

SCRUTINY ACTIVITY AND WORK PROGRAMMES – 2020/21 & 2021/22

Tameside Scrutiny Panels are required to publish an Annual Work Programme of planned activity. The programme of work will cover a two year rolling period that is to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis.

The annual work programmes will aim to reflect priority issues across the Council, Strategic Commission and external partners. Work will continue to improve the flexibility, responsiveness and reporting methods of all scrutiny activity undertaken.

Each year a range of emerging topics and issues may require the attention of Scrutiny. It is therefore important to ensure efforts are best placed to support and influence effective decision making, with the added focus on improving outcomes for residents and communities.

Role of Scrutiny during COVID-19 (Guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny)

In order to address the significant and far-reaching impacts of COVID-19, Scrutiny must adapt accordingly to consider appropriate matters with a keen eye on recovery, as well as community and economic resilience. Scrutiny work priorities will remain under continuous review throughout this period.

Guidance published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is aimed at managing some of the challenges associated with carrying out governance roles such as a Council's Scrutiny function during COVID-19. Councillors are encouraged to plan and conduct scrutiny in a way that is timely, supportive and proportionate.

Maintaining a form of effective scrutiny in the current crisis is critical for several reasons:

- Decisions will be made which are likely to have an impact on the lives of residents and the places they live.
- The Council and its partners should be trying to draw on the perspective of a broad range of stakeholders in response to the crisis.
- Scrutiny activity does not take the Executive and senior officers away from the task in hand. Councillors have a vital role in feeding into and supporting the response to communities and the scrutiny provides a mechanism for this work to feed into overall strategy.
- The crisis will not be ending any time soon.

It is expected that the current crisis will involve a consolidation of scrutiny's usual role, with a tighter focus on a smaller range of issues. Overall this involves a shift to recognise that scrutiny can respond accordingly by undertaking:

Outreach – to get an understanding from local communities about the kind of issues and challenges experienced.

Support – oversight of the system response to COVID-19. Understanding and supporting the Council and its partners as they grapple with an unprecedented situation, providing assistance with complex issues and resolution of challenges faced.

CfPS advice

Scrutiny should consider how well partnerships are working; oversee the systems that contribute to smooth effective decision making and bring influence to find positive solutions. Scrutiny should not try to second guess the response or seek to 'oversee' it as the response will be moving fast and acting accordingly.

Scrutiny activity in Tameside

Work has been undertaken to develop a list of topics for consideration. Discussions from the meetings held in June 2020 will directly inform the final programme and planned updates 'check and challenge' for the year ahead. The Annual Work Programmes are to be reviewed and signed off at the next meeting of Overview Panel on 27 July 2020.

The topics listed below present a range of subject areas whereby COVID-19 is thought to have had a direct or indirect impact on service delivery and/or accessibility. There are a range of options available to each Scrutiny Panel as to how activity is planned and undertaken, with a further need to consider timescales and future reporting. The Chair will work closely with panel members in order to determine the best approach for how activity will be undertaken.

Scrutiny activity will continue 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 to a particular issue
- Review of decisions and recommendations
- Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
- Consideration of decisions and reports from the Ombudsman

Plans remain in place to keep scrutiny members informed on the range of engagement and consultation activity taking place both within the Council and across partners. Where deemed appropriate, the wider development of scrutiny may include project support and service development work undertaken at the request of the Executive as a critical friend.

Topics for consideration

Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel
• Hospital response to Covid-19 and plans to bring routine back on stream
• Primary care response to Covid-19 and plans to support increased diagnosis of conditions
• Impact on Schools / education (re-opening)
• Care home resilience now and post Covid-19
• Adapting Care at Home while living with Covid-19
• Safeguarding and welfare of children and families – stress / pressure in households
• Lockdown impact on mental wellbeing and programme of supporting provision
• Mass testing / Test and Trace – how it will work / how it will be managed
• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas
Future consideration
• Children’s mental health
• Early years provision
Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel
• Impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on the economy
• Adapting public transport to meet the needs of the re-opening economy while maintaining social distancing
• Building on Clean Air at a local level – initiatives to seize opportunity around walking and cycling
• Waste and Recycling – behaviour / fly tipping
• Where next for key development sites – e.g. Godley Garden Village
• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas.
Future consideration
• Improving quality and standards - private rented sector and empty properties
• Community Safety Partnership / Strategy
Cross Panel
• Feedback from the community on their experiences of Covid-19
• Humanitarian response to Covid-19 (learning for the future)
• Balancing council and public sector budgets
• Financial and economic impact on individuals and families