

Report To:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Date:	19 JULY 2019
Heading:	SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2019/20		
Portfolio Holder:			
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Agenda. Each year, the Workplan is reviewed and refreshed with new topics for review. This report aims to focus Members on reviewing potential topic suggestions and progress against those already approved.

The Scrutiny Workplan is a live document and consultation on potential topics will be continued throughout the year with Service Directors, Third Tier Officers, and Members. Community engagement will also form part of the ongoing consultation process. All suggestions received will be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Scrutiny Workplan as a standing item.

When approving topics for the Scrutiny Workplan, Committee Members are asked to consider the criteria within the scrutiny review terms of reference. The Scrutiny Workplan needs to be sound, informed, and flexible with topics that will add value to community wellbeing and the work carried out by the Council and its partners.

Recommendation(s)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are recommended to:

- Note the items currently agreed on the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20
- Discuss approve any appropriate topics to the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20
- Delegate topics from the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20 for review
- Receive an update on the progress of review topics on the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda. At each meeting of the Committee, progress on the Workplan is discussed and new topics are considered for approval.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered. Agreeing the Scrutiny Workplan is part of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules of Procedure outlined within Ashfield District Council's Constitution.

Detailed Information

Topics Approved for the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20

The Scrutiny Workplan was approved at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 June 2019. The table below details those topics approved, progress and which Panel will be reviewing the subject.

Topic	Panel	Overview and Progress
War Memorials	Scrutiny Panel B	<p>To review war memorials within the district in preparation for Remembrance Day and review the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resident involvement• War memorial cleaning and preservation• A comprehensive protocol for war memorials in Ashfield• Events surrounding war memorials• Future planning <p>The following interim recommendations are being considered by Cabinet on the 15 July 2019;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. To ensure the four priority war memorials identified in this report are professionally cleaned and restored in readiness for remembrance events in November 2019.b. To continue with the submission of a grant application to the War Memorials Trust, to secure funding for the professional cleaning and restoration work required.c. In conjunction with recommendation B, to immediately identify sufficient Council funding for the professional cleaning and restoration work required, should the grant application to the War Memorials Trust prove unsuccessful.d. To develop a communications plan ensuring the public is fully informed of the proposed cleaning and restoration works, and any other events or plans relating to the District's war memorials.

Impact of Universal Credit	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>In reviewing the impact of Universal Credit, Members of the Committee are looking to review and gain a greater understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare Reform • How Ashfield District Council has planned for Welfare Reform • The impact the introduction of Universal Credit has had on tenants and claimants, including the most vulnerable • Mitigation steps the Council is taking in regards to the impact Universal Credit • Any impact the introduction of Universal Credit has had on Council finances <p>The first meeting to consider this topic is being held on the 18 July 2019.</p>
Community Engagement	Scrutiny Panel A	<p>To consider community engagement and review how the Council could improve both engagement activities and access to engagement, additionally the current methods used, impact of engagement and consideration of enhancing its effectiveness.</p> <p>The first meeting to consider this topic was held on 4 July.</p>
Commercialisation and Income Generation	Scrutiny Panel A	<p>Income generation for the Council has increased in importance over the last few years due to ongoing Central Government cuts and loss of funding.</p> <p>The Council's recent investments have been predominantly in property but additional ways of generating income could be considered in the longer term.</p>
Wildlife Protection	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<p>To consider how the Council could better work with charities and partner organisations to protect and preserve the wildlife within Ashfield.</p>
Local Bus Provision for the Elderly	TBC	<p>To consider the ongoing reduction of bus provision within the District, specifically for more elderly residents. Coupled with the recent Government led initiative to endeavour to prevent loneliness and isolation in elderly persons, it would be a timely topic to review from an Ashfield perspective.</p>

Community Safety Partnership Priorities	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	This topic was added to the Workplan to be considered as part of the annual Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Crime and Disorder meeting.
Homelessness	TBC	A recent decision has been taken by the Council to bring the Homelessness service back in house from the current shared service provision. It was agreed that some time should be given for the re-integration of the service. The topic will therefore be held in reserve until early 2020.

What is the Scrutiny Workplan?

Scrutiny in Ashfield follows a work programme approved annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The work programme is a rolling plan of in-depth reviews, undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels A and B. Alongside topic reviews, standing items are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

These standing items are:

- Crime and Disorder
- Performance
- Budget
- Scrutiny Workplan

The Scrutiny Workplan outlines areas of work to be scrutinised over the next year by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Panels. Any topics added to the Scrutiny Workplan should have anticipated outcomes that will add value to services delivered by the Council and its partners, and improve quality of life in Ashfield.

In recognising that there is a need for flexibility within the Scrutiny Workplan, it is suggested that the number of items initially placed on the Workplan should be limited to no more than 8 topics.

Sources of Workplan Topics

There are many sources where topics for scrutiny review can be identified, including:

- Issues of community concern
- Service delivery concerns
- Review, audit, and inspection outcomes
- Issues relating to Council outcomes, objectives, and priorities
- Partnership objectives
- The Forward Plan
- Performance
- Budget
- Improvement plans

Selecting a Workplan Topic

Scrutiny Workplan topic selection should be stringent, and Committee Members should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best and most effective Workplan. This means having clear terms of reference in mind and considering many different sources of information to help inform the Workplan.

This involves approving topics:

- Of community concern
- That contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities
- With defined objectives and clear outcomes
- That adds value to the Council's overall performance
- That has potential impact for more than one section of the District's population
- With adequate resources available to carry out a review
- That has not been reviewed recently

A common pitfall for Overview and Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the Workplan that are unsuitable for review due to different factors.

It is advised that Overview and Scrutiny Members avoid topics that are:

- Unmanageable
- Purely for informational purposes
- Have limited anticipated outcomes
- Fail to add value to service delivery
- Fail to improve community wellbeing and quality of life

Scrutiny has limited time and resources meaning the Workplan has to be manageable. It is impossible to include every topic suggested throughout Workplan consultation. Effective and successful scrutiny is about reviewing a beneficial topic that the Committee or Panel can add value to.

The selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function. A clear topic selection process ensures in-depth and effective reviews, resulting in impactful recommendations and improvements.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Scrutiny Workplan should include issues based on performance, priority objectives, and community concerns - many of which contribute to the Council's corporate priorities, vision, and outcomes contained within the Corporate Plan, such as:

- Health and wellbeing
- Economic regeneration
- Place and communities
- Organisational improvements
- Housing

Legal:

Consultation with Members on items for the Scrutiny Workplan is in accordance with the procedure rules set out within the Council's Constitution.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None.
General Fund – Capital Programme	None.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None.
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Without monitoring the Scrutiny Workplan, there is a risk that items added may not be beneficial, and can fall outside of Scrutiny's remit and become unmanageable.	The Scrutiny Workplan is a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda, ensuring Members have the opportunity to monitor the Workplan and any reviews carried out as a result of being approved for the Workplan.

Human Resources:

There are no immediate HR implications identified within this report. Any HR implications discovered as part of a scrutiny review will be adequately considered and addressed as part of the scrutiny review process.

Equalities:

There are no immediate equality implications identified within this report. Any equality implications discovered as part of a scrutiny review will be adequately considered and addressed as part of the scrutiny review process.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None

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