



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Title	Task and Finish Groups Update
Date of meeting	5 March 2024
Report of	Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Appendices	Appendix A –Task and Finish Groups Update Appendix B – Agreed Task and Finish Groups
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Summary

This report provides an update on progress made to date by the ongoing Task and Finish Groups established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees (Appendix A).

Appendix B is a list of the Task and Finish Groups agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees at the start of the year and the current status.

Recommendations

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the updates on all Task and Finish Groups in progress.
2. That the Committee comments on the programme of Task and Finish Groups and on the list of future topics.

1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Part 3C (52) of the council's Committee Procedure Rules outlines the options for Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees to appoint Task and Finish Groups:

“Overview and Scrutiny Committees may conduct reviews via informal Task and Finish Groups but the findings must be reported back to the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee. In conducting Task and Finish Groups they may also ask people to attend to give evidence at their meetings.

Task and Finish Groups will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations in Part 5 of the Constitution.

Following any Task and Finish Group review, a report will be submitted to the relevant Committee or sub-committees for onward submission to the Executive.”

1.2 The progress of current Task and Finish Groups are outlined in Appendix A.

The Task and Finish Groups agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees at the start of the year which have not yet commenced are set out in Appendix B.

2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

2.1 None in the context of this report.

3. Post Decision Implementation

3.1 The 2023-2024 scrutiny topics for review were decided at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees in June/July 2023 (See Background Papers)

3.2 Part 3C (52) of the council’s Committee Procedure Rules states that following any Task and Finish Group review, a report will be submitted to the relevant Committee or sub-committees for onward submission to the Executive.

4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

Corporate Plan

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes and proposed Task and Finish Group topics include suggestions and input from Councillors, officers, members of the public, community groups and the voluntary sector.

The input of executive members, senior officers, and external partners will all assist scrutiny Members to effectively fulfil their role as critical friends constructively challenging decision makers. [CfGS 2022]

4.2 The work programme should reflect the Council’s priorities and should be targeted on issues where scrutiny can add real value. Good practice guidelines for setting overview and scrutiny work programmes state that if scrutiny is to be effective in driving service improvement and making a real difference to outcomes for local people, its work programme must be:

- Informed by the priorities and concerns of local people.
- Led by scrutiny members.
- Manageable and realistic
- Integrated effectively with corporate budget-making and strategic planning and policy setting processes and add value in contributing to the achievement of the Council’s corporate objectives.

- Reflect a proactive approach to driving service improvement, rather than being simply reactive in response to decisions of the Executive.

4.3 This report is aligned with the key priorities in the new corporate plan. Built on the pillars of “caring for people, our places and the planet” and underpinned by a foundation of being Engaged and Effective. The work of Overview and Scrutiny will support the Council in becoming a ‘listening council’ collaborating and building a continuous dialogue with residents and communities. In doing so, residents are involved in decision-making, and Scrutiny acts to amplify the voice of the public, on issues of concern.

Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures

4.4 This item measure how “We act on concerns of local residents and involve them in decision making.”

Sustainability

4.5 None in the context of this report.

Corporate Parenting

4.6 In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. This duty will be considered when including items to the work programme. This is especially relevant for the work programme for the children and education sub-committee.

Risk Management

4.7 None in the context of this report.

Insight

4.8 Insight data and evidence will be used to support scrutiny reviews on the work programme.

Social Value

4.9 None in the context of this report.

5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)

5.1 A dedicated team supports the Overview and Scrutiny function, and the Task and Finish Groups will be delivered within the existing Governance service budget.

6. Legal Implications and Constitution References

6.1 The terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees are set out in Part 2B and 2C of the Constitution. Procedure rules relating to Overview & Scrutiny are set out in Part 3C of the Constitution. Further rules relating to Overview & Scrutiny are set out in Part 3D (Budget and Policy Procedure Rules) and Part 3E (Access to Information Procedure Rules).

6.2 The Council’s Constitution Part 2B – Terms of Reference and Delegation of Duties to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council,

10.1.1 states that the Committee will oversee an agreed work programme that can help secure service improvement through in-depth investigation of performance issues and the development of an effective strategy/policy framework for the council and partners.

6.3 Part 3C (52) of the Committee Procedure Rules [here](#) outlines the authority given to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees to appoint Task and Finish Groups:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee may conduct reviews via informal Task and Finish Groups but the findings must be reported back to the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee.

Task and Finish Groups will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations in Part 5 of the Constitution.

Following any Task and Finish Group review, a report will be submitted to the relevant Committee or sub-committees for onward submission to the Executive.

6.4 This report complies with the requirements of the Constitution.

7. Consultation

7.1 Consultation and engagement of Councillors, Officers, members of the public, community groups and the voluntary sector was undertaken to provide input into the list of topics for scrutiny and will be ongoing as the work programme is implemented.

7.2 The Scrutiny team has engaged with Councillors through the political assistants and Officers. The team also undertook a public consultation exercise on engage Barnet and in the Barnet First eNews letter.

7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committees agreed their programme of Task and Finish Groups for 2023/24 at their first meetings (see Background Papers).

8. Equalities and Diversity

8.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the Council and all other organisations exercising public functions on its behalf must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those without; promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination. The work of overview and scrutiny will be transparent and accessible to all sectors of the community.

9. Background Papers

9.1 Item 25: Work Programmes for Overview and Scrutiny 2023/24 - [Agenda for Council on Tuesday 11th July, 2023, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)