

# **Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**20 June 2024**

## **Work Programme**

Report from: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

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### **Summary**

This report advises Members of the work programme for 2024/25 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.

#### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. The Committee is asked to agree the provisional work programme at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 1.2. The Committee is asked to note the work programmes of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 1.3. The Committee is asked to agree the scope of the Active Travel and Air Quality Task Group as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

#### **2. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 2.1. 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).

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Committee's provisional work programme for the 2024/25 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.

#### 4. Agenda Planning Meeting

- 4.1. Members will be aware that Overview and Scrutiny Committees hold agenda planning meetings on a regular basis. An agenda planning meeting took place on 30 May 2024 attended by the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Opposition Spokesperson.
- 4.2. At the meeting ,the following amendments to the work programme were proposed:
  - 4.2.1. Medway Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation and Statement of Gambling Policy be considered in August 2024.
  - 4.2.2. Portfolio Holders be held to Account as set out in the Work Programme to ensure that only one Portfolio Holder is held to account at each Committee meeting.
  - 4.2.3. The results of the 2024 Employee Survey would be considered in October 2024.
  - 4.2.4. The Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report and Risk Register Review Quarters 1 and 2 be considered together in November 2024 to allow for data in relation to new indicators be collated.

#### 5. Forward Plan

- 5.1. The latest Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions was published on 10 June 2024.

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=489&T=4>

- 5.2. The items that are relevant to the Business Support and Digital 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.

<b>Title of Decision</b>	<b>Anticipated Decision Date</b>
<b>Cost of Living Plan – Refresh</b> This report will set out an update to the Cost of Living Plan, which was agreed by the Cabinet in July 2023.	30 July 2024
<b>Treasury Management Outturn Annual Report</b> This report will provide an overview of treasury management activity for 2023/24.  This report will be considered by the Audit Committee which undertakes the scrutiny function of Treasury Management on behalf of the Business Support and Digital O&S Committee.	30 July 2024

<b>Capital Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1 2024/25</b> This report will set out the latest monitoring position.	27 August 2024
<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1 2024/25</b> This report will set out the latest monitoring position.	27 August 2024
<b>Financial Outlook</b> This report will set out the financial pressures projected by the Council's services alongside projections of the Council's income streams.	27 August 2024
<b>Treasury Management Monitoring - Quarter 1 2024/25</b> This report will set out the latest monitoring position.  This report will be considered by the Audit Committee which undertakes the scrutiny function of Treasury Management on behalf of the Business Support and Digital O&S Committee.	22 October 2024

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

- 6.1. 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)).
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. Appendix 2 to this report sets out the current work programmes of the other three Overview and Scrutiny committees.
- ## 7. New Statutory Guidance: Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities.
- 7.1. The Government published new [statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny for councils, combined authorities and combined authorities](#) on 22 April 2024. This replaces the previous statutory guidance published in 2019. The main focus of this new publication is to ensure that scrutiny at the combined authorities is embedded in the new statutory guidance. There are no significant changes in the guidance which affect unitary authorities such as Medway, however, it would be useful to raise this at the next informal meeting of the overview and scrutiny chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and opposition spokespersons.

## 8. Task Group: Active Travel & Air Quality

- 8.1. On 26 October 2023, this Committee agreed the priority order for Task Group activity and agreed that Air Quality and Public Transport & Active Travel should be the first review to be conducted. On 30 November 2023, it agreed that this be conducted as a combined review (across two overview and scrutiny committee remits) and therefore agreed it have a membership of seven to reflect the breadth of the subject.
- 8.2. The Task Group has met on a couple of occasion and has debated the scope to try to find a balance between covering the breadth of the remit agreed by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whilst keeping the scope manageable and focused in order to add the most value by allowing the Task Group to look at specific strands which it can scrutinise in-depth to have an opportunity of making the most impact.
- 8.3. An updated scope, attached at Appendix 3, was presented to the Task Group at its meeting on 23 April and following discussions about its content which not all Members were content with, the Task Group agreed to send the scope to this committee for its approval. Subject to Committee approval, the Task Group will commence work on the review as soon as possible.

## 9. Informal Meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Opposition Spokespersons

- 9.1. On 3 April 2024, an informal meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and Opposition Spokespersons took place. The meeting discussed the following issues:
- 9.2. A draft Protocol for Task Groups was considered. It was proposed that the protocol would be an appendix to the overview and scrutiny rules in the constitution so that it would be formal guidance to Members. Members discussed the role of substitutes on the Task Group and the role of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee in approving the scope for the Task Group. It was agreed that further work on the protocol would be undertaken, and an updated version was then circulated to Members for comments. It is proposed that the updated version be submitted to the next informal meeting, later this year, for further discussion before seeking formal approval.
- 9.3. Examples of good scrutiny were shared and discussed.
- 9.4. Length of Overview and Scrutiny Meetings were discussed, it was commented that three hours was a helpful guide for meeting length and there were fewer very long meetings.

## 10. Financial and legal implications

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Business Support and Digital O&S work programme

Appendix 2 - Other O&S Committees' work programmes

Appendix 3 – Active Travel and Air Quality Task Group

Background papers:

None