

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Report To:</b>  | <b>JOINT MEETING EXECUTIVE CABINET / OVERVIEW PANEL</b>   |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 14 February 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b>  | Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive  |
| <b>Subject:</b>  | <b>SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2023/24</b>  |
| <b>Report Summary:</b>   | To receive for information, a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for 2023/24.  |
| <b>Recommendations:</b>  | 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.   |
| <b>Links to Corporate Plan:</b>  | Scrutiny work programmes are linked to the Council's Corporate Plan. Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision making and priorities across Tameside.   |
| <b>Policy Implications:</b>  | 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.   |
| <b>Financial Implications:</b><br><b>(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b> | <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. Any policy or service delivery changes that are implemented as a result of these reports together with any related budgetary impact will be the subject of separate governance.</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> |
| <b>Legal Implications:</b><br><b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>       | <p>Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 by sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>They have statutory powers to scrutinise and make recommendations in relation decisions made and those to be made in order to prove continuing improvement.</p> <p>An effective scrutiny function is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge</li> <li>• amplify the voices and concerns of the public</li> <li>• be led by independent people who take responsibility for their</li> </ul>  |

role

- drive improvement in public services

provide a valuable role in developing policy.

**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:



Telephone:0161 342 2199



e-mail: [paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is a range of options available to each Scrutiny Panel as to how activity is planned and undertaken. Scrutiny Chairs will work closely with panel members in order to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:
- Research and insight on a particular issue, including desktop reviews
  - Review of decisions and recommendations
  - Follow-up (from previous review / recommendations)
  - Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
  - Consideration of decisions and reports of the Ombudsman
  - Receive updates on key issues as they arise
  - Active monitoring of national and regional policy and substantive variation to services
- 1.2 Scrutiny activity will continue to be undertaken outside of the formal meetings and through working groups, with all findings and recommendations presented to the full panel. This flexibility can allow responsive and timely work to be undertaken, creating an enhanced opportunity to both influence and inform the impact of decisions. It is also necessary to monitor and evaluate outcomes from past activity and to review the implementation of recommendations.

## 2. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITY

- 2.1 At the start of the municipal year all panel members were provided with the opportunity to comment and contribute to the list of topics included within the annual work programmes. The programme of work for each panel covers a two-year rolling period to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis.
- 2.2 The table below provides a summary of activity undertaken by Scrutiny Panels for the period March 2023 to February 2024, with topics cited in Annual Work Programmes (**APPENDIX 1**).

**Table 1: Summary of Scrutiny activity and oversight (March 2023 to February 2024)**

| <b>Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel</b>   | <b>Children's Services Scrutiny Panel</b>   | <b>Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Growth – strategy and delivery</li> <li>• Response to LGSCO focus report - More home truths: learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act, published March 2023</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Enforcement</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder (GMP Neighbourhood Model and Community Safety Partnership)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND Improvement (March 2023 and January 2024)</li> <li>• Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership</li> <li>• Scrutiny summary report – review and monitoring of Children's Services 2021 to 2023</li> <li>• Support and services for Care Leavers</li> <li>• Children's Social Care Performance and Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Children's Social Care Improvement Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMICS Update</li> <li>• Primary Care Access</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Adult Social Care</li> <li>• Tameside Mental Health Provision (Pennine Care)</li> <li>• Tameside Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board</li> <li>• Healthwatch Tameside</li> <li>• Budget consultation</li> </ul> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to LGSCO focus report - Out of Order: learning lessons from complaints about anti-social behaviour, published August 2023</li> <li>• Response to LGSCO focus report - Not in my back yard – Local people and the planning process, published August 2023</li> <li>• Scrutiny response to the Draft ASB Policy</li> <li>• Economy, Employment and Skills</li> <li>• Local Plan</li> <li>• Budget consultation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to LGSCO focus report - Parent Power: learning from complaints about personal budgets, published November 2023.</li> <li>• Children's Services Performance and Quality Assurance Scorecard</li> <li>• Budget consultation</li> </ul> |  |
|---|--|--|

### **Scrutiny Activity and Working Groups**

- 2.3 Scrutiny is progressing and concluding review activity in the following areas, as detailed within the annual work programmes.

#### **Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel**

- Community Safety

#### **Children's Services Scrutiny Panel**

- The effectiveness of services and support to care leavers in Tameside

#### **Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel**

- Domestic Abuse

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 2.4 Scrutiny will remain suitably informed of open consultations at a local, regional and national level. Each panel will also undertake engagement outside of the formal meetings with Council services and external partners, where necessary.

- 2.5 Following a meeting on 12 September 2023, members of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel received a draft version of the Council's Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Policy, for review and comment. A formal and collective response of the Scrutiny Panel was submitted to Councillor Vimal Choksi, Executive Member (Towns & Communities), on 10 October 2023, (**APPENDIX 2**).

- 2.6 At a meeting of the Community Safety working group on 1 November 2023, members received an updated version of the draft ASB Policy where the comments of Scrutiny had been given full consideration and informed the document.

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**

- 2.7 Scrutiny Panels continue to review decisions and focus reports published by the ombudsman. The aim is to ensure learning opportunities are shared with services in a timely manner and

for a formal response and/or position statement to be returned to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel within agreed timescales.

- 2.8 Scrutiny activity informed by recently published LGSCO focus reports include:
- Focus report – More Home Truths: Learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act (published March 2023).
    - Report shared with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 6 June 2023.
  - Focus report – Out of Order: Learning lessons from complaints about anti-social behaviour (published August 2023).
    - Report shared with the Executive Member for Towns & Communities. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 12 September 2023.
  - Focus report – Not in my back yard: Local people and the planning process (published August 2023).
    - Report shared with the Executive Member for Planning, Transport & Connectivity. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 12 September 2023.
  - Focus report – Parent power: Learning from complaints about personal budgets (published November 2023).
    - Report shared with the Executive Member for Education & Achievement. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel on 10 January 2024.

#### **Budget Consultation**

- 2.9 Scrutiny mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation) and Director of Resources received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points for consideration in supporting the Council’s ongoing work in this area. The letter was tabled in a report to the meeting of Overview Panel on 21 November 2023.
- 2.10 Scrutiny Annual Budget meetings held on 15 January 2024. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation) and Director of Resources received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points for consideration in supporting the Council’s ongoing work in this area. A summary of the activity and letters is tabled in a separate report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 14 February 2024.

#### **Training and Development**

- 2.11 There is an ongoing commitment to ensure all 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.
- 2.12 Detail below on training and development sessions delivered during the 2023/24 municipal year.
- **28 November 2023** – Members of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel invited to attend a training session delivered by the LGA and Councillor Paul Watling (Political Peer). The session was on the Effective Scrutiny of Children’s Services. A further two sessions to be held on 6 February 2024 and 11 March 2024.
  - **19 January 2024** - Scrutiny members invited to access an online session delivered by the LGA, titled an Introduction to Scrutiny for Councillors.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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