

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2020</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>WORKPLAN MANAGEMENT</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>NO</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the work being undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A and B, as well as the recently established COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with the Panel's terms of reference.

Workplan management is a key responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out within the Council's Constitution. This involves ensuring topics currently under review are progressing sufficiently and align with agreed terms of reference and taking an overview of the work each Panel is undertaking. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also has a key role in delegating work to each Panel and managing workloads.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are recommended to:

- a. Receive an update on the work of Scrutiny Panel A, Scrutiny Panel B, and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel.
- b. Consider any suggestions to be put forward to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel regarding the Panel's work programme.
- c. Set terms of reference for the additions made to the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/2021 at the July 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - a. Accessibility Support in Ashfield
  - b. Recycling and Collection Rates in Ashfield

## **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a responsibility to monitor the work of Scrutiny Panel A, Scrutiny Panel B and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel. This responsibility is set out in the Committee's terms of reference within the Council's Constitution.

## **Alternative Options Considered**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee could not receive updates and manage the work of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel. However, this would not align with the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Panels A and B, and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel. Failure to adequately manage the workplan could also lead to the duplication of work. As such, the scrutiny workplan is a standing item on this Committee's agenda and is consistently monitored.

## **Detailed Information**

### **SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2020/2021**

<b>Workplan Item</b>	<b>Panel</b>	<b>Approximate Timescale</b>
<b>Community Protection Service</b>	Scrutiny Panel B	Jan 2020 – October 2020
<b>Veterans and Service Personnel</b>	Scrutiny Panel A	September 2020
<b>Accessibility Support in Ashfield</b>	TBD	TBD
<b>Recycling and Collection Rates in Ashfield</b>	TBD	TBD
<b>Bus Provision</b>	Scrutiny Panel A	On hold following COVID-19, awaiting new legislation and initiatives regarding public transport.
<b>Climate Change</b>	Scrutiny Panel B	November 2020

Please see below updates on the work of Scrutiny Panel A, Scrutiny Panel B, and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel. Both the Service Manager – Scrutiny and Democratic Services and the Scrutiny Research Officer will be in attendance at the meeting to expand on the work of each Panel and answer any questions Committee Members may have.

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY SCRUTINY PANEL – WORK UPDATE**

At the July 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members were informed of the potential establishment of a COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel. The establishment of this Panel followed recommendations from Cabinet made to Council.

The establishment of this Panel was formalised at the 9 July 2020 Council meeting, set up to review the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to take an active role in the Council's recovery plans.

As a reminder, these are the approved terms of reference for the Panel:

1. Responsibility for the review of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and taking an active role in respect of the Council's recovery plans as requested by the Executive or as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Scrutiny Workplan, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Reviewing the Council's response to COVID-19, and identifying any short-term actions arising which improve operational and corporate resilience.
  - b. Policy development in respect of the Council's recovery from COVID-19, including preparedness for future waves of COVID-19.
  - c. Policy development in respect of respect of the Council's approach to the renewal of the local economy.
  - d. Policy development in respect of the renewal and reform of local government services, including the future structure of local government in Nottinghamshire.
2. To report any recommendations or considerations to the Executive in respect of the responsibilities outlined above.
3. The Panel will receive updates in respect of the implementation of the Council's Recovery Action Plan.

Since the establishment of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel at July's Council meeting, two formal meetings have been held.

### COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel Meeting – 30 July 2020

At the introductory meeting of the Panel, Members were presented with the following information:

- Up-to-date guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny regarding the role of scrutiny during and in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A broad overview of the response measures taken by the Council, details of executive decisions taken as a response to COVID-19, and initial recovery plans and strategy.
- Details of the updated Corporate Plan.
- Latest COVID-19 guidance from Central Government

The primary focus of the Panel at this initial meeting was to:

1. Discuss and identify initial areas of focus, ensuring these areas are in line with the Panel's terms of reference.
2. Establish a work programme to assist the management of the Panel's agenda and the scheduling of the Panel's business.

The Panel established a work programme, with the intention of maintaining flexibility within the programme in line with the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 recovery phase. The Panel also agreed meeting dates for the rest of 2020, ensuring these dates align with meetings of the Cabinet to allow appropriate reporting of the Panel's work, alongside any recommendations, to the Council's Executive.

Meeting Date	Meeting Theme	Attendees	Cabinet Update
<b>3 September 2020</b>	Local Recovery Themes	Corporate Leadership Team	15 September 2020
<b>6 October 2020</b>	Small Business and High Street Recovery/Local Government Reorganisation	Local Business Representatives/CLT	13 October 2020
<b>5 November 2020</b>	Multi-agency Working	Police, NHS, Charities, Discover Ashfield, County Council	1 December 2020
<b>10 December 2020</b>	TBC	TBC	20 January 2020

Discussions also took place regarding a memorial within the District for key workers. Since then, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Panel have held numerous meetings discussing the feasibility of a proposed memorial, including potential locations and funding opportunities.

#### COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel Meeting – 3 September 2020

At the second meeting, the Panel welcomed attendance from all members of the Corporate Leadership Team, with the focus of the meeting being local recovery themes.

The meeting took a question and answer format as questions from the public were put to the relevant CLT member, alongside questions from Panel Members.

In discussions with CLT, Panel Members identified the following areas of interest to be picked up on as part of the Panel's agreed work programme:

- Further support that could potentially be offered to small businesses in Ashfield
- Further support that could potentially be offered to the charity and voluntary sectors
- Homelessness and rent arrears and the tangible possibility of these issues escalating
- Preparations for a second wave

#### COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel Meeting – 6 October 2020

The next meeting of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel will focus on the main theme of small business support in Ashfield in the recovery stages of the pandemic. This will involve attendance from various business representatives across a variety of sectors.

Focus will also be given to local government reorganisation, as Members will receive an update on the Council's position regarding recent proposals.

## **SCRUTINY PANEL A – WORK UPDATE**

Scrutiny Panel A will be holding its first formal meeting of the municipal year on 22 September 2020 where a new review will commence on the Veterans and Service Personnel workplan topic.

Originally this review was set to take place as a separate scrutiny commission as announced at a July 2019 meeting of the Council by the Leader of the Council. Due to several circumstances over the past year, work on the commission was delayed.

At the July 2020 meeting of this Committee, Members agreed the most appropriate course of action would be to incorporate the planned Veterans and Service Personnel Scrutiny Commission into the annual Scrutiny Workplan 2020/2021 to ensure the review can be undertaken and any findings and recommendations can be submitted to Cabinet.

At this upcoming meeting of Scrutiny Panel A, Members will consider an introductory report and begin to set terms of reference to shape the review.

Primary objectives for this review have already been identified as follows:

- Examine all relevant Council policies and strategies, ensuring all important information for veterans and service personnel is clear and easily accessible.
- Consider the Council's relationship with the veterans and service personnel charity sector.
- The development of a policy document to support the armed forces community, including detailed information regarding:
  - General support
  - Benefits and finance
  - Jobs and employment
  - Housing
  - Health and wellbeing

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be updated on the progress of this review, as it gets underway over the coming months. Any comments and suggestions from this Committee will be passed on the Scrutiny Panel A to inform the review process.

## **SCRUTINY PANEL B – WORK UPDATE**

Scrutiny Panel B has been undertaking a review of the Council's Community Protection Service since January 2020. The item was originally added to the 2019/2020 workplan, but due to circumstances discussed earlier in this report, it was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the work of Scrutiny Panel B on this item should continue through the 2020/2021 workplan.

The next meeting of Scrutiny Panel B will be held on 15 October where Members will be considering the Community Protection Service with a view to finalising recommendations to be put to Cabinet in November.

Plans are in place for Scrutiny Panel B to commence work on the Climate Change workplan topic following the conclusion of the Community Protection Service review.

## **SETTING TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members are asked to set terms of reference for the following reviews added to the Scrutiny Workplan at the previous meeting of the Committee:

- Accessibility Support in Ashfield
- Recycling and Collection Rates in Ashfield

This will involve discussions between Members and Officers with the objective of considering the following terms of reference criteria:

### Review Objectives

- The broad objectives of the review
- Any anticipated outcomes

### Review Methodology

- How the review will be carried out
- Desktop based/site visits/comparator data

### Indicators of Success

- A way to measure the progress of a review

### Key Involvement

- Essential involvement to be sought through the course of a review i.e. specific Council Officers/Outside representatives

### Key Information

- Key information that will be needed to undertake a review i.e. a specific Council strategy/legislation/data

Setting terms of reference for both of these workplan topics at an earlier stage will allow each review to hit the ground running when they are undertaken, as Panel Members will have a clear idea of the review structure.

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

As part of the recovery phase, the Corporate Plan has been reviewed to consider the impacts of COVID-19 with a forward look to recovery plans. The refreshed Corporate Plan was approved at the July 21 meeting of Cabinet.

The refreshed Corporate Plan sets out the three main National recovery themes of Health Recovery, Economic Recovery, and Social and Community Recovery. The Council's two main strands of recovery are:

#### **Ashfield as a Place – Community and Economic Recovery**

Supporting the community and businesses in achieving stability and a new normality following COVID-19., assisting in rebuilding, restoring, and rehabilitating the community's emotional, social, economic, and physical wellbeing.

#### **The Council – Organisational Recovery**

Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Council services, finances, and employees, and planning for future financial resilience and how the Council may need to operate differently.

Local recovery themes have been identified through the refreshed Corporate Plan:

#### **External Housing and Communities**

- Health and Happiness:
  - Building on humanitarian work with the Community and Voluntary Sector.
  - Re-introduction of events when safe to do so.
  - Ensuring workplace health.
- Homes and Housing:
  - Reviewing the Homelessness Strategy to understand the impact of COVID-19.
- Cleaner and Greener:
  - Delivering the 'Bag It' campaign.
  - Safe re-opening of park buildings.
- Safer and Stronger:
  - Providing refuge accommodation for victims in abusive relationships.
  - Raising awareness of domestic abuse and ensuring support is provided to victims.

#### **External Economy and Place Finance**

- Economic Growth and Place:
  - Opening the District's Town Centres safely and in accordance with COVID-19 Secure guidelines.
  - Ensuring eligible businesses receive COVID-19 grant support funding.
  - Ensuring transport is safe.

#### **Internal Council Services**

- Innovate and Improve:
  - Fast tracking the digital transformation delivery to improve accessibility and online capability, centred on the customer.
  - Supporting employees to increase digital skills.
  - Working in partnership to increase digital inclusion across the District.
  - Enabling employees, where appropriate and relevant, to work from home, having adequate digital tools and equipment, and a safe working environment.
  - Ensuring employee wellbeing at home or when returning to the workplace.

**Legal:**

There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

**Finance:**

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

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

**Risk:**

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to adequately manage the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/2021.	Ensuring the workplan is effectively managed as a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda.

**Human Resources:**

There are no HR implications resulting from this report.

**Environmental/Sustainability:**

There are no environmental/sustainability implications resulting from this report.

**Equalities:**

There are no equalities implications resulting from this report.

**Other Implications:**

There are no other implications resulting from this report.



**Reason(s) for Urgency**

None.

**Reason(s) for Exemption**

None.

**Background Papers**

None.

**Report Author and Contact Officer**

Shane Wright  
Scrutiny Research Officer  
[s.wright@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:s.wright@ashfield.gov.uk)  
01623 457318