


Report To:	JOINT MEETING EXECUTIVE CABINET / OVERVIEW PANEL
Date:	8 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Sandra Stewart – Chief Executive
Subject:	SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2022/23
Report Summary:	To receive for information, a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for 2022/23.
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 priorities. 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)	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where Scrutiny activity and recommendations result in changes to policy or service delivery with financial implications, these changes will need to be subject to separate reports.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	<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"> • provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge • amplify the voices and concerns of the public • be led by independent people who take responsibility for their 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

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 for comment and approval. 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 2022 to January 2023, with topics cited in Annual Work Programmes (**APPENDIX 1**).

Figure 2: Summary of Scrutiny activity and oversight (March 2022 to February 2023)

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel	Children's Services Scrutiny Panel	Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport for Greater Manchester • Tameside town centres • Response to Ashton market square consultation • Follow up on review of Homelessness and Housing • Environment and climate change • Corporate performance scorecard • Mid-year budget update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Children's Social Care Improvement Plan • Children's Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) • Children's placement sufficiency • Children missing from home or care • Assurance review of LGSCO focus report – Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education, published July 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult social care reform White Paper • LGSCO learning report • Population Health • Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust • Learning Disability Health Checks • Corporate performance scorecard • Mid-year budget update

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s workforce strategy – social worker recruitment and retention • Scrutiny of children’s social care - benchmarking exercise with Manchester City Council • Children’s social care scorecard • Corporate performance scorecard • Mid-year budget update 	
--	---	--

Budget Consultation

- 2.3 Scrutiny mid-year budget update received on 3 October 2022. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation), 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 2022.
- 2.4 All Scrutiny Panel members were invited to attend one of two annual budget sessions held on 16 January 2023. The independence of Scrutiny enables members to seek assurances on budget planning, process and priorities for 2023/24 and beyond. It is appropriate for budget priorities to inform future Scrutiny activity and work programmes. A response letter of the Scrutiny Chairs has been sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation); and Interim Director of Finance – Section 151 Officer. The letter is tabled in a separate report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023.

Follow-up on past reviews

- 2.5 As detailed within the annual work programme, Scrutiny Panels will conduct follow-up activity in order to monitor and seek assurances against past recommendations. This work is a vital part of the review process and it is customary for follow-up activity to take place approximately 12 months following the initial review.
- 2.6 The Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel has recently revisited the following review.
- Homelessness and Housing

Consultation and Engagement

- 2.7 Scrutiny will remain suitably informed of open consultations at a local, regional and national level. Responses include:
- Phase 1 – Ashton Market Square – December 2022
 - Submission tabled as part of the Scrutiny Update report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

- 2.8 Scrutiny Panels continue to review decisions and focus reports published by the ombudsman. The aim is to ensure learning opportunities be 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.
- 2.9 Scrutiny activity informed by recently published LGSCO focus reports include:
- Focus report – Unprecedented pressure: Learning from complaints about council and care provider actions during the Covid-19 pandemic (published February 2022).

- Report shared with the Executive Member for Adult Services and Director of Adult Services. The activity was reported to Overview Panel on 25 July 2022.
- Guidance report – Section 117 aftercare: guidance for practitioners (published April 2022).
 - Report shared for information and awareness with the Executive Member for Population Health and Wellbeing.
- Focus report – Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education (published July 2022).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Education & Achievement and Director of Education. The activity was reported to Overview Panel on 26 September 2022.

Training and Development

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 Detail below on training and development sessions delivered during the 2022/23 municipal year.
- **20 July 2022** - Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Scrutiny and Overview Panel invited to attend an afternoon training session delivered by the LGA and Councillor Bryony Rudkin (Political Peer).
 - **5 September 2022** - All Scrutiny Panel members invited to attend a training session delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) - Essentials of Effective Scrutiny.
 - **12 September 2022** - All members of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel invited to attend an online training session on Children’s Safeguarding, delivered by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team within Tameside Children’s Services, to include scene setting delivered by the Assistant Director.
 - **14 September 2022** – All members of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel invited to a visit of Children’s Social Care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) / Early Help access point.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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