

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

17 SEPTEMBER 2018

Chair:	* Councillor Jeff Anderson	
Councillors:	* Richard Almond * Dan Anderson * Peymana Assad * Honey Jamie	* Jean Lammiman * Jerry Miles * Chris Mote * Kanti Rabadia
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) None	(Parent Governors) None
In attendance: (Councillors)	Councillor Keith Ferry Councillor Adam Swersky	Minute 25
	* Denotes Member present	

26. Scrutiny Work Programme 2018-22

The Committee received a report concerning the Scrutiny Work Programme proposed for the period to the next Council elections in May 2022. It was confirmed that a number of Members on the Committee had been involved in discussions about the content of the programme and that it reflected the priorities and phasing which been supported by them.

A Member who had been elected for the first time in May, asked about the approach taken in framing the programme. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, reported that discussions with councillors in the political groups had commenced in January focusing on a list of some 12 to 15 key topics; these had been generated through evidence and research, residents feedback and consideration of Council priorities. The Divisional Director would circulate this list.

The Member suggested that the programme could also include examination of equalities issues; she pointed to the reference to considering the impact of ethnicity on in-work poverty, but wondered whether this meant such aspects were not addressed elsewhere. Other Members stated that equalities should be an integral part of the work in any scrutiny review and that this had always been the case. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning underlined that the Committee were in control of the work programme and could adapt it as they considered appropriate from year to year; it was discussed at regular Scrutiny Leadership Group meetings. Sometimes, the programme would be impacted by significant external events affecting local government, an example of which was the collapse of Carillion. He and the Chair encouraged all non-executive councillors to become involved in scrutiny work.

A Member gave an example of a middle management review undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny councillors some time ago and explained how it had developed from a “light touch” review to a more in-depth analysis as a result of the nature of the some of the issues initially discovered. Another Member explained how the review of health visiting had, in effect, been used to create a contract specification for a revised service; he emphasised the importance of Cabinet using scrutiny in this way to improve services for residents.

A Member commended the work programme and asked questions about the way in which the views of resident and staff had informed its preparation. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning reported that a company called the Campaign Company had carried out a 500-person telephone survey of residents using standard market research methodology; the sample size meant that there was a confidence level of plus or minus 3% in the results. The Corporate Leadership Group had suggested a number of key topics for research and investigation, and trends in the annual complaints reports had also been examined.

A Member referred to the important role of scrutiny lead Members in carrying out initial work to frame and develop the later formal scrutiny reviews. He underlined the need to keep alert to key issues arising, for example, in the business reported to Cabinet, so that these could inform the evolution of the scrutiny work programme across the term of the Administration.

The Committee thanked the Head of Policy for her significant work in developing the scrutiny work programme.

RESOLVED: That the scrutiny work programme 2018- 2022, as set out in the report, be approved and submitted to the Council.