

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW PANEL</b>
<b>Date:</b>	8 November 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sandra Stewart, Director – Governance and Pensions Sarah Threlfall, Assistant Director – Policy, Performance and Communications
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To receive for information, a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's two Scrutiny Panels for September to November 2021.
<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 priorities. 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 the Strategic Commission's policies and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The activities of Scrutiny Panels are funded from existing revenue budgets.
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	<p>Overview and scrutiny committees were established in English and Welsh local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000 as a balance to the executive structures created by that Act (elected mayors or leaders and cabinets).</p> <p>The current legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees for England can be found in the Localism Act 2011 and specific powers exist to scrutinise health bodies, crime and disorder partnerships, and Police and Crime Commissioners. Combined authorities are also required to establish overview and scrutiny committees</p> <p>This report provides the Panel with an overview of scrutiny activity and proposals.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Regular updates to Overview Panel provide assurance that scrutiny is progressing with an effective work programme, supporting good decision making and service improvement.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:



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e-mail: [paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk](mailto: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 panels 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 regards to the impact and value of planned activity. This includes the selection and order of topics and updates to be received during the year. The annual work programmes and priorities were agreed at the June meetings and this coincides with consultation activity for which a valued response and input can be achieved. The tables below provide a summary and chronology of scrutiny activity.

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

PLACE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS	
7 September 2021	2 November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Panel met Councillor Leanne Feeley, Executive Member, Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage; Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods; and Mandy Kinder, Head of Cultural and Customer Services, to receive an update regarding the Council's cultural offer and strategy.</li><li>• The Panel met Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth; and Caroline Barlow, Assistant Director of Finance, to receive an update on the 2021/22 budget and looking ahead.</li><li>• Received for information the Corporate Plan Scorecard.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Panel met Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment; Ian Saxon, Director of Place; Gregg Stott, Assistant Director; and John Gregory, Head of Community Safety and Homelessness, to receive an update in response to the Scrutiny desktop review of homelessness and housing.</li><li>• The Panel received a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth, in response to the mid-year budget update.</li></ul>

INTEGRATED CARE AND WELLBEING	
9 September 2021	4 November 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Panel met Councillor Eleanor Wills, Adult Social Care and Health; Jessica Williams, Director of Commissioning; Lynzi Shepherd, Head of Mental Health; and Emma Richardson, Pennine Care, to receive an update regarding the accessibility of local mental health services and responding to impacts of Covid-19 with regard to demand pressures and ongoing support for residents.</li> <li>The Panel met Caroline Barlow, Assistant Director of Finance, to receive an update on the 2021/22 budget and looking ahead.</li> <li>Received for information the Corporate Plan Scorecard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Panel met Councillor Eleanor Wills, Executive Member, Adult Social Care and Health; and Stephanie Butterworth, Director of Adult Services, to receive an update on current challenges, recent consultations and future strategic priorities for Adult Services.</li> <li>The Panel received a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth, in response to the mid-year budget update.</li> </ul>

### **Response to mid-year Budget Update**

- 2.2 As detailed in figure 1, Scrutiny Panels received a mid-year budget update at meetings held on 7 and 9 September 2021. The Executive has now received a formal response of the 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, see **APPENDIX 1**.

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

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

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

- Asset Management Framework and Policy – members met with Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth; and Paul Smith, Assistant Director, Property, on 18 October 2021.

#### **Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel**

- Mental health Access and Crisis Support – members met with Lynzi Shepherd, Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, NHS Tameside and Glossop CCG, on 21 October 2021.

- 2.4 The Children's Working Group is a fixed sub-group of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. A meeting took place on 20 September 2021, with the group receiving an update on foster carer marketing and recruitment.

#### **Cross-Panel Review**

- Homelessness and Housing – following the desktop review tabled at Overview Panel on 27 September 2021, Scrutiny will now look to progress activity in order to explore the size and scale of local impacts on residents and to support work of the Executive. The Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will lead on this with a cross-panel element to ensure wider determinants and contributing factors be picked up relating to health, mental health, domestic abuse, poverty, drug, and alcohol misuse.

- 2.5 The Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel received an update on 2 November 2021, specific to homelessness and housing and key strands below.
- Homelessness – wider determinants and statutory responsibilities (separate to that of rough sleeping)
  - Housing supply and access – affordability and for targeted groups. Allocations policy, nominations etc
  - Private Rented Sector and improving quality – what next re licensing and also how we work with the PRS more generally

#### **Keeping Scrutiny Members Informed**

- 2.6 All Scrutiny Panel members receive a monthly update email, with the purpose of raising awareness to a variety of materials to support their role, provide access to scrutiny resources and the ongoing opportunity for councillors to contribute and share any open consultations and engagement exercises. This will continue to include a wide variety of topic areas for consideration.
- 2.7 The update email also includes links to Greater Manchester Priorities and the work of the Combined Authority Scrutiny Panels. This email provides a further opportunity to inform members how the work of scrutiny is shared and reported within the Council. The most recent update was sent in October 2021, **Appendix 2**.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

# APPENDIX 1

## Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels

**Councillor Oliver Ryan**  
**Executive Member**  
**Finance and Economic Growth**

**Caroline Barlow**  
**Assistant Director of Finance**

Councillors Mike Glover and Teresa Smith

Tameside One  
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Ashton-under-Lyne  
OL6 6BH

email:	paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk
Ask for	Paul Radcliffe
Direct Line	0161 342 2199
Date	20 October 2021

Dear Councillor Ryan,

### Scrutiny mid-year Budget Update 2021/22

We write in response to the mid-year budget update presented to Scrutiny Panels on 7 and 9 September 2021. Thank you for the time taken to provide all scrutiny members with the opportunity to receive a comprehensive appraisal, which included an overview of financial impacts and projections related to Covid-19 and the current financial pressures placed on a range of statutory services.

The budget monitoring information continues to inform future work priorities for the Scrutiny Panels. Regular updates also enable members to seek assurances on the Council's approach to managing and mitigating both the direct and indirect impacts that Covid-19 will continue to have on residents, communities and the local economy.

Scrutiny forms part of the Council's governance and decision-making process, underpinned by principles that aim to provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge, to amplify the voice and concerns of residents, and to drive improvement in public services. Scrutiny activity remains aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and relies on insight of the Council's budget and medium-term financial plan.

This letter provides an account of discussions captured from the meetings and subsequent feedback received. It is hoped that the collective points can assist with planning for 2022 and beyond. Please pass our thanks to the Director of Finance and we will ensure the Council's Overview Panel receive a suitable update on this activity at the next meeting on 8 November 2021.

Scrutiny Panels have continued to review the ability of services to improve outcomes for residents while at the same time deliver value for money. What appear as significant and relentless budget savings are further exacerbated by limited options available to the Council to increase income and revenue, outside of a rise to Council Tax.

Having reviewed the data presented on budget savings, service overspend to-date and financial sustainability, members are keen to ensure the budget, in the simplest of terms, remains firmly aligned to priorities set within the Council's Corporate Plan. This could have been clearer in the update.

Members agree with the key risk factors identified, with the budget appearing fragile in places and the heightened level of risk and emerging pressures. It is appreciated that a single year financial settlement does create a level of uncertainty. It was pleasing to hear of the commitment to achieve a balanced budget going forward without the use of reserves. There appears a need to assess and communicate how the past use of reserves has helped to underpin financial sustainability rather than this having been one off transfers with limited long-term gain.

Future challenges are likely to be profound and far-reaching on the resilience of households and communities. This includes factors such as the uncertainty of future employment, homelessness, housing, education and access to a range of health services. Members are conscious of the need to effectively plan for challenges that residents are likely to face going forward, and the impact this will have on the demand for services and budgets.

It does feel as though the Council could be looking at a wider range of options and solutions. Panel members do not want services to be left behind and would recommend that a local appraisal is undertaken to measure the level of support, advice and funding available in order to find practical alternatives and enabling services to adapt and innovate. This may be something that can align with invest to save initiatives and cost benefit analysis.

Members are keen to ensure the Council is making the best use of existing partnerships, links within Greater Manchester and beyond. This could be to ensure all available data and intelligence is used effectively in order to benchmark the authority against others. With a possibility to review best practice, key developments, service spend and unit costs.

The process in which directorates identify achievable savings was unclear in parts. This includes a need for clarity as to how the financial efficiency of a service is assessed prior to decisions being made. For example, members feel that a service judged as less financially efficient may have more ability to find achievable savings. This includes a further point to reflect on how comprehensive the current financial planning model is to ensure the right services are contributing the right savings, without jeopardising service quality and to mitigate risk and under-delivery of agreed targets.

Panel members are pleased to see the creation of a transformation team and the range of work planned. There was a level of concern as to the reliance and dependency on such a team to deliver outcomes that have not yet been achieved by the Council despite work undertaken to date. It was discussed that additional spend on external support or consultancy must only be made where the achievable savings largely outweigh the expenditure.

The Council continues to face high levels of demand on statutory services and members are supportive of a short-term need to allocate additional financial resource to Children's Services. However, concerns were raised on the Council's ability to sustain budget increases of this nature in future years. Improving outcomes for children and vulnerable residents remains a pressure and Scrutiny will continue to work with services to review the impact of sustainability projects.

It is felt that the strategic direction for growth and investment has an important role to play going forward. This may include the Council's ability to bid for and access key funding pots available at a regional and national level. Points were raised on resources that could be made available to support the bidding for external funding sources and to coordinate a programme of work to maximise such opportunities.

The Executive has remained engaged and supportive of Scrutiny activity and reporting methods. Scrutiny will continue to seek assurances and identify suitable opportunities to inform local, regional and national decision-making.

The Council will undoubtedly achieve a greater level of confidence and assurance if a long-term funding package is to be granted. With a need to confidently plan past 2022, scrutiny members welcome and encourage transparency in budget conversations and request that bi-annual engagement with Scrutiny Panels remain in place going forward.

Yours sincerely,

**Councillor M Glover – Chair to Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel**

**Councillor T Smith - Chair to Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel**

### October 2021

Welcome to the October 2021 Scrutiny Update.

The regular updates aim to keep you informed of upcoming activity, including engagement and consultation with regard to local, regional and national decision-making. All of the open consultations listed below are available for you to access and complete, with the opportunity to raise greater community awareness and participation where possible. For further information and to have your say please follow the relevant links below.

I hope this is something you will continue to find useful and please let me know if you require any further information.

**(Please note, the Covid-19 information section is now at the end of this update)**

Things to be aware of:

**Turtle Song: singing and song writing for people living with dementia and their carers/companions** – the project is free and takes place once a week for 9 weeks, starting on 7 October from 2.15pm-4pm at Chetham's School of Music. The venue is fully accessible and residents from Tameside are invited. For further information, please call 020 8964 5060 or email [charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk)

### **Local Engagement and Consultations**

**Waste Policy Consultation** - Tameside Council are consulting with residents on proposed amendments to our Waste Policy, which highlights the responsibilities of ourselves and the public in regards to waste collection and recycling across the borough. Closing date: **20 October 2021**.  
[Waste Policy Consultation 2021 \(tameside.gov.uk\)](https://www.tameside.gov.uk/waste-policy-consultation-2021)

**Stamford Drive and Currier Lane Active Neighbourhood Trials Questionnaire** - Acting on advice from central government, Tameside Council rolled out a series of schemes to ensure that people feel safe enough to walk and cycle whilst socially distancing. Creating quieter residential streets and making neighbourhoods nicer, healthier and safer places to live, travel and play is also a key part of this work. This saw the delivery of two Active Neighbourhood trial schemes, on Stamford Drive in Stalybridge and Currier Lane in Ashton-under-Lyne.

The two trial schemes have been operational on an experimental basis since September 2020. Tameside Council are now gathering comments to determine the future of the schemes and want to hear your views and thoughts. Closing date: **12 November 2021**.  
[Stamford Drive / Currier Lane Active Neighbourhoods Trial questionnaire Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/stamford-drive-currier-lane-active-neighbourhoods-trial-questionnaire-survey)

**Tameside Community Cohesion Questionnaire** – A cohesive community is a diverse society where people from all backgrounds feel that they belong and are valued, enjoy similar life opportunities, and interact with other groups. A cohesive community is one that has moved beyond an “us” and “them” narrative to one where there is trust and interaction between different groups.

Tameside Council would like to hear about your thoughts and experiences of community cohesion in the borough. This will help us to better understand the topic in Tameside. Closing date: **Ongoing**.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TMBCCCommunityCohesionsurvey>

**Barriers to Accessing Information and Services** - Diversity Matters North West are conducting a survey on the "Barriers to Accessing Information" that people face across Tameside and Glossop. This is particularly in relation to language barriers, and in the context of Covid-19, but barriers could also include digital access, gate-keeping, "red-tape", difficulties identifying the correct service, slow response times by services etc.

The Tameside and Glossop Inequalities Reference Group have invited Diversity Matters North West to conduct this survey as part of a wider research and engagement process into these barriers across the locality. The responses, analysis and recommendations will inform an action report which will be delivered through the governance processes of the Tameside and Glossop Strategic Commission. Closing date: **Ongoing**.  
[Barriers to Accessing Information Questionnaire \(office.com\)](#)

**General Feedback About Health and Care Services** - This new survey is about general use of health and care services. Please help Healthwatch Tameside by telling them about any services you have used recently, that you haven't included in a survey response before. What went well? What could be improved? Closing date: **Ongoing**  
[Health and care feedback survey 2021 \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](#)

### **Regional Engagement and Consultations**

**Dementia Call for Evidence – Black African and Caribbean People In Greater Manchester** – The African Caribbean Care Group (ACCG) want to understand the dementia support and information provision to Black African and Caribbean people in Greater Manchester. Questions can be answered by either carers or people living with dementia. The Dementia Call for Evidence Survey covers 4 areas of a person's Dementia journey: Diagnosing well, living well, supporting well and end of life. This consultation is **ongoing**. <https://www.accg.org.uk/dementia-surveys/>

All live and past consultations are available for viewing at the [Big Conversation](#) pages on the Council's website.

### **Regional Scrutiny**

The links below provide you with access to the most recent meeting papers for each of the GMCA Scrutiny Panels.

[Corporate Issues & Reform Overview & Scrutiny](#)

[Economy, Business Growth & Skills Overview & Scrutiny](#)

[Housing, Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny](#)

### **Scrutiny Resources**

I will look to share any available material to support you in your role during the course of the year.

Publications:

- [Scrutiny Frontiers 2020/21: experiences from the frontline](#)
- [Building post-pandemic prosperity](#)
- [Guidance on Member Code of Conduct Complaints Handling](#)
- [Tackling Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Build Back Local](#)



## **COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update**

The following are some critical sources of information from the government which are updated regularly:

- Updated figures on the number of Coronavirus cases and numbers vaccinated here: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- Guidance on restrictions and how to protect yourself or check if you need medical help: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Information on self-isolation [here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)
- Covid-19 advice for employees, employers and businesses here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

There is also guidance available on our own local websites as detailed below:

Tameside Council - [www.tameside.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/coronavirus) - includes links to service change information, how to volunteer, support for businesses, council tax recovery, mental health support, wellbeing, how to contact the Council for support and more.

NHS Tameside & Glossop CCG - [www.tamesideandglossopccg.org/](http://www.tamesideandglossopccg.org/) link on homepage

Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust - [www.tamesidehospital.nhs.uk/](http://www.tamesidehospital.nhs.uk/) information on homepage

## **Covid-19 opinion and behaviour insight:**

The following are some key statistics taken from different pieces of national and regional research indicating what the impact of covid-19 has been for people including businesses. Understanding the impact of Covid-19 will be crucial to our recovery locally and how we plan to build back better.

- If COVID-19 hospitalisations increase over the coming months, most of the public would support face masks being required indoors again (80%)
- Most adults would support the return of a 'working from home' rule and use of vaccine passports if COVID-19 hospitalisations become high over the coming months (78% and 72% respectively)
- The majority of UK adults would accept a vaccine booster if it was offered to them (82%)
- Most adults think vaccinations should be compulsory for care home staff (73%)
- Feelings of safety amongst transport users remains stable on buses, but has dropped on trains: 88% of trains users feel safe (2% decrease), 19% did not feel safe (9% increase)

## **Grant Funding for VCSE organisations**

There are a number of ways VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester and Derbyshire can apply for funding during the Covid-19 outbreak. 10GM, a partnership of local support and development agencies in Greater Manchester, have come together to produce a bulletin providing all the information on funding opportunities available for VCF organisations in Greater Manchester, including how to apply. You can find the latest bulletin here:

<https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/news/gm-funding-ebulletin-september-2021>

**Action Together Funding Bulletin** – Action Together have a wealth of experience that could help you find and secure funding. The latest funding bulletin, which is produced monthly with 10GM colleagues can be found here:

[https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/sites/actiontogether.org.uk/files/10GM%20Funding%20Bulletin%20June%202021\\_0.pdf](https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/sites/actiontogether.org.uk/files/10GM%20Funding%20Bulletin%20June%202021_0.pdf)