

Report To:	JOINT MEETING EXECUTIVE CABINET / OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	14 February 2024
Reporting Officer:	Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive
Subject:	SCRUTINY UPDATE
Report Summary:	To receive for information, a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for November 2023 to February 2024.
Recommendations:	That Overview Panel is asked to note the content of the report and summary of scrutiny activity. All related documents can be viewed within the appendices.
Links to Corporate Plan:	Scrutiny work programmes are linked to the Council's Corporate Plan. Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision making and priorities across Tameside.
Policy Implications:	The work programmes comprise activity that seeks to check the effective implementation of policy and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regard to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	<p>The report provides an update of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for the period November 2023 to February 2024.</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this update as any related implications will be detailed within the various scrutiny panel reports per the activity stated in section 2.</p> <p>The 2024/25 Council budget consultation scrutiny referenced in section 2.3 including the mid-year (2023/24) budget update provided in November 2023, is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.</p> <p>The report includes details of the engagement and key issues raised by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chairs together with the supporting responses from the First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation) and Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer).</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. However, the Scrutiny work programme is a key element to provide Members with assurance in relation to the Council's performance and to continue the drive for excellence in service provisions and outcomes
Risk Management:	Regular updates to Overview Panel provide assurance that scrutiny is progressing with an effective work programme, supporting good decision making and service improvement.
Access to Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:



e-mail: paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Update provides a platform for appropriate insight, activity, outcomes and proposals to be relayed. This method of reporting supports the improved responsiveness of scrutiny work and also prevents any delay in the communication of key messages.
- 1.2 The report, by nature, aims to provide members with a general summary of scrutiny activity and proposals. It remains that all reports produced by Scrutiny as a result of in-depth review will be tabled separately at the earliest opportunity.

2. SCRUTINY ACTIVITY

- 2.1 Scrutiny in practice remains mindful of the suitability and appropriateness of timings with regard to the impact and value of planned activity. This includes the selection and order of topics and updates to be received during the year, with annual work programmes and priorities agreed at the June meetings. The tables below provide a summary and chronology of recent scrutiny activity.

Figure 1: Breakdown of activity at the formal Scrutiny Panel meetings

PLACE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL	
7 November 2023	9 January 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Councillor Jack Naylor, Executive Member (Inclusive Growth, Business & Employment); Nicola Elsworth, Assistant Director; and Sarah Jamieson, Head of Economy, Employment & Skills; to receive an update on strategic priorities, work streams, local delivery and support for business and employment. Received the formal response submitted to the Executive Member (Towns & Communities) on the draft Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Councillor Jan Jackson, Executive Member (Planning, Transport & Connectivity); Julian Jackson, Director of Place; and Graham Holland, Planning Policy Team Manager, to receive an update on developments and arrangements for Tameside. Members received the response letter sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation); and the Director of Resources, following a mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023.
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL	
8 November 2023	10 January 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children & Families); Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services; Alison Montgomery, Assistant Director; Melanie Field, Interim Head of Quality Assurance; and James Smith, Performance, Intelligence and Scrutiny Manager, to review the Children's Social Care and Early Help Scorecard and to receive a summary of findings and learning from recent quality assurance work and audits, with a focus on practice improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Councillor Leanne Feeley, Executive Member (Education & Achievement); Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services; and Jackie Ross, Interim Lead for SEND, to receive an update specific to the provision of SEND services and required improvements. The Panel received a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report, Parent Power: learning from complaints about personal budgets, published November 2023.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children & Families); Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services, to receive the updated Children's Social Care Improvement Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel received the Children's Services Performance and Quality Assurance Scorecard and a response to enquiries made against specific indicators from the meeting on 8 November 2023. Members received the response letter sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation); and the Director of Resources, following a mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023.
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HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL	
9 November 2024	11 January 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Simon Sandhu, Medical Director, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust; Trish Cavanagh, Deputy Place Based Lead; and Lynzi Shepherd, Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism (Tameside), to receive an update on mental health priorities for Tameside and an overview of services and support delivered by Pennine Care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel met Jane Timson, Independent Chair, Tameside Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board; and Anna Jenkins, Head of Safeguarding, Quality and Practice, to receive the annual report. The Panel met Alex Leach, Manager of Healthwatch Tameside, to receive the annual report and to discuss opportunities regarding insight and information sharing, forward plans and the learning available by effectively capturing the voice and experience of patients and service users. Members received the response letter sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation); and the Director of Resources, following a mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023.

Scrutiny activity and working groups

2.2 Scrutiny is progressing review activity in the following areas.

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

- Community Safety – working group meeting held on 18 January 2024.
- The review to consider the effectiveness of local partnership arrangements in the development and delivery of community safety priorities. Aspects specific to the strategic and operational partnership between the local authority, Police and partners within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

- Care Leavers – activity to resume February 2024 onwards.
- The review to consider the effectiveness of services and support for care leavers in Tameside. Priorities for the working group will focus on the services and partners specific to the local offer for care leavers; accommodation (sufficiency, quality, future planning); support available regarding education, employment and training; and to meet with and listen to the experiences of care leavers on the services they receive.

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

- Domestic Abuse – working group meeting held on 11 December 2023.
- The review to consider services aimed at supporting and improving outcomes for the perpetrators of domestic abuse, access to safe accommodation for victims and the importance of prevention work in this area and measures to protect and safeguard people in their own homes.

Budget Consultation

- 2.3 The independence of Scrutiny enables members to seek assurances on budget planning, process and priorities for 2024/25 and beyond. It is also appropriate for budget priorities to inform future Scrutiny activity and work programmes.
- 2.4 All Scrutiny Panel members were invited to attend one of two annual budget briefing sessions held on 15 January 2023. The update was provided by Councillor Jacqueline North, First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation); and Ashley Hughes, Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer). This follows on from a mid-year budget position received in November 2023.
- 2.5 The Executive has now received a formal response of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points and highlighting any concerns and specific areas for consideration in supporting the Council's ongoing work in this area. A summary of this activity and response letters is tabled in a separate report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 14 February 2024.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

- 2.6 Scrutiny Panels continue to review decisions and focus reports published by the ombudsman. This ensures learning opportunities are identified and shared with the Executive and services in a timely manner and where necessary, a formal response and/or position statement returned to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel within agreed timescales.
- 2.7 Scrutiny activity informed by recently published LGSCO reports includes:
- Focus report – Parent power: learning from complaints about personal budgets (published November 2023).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Education and Achievement. The report and response of the Executive was tabled at a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 10 January 2024.

Training and Development

- 2.8 There is an ongoing commitment to ensure scrutiny members receive a suitable level of training and guidance. In addition to online resources, it is important that new and existing members have access to external provision based on scrutiny principles, national guidance and expectations.
- 2.9 Following on from an initial session focusing on the Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services, delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA) on 28 November 2023, a further two sessions will be held on 6 February 2024 and 11 March 2024.
- 2.10 Scrutiny members have also been able to access a further online session made available by the LGA on 19 January 2024, titled an Introduction to Scrutiny for Councillors.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out on the front of the report.