Six Monthly Report and Business Plan Update</b></p> <p>This report will set out details of performance for the latest monitoring period for Kyndi Ltd.</p>	13 June 2023
<p><b>Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn 2022/23</b></p> <p>This report will provide details of the final revenue and capital outturn position for the financial year ending 31 March 2023.</p>	13 June 2023
<p><b>Climate Change Action Plan Update</b></p> <p>This report will update the Cabinet on delivery of the Medway Climate Change Action Plan.</p>	11 July 2023
<p><b>Treasury Management Outturn</b></p> <p>This report will provide an overview of treasury management activity for 2022/23. This report will first be considered by the Audit Committee.</p>	11 July 2023

## 5. The Co-ordinating Role of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 This Committee has the overall responsibility to provide guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny committees, including guidance on priorities for scrutiny activities (Constitution, Chapter 4 – Rules – paragraph 22.2 (xxiii)).
- 5.2 To assist the Committee in fulfilling this role, it has been agreed that a regular overview of business discussed by the other Overview and Scrutiny committees should be presented at these meetings. Whilst each Overview and Scrutiny committee is able to determine its own work programme, this Committee may wish to comment on common themes and the balance of business being covered by each Committee.
- 5.3 Appendix 2 to this report sets out the current work programmes of two of the other three Overview and Scrutiny committees. Due to the current work on theming future meetings of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there is no work programme for the committee at present.

## 6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report.

## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to:

- 7.1.1 agree the committee's provisional work programme at Appendix 1, subject to the following and the views of members of the 2023/24 Committee:
  - a) The attendance of Portfolio Holders be provisionally scheduled for the meetings of 26 October, 30 November, 1 February, and 4 April, subject to their availability and the number of other items scheduled for those meetings, with the Portfolio Holder for Resources being invited to attend the 4 April 2024 meeting, after the Council's budget for 2024/25 had been set.
  - b) The deletion of the item on Complaints Handling from the Date to be Determined section.
- 7.1.2 note the work programmes of the other Overview and Scrutiny committees at Appendix 2; and
- 7.1.3 note and comment on the review of the Committee's work from 2019 to 2023 summarised at Appendix 3.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Business Support O&S work programme

Appendix 2 - Other O&S Committees' work programmes

Appendix 3 - Review of the Committee's work from 2019 - 2023

Background papers:

None