

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2019

Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2019-2020

Report of the Chair of the Commission, OSC/280

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Commission is requested to approve the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (OSC) work programme for 2019-2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission:

- (i) Note the contents of the report
- (ii) Approve the OSC Work Programme for 2019-2020 as set out in Appendix 1, with an acknowledgement that the Work Programme will remain flexible.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The Commission is expected to agree an annual OSC work programme. This is to ensure the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's time is effectively and efficiently utilised.
- 3.2 The careful selection and prioritisation of scrutiny work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility. The work programme should also be realistic, flexible and retain spare capacity so that additional matters raised during the year can be addressed.
- 3.3 It is worth noting that items should not be identified for the Commission's consideration if a Councillor's queries could easily be answered by reference to the appropriate Head of Service, relevant Cabinet Member or Service Officer. Scrutiny needs to be able to justify why it chooses the items it does and the Commission is accountable for the resources it uses. It is important that Councillors are aware of adding value and avoiding duplication. Focusing on matters that have been or are already being addressed may not necessarily add value in terms of officer and Councillor time, resources, money and outcome/s.

4. Background

- 4.1 Full Council agreed the OSC's change of remit in 2015, incorporating the Transformation Programme. The report published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny 'Hiding in plain sight: barriers to effective scrutiny' has highlighted the importance of understanding the local impact and analysing the experience of service users. Scrutiny can be determined as *"reviewing policies and services to ensure they provide value for money and have the intended effect"*. Consequently it was logical that Transformation Programme updates, measures and service reviews were incorporated into the Commission's work as

Transformation includes “*redesigning services from the customers’ perspective and making them more efficient*”.

- 4.2 This enables the OSC to have enhanced knowledge, provide added value and the opportunity to scrutinise how the services impact on customers. It also assists Councillors to have a crucial view on the council’s services, ensuring that there is nothing which ‘falls through the gap’, which Councillors have highlighted as a significant concern.
- 4.3 The change further endorsed the Centre for Public Scrutiny’s four principles of good scrutiny:
- Provides a constructive “critical friend” challenge
 - Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public
 - Is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
 - Drives improvement in public services
- 4.4 Following the change in remit, the OSC received updates and has been able to scrutinise many of the services available including:
- NASB
 - Streetscene
 - Facilities
 - Homelessness
 - Sheltered Housing
 - Benefits
 - Environmental Health
 - Planning

5. Work Programme

- 5.1 Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is provisional work programme for the remaining OSC scheduled meetings for 2019/2020, based on the agreed OSC function and remit. (Transformation updates are to be added following approval of the new Transformation Programme).
- Considers the work on the council’s Transformation Programme
 - Reviews services from the Transformation Programme ‘in depth’, including System Thinking review updates (as decided by OSC)
 - Receives Contractor updates on a timely basis
 - Conducts Cabinet Member and Chief / Deputy Executive discussions
 - Arranges other agency discussions if appropriate
 - Refers items from the Forward Plan
 - Considers other items referred under the Scrutiny Procedure Rules
- 5.2 Feedback received from Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) linked effective, successful scrutiny to that which aligned to a corporate programme, along with a focused work programme shaped around the selection of one or two in-depth issues at each meeting; together with relevant Cabinet Member presence for witness discussion at each meeting.
- 5.3 By continuing this approach the scrutiny function would be well-integrated with the rest of the Council and help it focus on its priorities. The Centre for Public Scrutiny ‘Scrutiny, performance and improvement: the road to excellence’ believes that scrutiny should be used consistency to drive continuous improvement. Scrutiny should be able to add value and scrutinise services, from every angle – from ‘grass roots’ and the ‘front line’, in order to tackle issues which add the most value from the customer’s perspective.

- 5.4 The draft work programme is not definitive as it may be subject to slippage as well as other items being added to it including further items from the Forward Plan being referred/provisionally referred, or further reports being requested by the Commission.

6. Implications

- 6.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published new Statutory [Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities](#) (May 2019). The guidance has been issued under section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 and under paragraph 2(9) of Schedule 5A to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which requires authorities to have regard to this guidance. It further provides advice for senior members, senior leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees and support officers, including a number of policies and practices that authorities should adopt (or consider adopting) when carrying out scrutiny functions and how these may then impact on scrutiny operating in Crawley. Some of this guidance will be relayed to Councillors at the forthcoming training session.
- 6.2 The scrutiny function needs to be able to be responsive and pick up, at short notice, topical issues which might arise. Consequently, it may be necessary for the Commission to further prioritise or reschedule the programme or accept that it may slip.
- 6.3 Under normal circumstances it is recommended that usually no more than three scrutiny reviews take place at a time to ensure (i) adequate Councillor availability and capacity to do the work – both in panels and at the Commission; (ii) adequate resources can be provided, by Democratic Services and other officers of the Council; and (iii) robust and rigorous reviews can be completed more swiftly.
- 6.4 The staffing implications will be dictated by the work programme agreed. In addition to the provision of dedicated support from the Democratic Services Officer, any scrutiny work would require input from staff in the service area concerned. This could impact, in the short-term, on service delivery and approved work plans, but could lead to long-term improvements.

7. Background Papers

[Centre for Public Scrutiny 'Hiding in plain sight: barriers to effective scrutiny'](#)
[Centre for Public Scrutiny 'Scrutiny, performance and improvement: the road to excellence'](#)
[LDS/100 – Report to OSC and Governance June 2015](#)
[Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Guidance for Councils and Combined Authorities](#)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION: WORK PROGRAMME 2019 - 2020

The items allocated to date for specific Commission meetings are set out below.

- (Cabinet Member Discussions to add dependent on reports).
- (Transformation Programme Updates to add following approval of new Transformation Programme).

OSC 3 June 2019

Deputy Chief Executive Discussion
Update on Transformation Programme
Appointments

'provisional' Cabinet 5 June 2019

OSC Workshop General Scrutiny Training – 11 June 2019 6.30pm

OSC 24 June 2019

Relocation of Crawley's Crown Post Office to WHSmith
Treasury Management Outturn 2018-2019
Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Gambling Act 2005 (2020-2023)

'confirmed' Cabinet 26 June 2019

OSC 3 September 2019

Safer Crawley Partnership Performance Review & Future Priorities - TBC
Cabinet Member Discussion – Public Protection & Community Engagement ? - TBC

'provisional' Cabinet 4 September 2019

OSC 23 September 2019

Budget Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/24
Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024
Tenancy Strategy 2019
Three Bridges Improvement Scheme Final Design
Cabinet Member Discussion – Housing ? - TBC

'confirmed' Cabinet 25 September 2019

OSC 4 November 2019

K2 Crawley Contract – Everyone Active – tbc or January ?
Cabinet Member Discussion – Wellbeing ? - TBC

'provisional' Cabinet 6 November 2019

OSC 25 November 2019

Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2019/2020
Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Gambling Act 2005 (2020-2023)
Cabinet Member Discussion – ?

'confirmed' Cabinet 26 November 2019

OSC 13 January 2020

'provisional' Cabinet 15 January 2020

OSC 5 February 2020

2020/2021 Budget and Council Tax
Treasury Management Strategy 2020-2021
Capital Strategy 2020-2021
Cabinet Member Discussion – The Leader ? - TBC

'confirmed' Cabinet 7 February 2020

OSC 9 March 2020

Reports from Forward Plan
Cabinet Member Discussion – ?

'confirmed' Cabinet 11 March 2020

Blue = Reports referred, Red = Cabinet Member, Purple = Transformation, Green = other items