

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	8 November 2022
Subject:	Scrutiny work programme 2022-26
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Acting Corporate Director Resources
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All - Scrutiny Leadership Group
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix A - Draft scrutiny work programme 2022-26

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the scrutiny work programme for 2022-26, as devised by the Scrutiny Leadership Group. This provides an indicative outline of the key areas of focus for the scrutiny function until the next whole-borough elections in 2026.

Recommendations:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Approve the scrutiny work programme 2022-26
- Forward the scrutiny work programme to Council for endorsement.

Section 2 – Report

The Council's Constitution provides that, in years when whole-borough elections take place, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider its work programme at the first suitable meeting.

As time has been required for discussions with the newly-appointed Scrutiny Lead Members following the election and collectively at the Scrutiny Leadership Group (comprising all scrutiny committee chairs, vice-chairs and scrutiny lead members), the work programme is being reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with full Council consideration during Autumn 2022.

In Harrow, the role of scrutiny is defined as: *'Cross-party investigation of issues and decisions that are important to local residents'*.

Due to the pandemic, some of scrutiny's previous work programme was paused or re-shaped as the council and partners diverted resources to respond to the pandemic. Therefore, the work programme for 2022-26 seeks to recalibrate to a more equal balance between looking at decisions the Cabinet are taking and holding them to account and looking at some of the bigger, longer-term issues facing the borough or that concern residents, where scrutiny can play a more influential role in highlighting issues and shaping the response and also shape the direction of travel through policy development.

Developing a work programme 2022-26

The scrutiny work programme has been drafted based on suggestions from the outgoing Scrutiny Leadership Group, as proposed in March 2022, with additions and adjustments by the current Scrutiny Leadership Group and members of the scrutiny committees.

Council directorates and NHS partners have been asked for their own advice on scrutiny's proposals for its work programme, in particular giving consideration to timing, feasibility, approach and resources required to support the scrutiny work whether this be through work with Scrutiny Leads at briefings, reports to formal committee or informal review work. As part of the engagement on the draft scrutiny work programme, it has also been discussed with CSB (Corporate Strategic Board) and DMTs (Directorate Management Teams).

The work programme and all projects commissioned will be aligned to the new corporate priorities as they emerge during Autumn 2022.

The Scrutiny Leadership Group is the custodian of the scrutiny work programme and will agree and launch the first iteration of its work programme in Autumn 2022. This is an indicative four-year programme – issues may arise over this timeframe which are currently unknown or not priorities, and therefore the work programme leaves in flexibility especially for later years. The work programme is updated and presented annually to Council, alongside the Scrutiny Annual Report.

Principles for topic selection

The principles used for selecting topics for the work programme were:

- Is it an area of significant concern to local people or of public interest?
- Is it an area where significant change or budget cuts are being proposed?
- Is it a topic that would span electoral cycles and therefore benefit from cross-party collaboration?
- Is it an area of poor performance?
- Is it a source of a high level of complaints?
- Is it an area in which the council or partners wish to develop or significantly change policy?
- Is it an area where Government legislation is being developed?
- Could scrutiny's investigation help identify solutions and lead to real impact?

Topics of focus for scrutiny

The attached work programme sets out the themes and issues that scrutiny wants to consider over the next four years through the work of the scrutiny leads, reports to committee and scrutiny reviews. The Scrutiny Leadership Group will drive this work programme forward and meet quarterly to review and prioritise the items on it, taking into account any new, emerging or topical issues that may arise during the course of the year and warrant scrutiny's attention. It is therefore important that there is flexibility built into the work programme so that scrutiny can be responsive to local need.

The items in the work programme that are identified for committee consideration will feature in the scrutiny committee forward plans that also take account of the routine and statutory items that come to committee such as petitions, scrutiny review scopes and progress reports, policies that are part of the Council's statutory policy framework etc.

Ward Councillors' comments

N/A

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.
n/a

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? **No**

If yes, summarise findings, any adverse impact and proposed actions to mitigate / remove these below:

If no, state why an EqIA was not carried out below:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this report as it summarises the activities of scrutiny and does not propose any changes to service delivery.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO as it impacts on all Wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer,
nahreen.matlib@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None