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1 July 2024

Dear Councillor,

Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
6:00pm, Tuesday 9 July 2024
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

T. Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

Aston, J. (Chair)
Gaye, D. (Vice-Chair)
Bullock, L. Mawle, D.
Freeman, M. Muckley, A.
Hill, J.O. Sutherland, M.
Hughes, G. Thornley, S.
Johnson, J.

Agenda

Part 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

(i) To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 (enclosed).

4. Introduction to the Role of the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

Presentation of the Head of Transformation & Assurance.

5. End of Year Performance 2023/24

To receive the end of year 2023/24 performance information for the Responsible Council Priority Delivery Plan (Item 5.1 - 5.11).

The documents included are as considered by Cabinet on 12 June 2024.

6. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

Report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 6.1 - 6.14).

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee
Held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 6:06pm
In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors

Aston, J. (Chair)
Johnson, J.P. (Vice-Chair)
Boulton, C. Lyons, N.
Boyer, M. Mawle, D.
Hill, J. Sutherland, M
Johnson, P. Wilson, L.J.
Jones, P.T. (substitute)

22. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been submitted by Councillors J.T. Bancroft, C.L. Frew, and P.G.C. Jones.

Councillor P.T. Jones was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Bancroft.

23. Declarations of Interest of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

24. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2023 and 23 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

25. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023/24

Consideration was given to the quarter three performance information for the Responsible Council Priority Delivery Plan (PDP) 2023/24 (Item 4.1 - 4.9) *(presented by the Head of Transformation & Assurance)*.

The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that the new customer portal had gone live on 6 December 2023, with further processes to be added during quarter 4 and throughout 2024/25. There had been some slippage on transformation work during quarter 3 due to capacity issues, with funding for additional capacity being included in the 2024/25 budget to help address some of these issues.

The Head of Transformation & Assurance then took the Committee through project/actions in the PDP marked as being behind schedule:

- **Digital Strategy** - the strategy had been drafted and was with the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources for review. This work had been delayed due to work on the 2024/25 budget setting process.

In response to a query from a Member as to when it was likely to be reviewed, the Head of Transformation & Assurance hoped it would be done in the early part of 2024/25, most likely toward the latter end of quarter 1.

In response to a query from another Member as to whether the Council was looking into to the use of AI (artificial intelligence) to support service delivery, the Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that not yet as more work was needed on the customer portal and the funding was not in place to do such things, but it would certainly be looked at in due course.

Another Member raised that the updated provided for the digital strategy implied there was no sense of urgency to get it finalised. The Head of Transformation & Assurance clarified it had been drafted and the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources wanted to review it before being taken forward. A clear target will be included in the quarter 4 report.

The same Member noted he had raised frustration at previous meetings about lack of available information on the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS). The Deputy Chief Executive-Resources advised monitoring information was now starting to be pulled together. The team was going to be redesigned and posts recruited to so as to improve resilience, but the Council had suffered from an underinvestment in its support services in recent years. Monitoring would be done and delivered properly once the team was fully staffed.

In response to a query from a Member as to the energy efficiency of the civic centre, specifically whether all floors were in use, the Head of Housing & Corporate Assets advised this was the case, and the leadership team was due to have a discussion next week about future accommodation needs of the building. Modelling had been done on usage of the building to aid the discussion and look to reduce the number of floors used where able to do so.

- **Hybrid working trial** - owing the significant capacity issues in the HR team this piece of work had rescheduled to the early part of 2024/25.
- **Civic Hub** - a Member noted a date was needed for when this was going to be done as it had not been discussed at recent meetings of the Levelling Up Fund project board. The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised this point would be raised with the relevant officer accordingly.

In respect of the key performance indicators (KPIs), the Head of Transformation & Assurance providing the following updates for those areas recorded as below target:

- **Days taken to process new Housing Benefits / Council Tax claims** - although this was still not on target, performance had much improved and so it was hoped that target would be achieved in quarter 4.
- **Percentage of national non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected** - as per the above update.
- **Percentage of calls answered** - this had been affected by the volume of calls taken during December for the rollout of garden waste charges and it was expected the quarter 4 performance figure would also be impacted for the same reason.

26. Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

The Head of Transformation & Assurance advised that the review of the Equality & Diversity Policy and Strategy had been undertaken with some further amendments required. It was hoped to take the document to Cabinet in April for approval. If so, it would be aimed to arrange a short meeting with interested Members of the Committee to provide their views in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

The meeting closed at 6:25 p.m.

Chair

End of Year Performance Report 2023/24

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	12 June 2024
Report of:	Head of Transformation and Assurance
Portfolio:	Resources and Transformation

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) and Council's performance at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023-24, which also marks the end of the year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress at the end of the fourth quarter relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Priority Delivery Plans set out the key projects and actions for delivery in 2023/24. These are based on the Corporate Plan 2022-26 and the supporting four-year delivery plans.
- 3.2 Overall, 74% of the projects have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in Appendices 1a to 1d.
- 3.3 With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 73% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found at 5.6 and in Appendix 2.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26 was approved by Council on 27 April 2022, setting out the priorities and strategic objectives. The supporting four-year delivery plans were approved on 16 November 2022. The indicators and actions contribute individually to the Council's priorities and objectives.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in Appendices 1a to 1d to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council's performance reporting framework.
- 5.2 In addition to the PDPs, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Where applicable, we will also report on new or additional duties undertaken by the Council during the quarter, as part of this report.

Priority Delivery Plans

- 5.4 A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the projects/actions set out in the PDPs is given in Appendices 1a-1d. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in the table below.




Corporate Plan Priority					Total Number of Projects
	Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	
Economic Prosperity	15	-	3	2	20
Health and Wellbeing	11	1	1	2	15
Community	9	6	-	3	18
Responsible Council	5	1	1	5	12
Total	40	8	5	12	65

- 5.5 At the end of quarter 4, of the 65 actions planned for delivery in 2023/24:
- 62% have been completed;
 - 12% are on target to be completed;
 - 8% have slipped slightly; and
 - 18% are more than 3 months behind schedule.
- 5.6 The key successes during 2023-24 are highlighted below:
- Phase one of LUF project approved by Cabinet.
 - UKSPF year 2 spend fully committed with projects underway and delivering required outputs.

- Rugeley Power Station - site now fully demolished and remediated and ready for development.
- Play areas improvements at Barnard Way and Wellington Drive.
- The creation of the Council's first learn to ride area at the Stadium site in Chadsmoor.
- 211 trees have been planted by the Parks and Open spaces team.
- The new customer portal has gone live.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

5.7 A dashboard of key performance indicators for the Council's operational services is set out in Appendix 2. In summary:

Corporate Priority				Total Number of KPIs
	Performance exceeds target	Performance on target	Performance below target	
Economy Prosperity	4			4
Health & Wellbeing	2			2
Community	4	2	1	7
Responsible Council	3		5	8
Total	13	2	6	21

- 63% indicators show performance above target;
- 10% indicators show performance on target; and
- 29% indicators show performance below target.

The reasons for underperformance and the corrective action to be taken is set out in Appendix 2.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

There are specific objectives within all of the priority areas which address the challenge of climate change.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1a: Economic Prosperity PDP

Appendix 1b: Health and Wellbeing PDP

Appendix 1c: The Community PDP

Appendix 1d: Responsible Council PDP

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers





Corporate Plan 2022-26 - Council 27 April 2022

4-Year Delivery Plans 2022-26 - Cabinet 15 September 2022

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL “To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council”






Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4



				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
5	1	1	5		12

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4
The new customer portal has gone live this year. The number of forms available on the system has expanded in Q4 and will continue to grow in 2024/25.




Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4
There has been slippage on the two HR related projects due to capacity issues in the team. The focus has been on supporting the restructuring of the manager tier as part of the shared service development and transformation. This will set the foundations for work to progress in 2024/25.



Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Improve our customers' access to services							
Develop a new customer portal to deliver better access to services online	Implementation of new system - Phase 1		X			The new system went live in December with the introduction of garden waste permits.	★
	Development of new e-forms and processes - Phase 2			X	X	During Q4 a range of revenues and benefits forms have been added and work is ongoing on developing other waste related forms such as missed bins.	★
Enhance the use of technology and new ways of working							
Update our digital technology strategy and plan future improvements	Review of digital strategy and development of action plan	X				A new digital strategy has been drafted and will be brought to Leadership Team in May and to Cabinet for approval in June.	✘
Develop our workforce to ensure they are suitably skilled							
Develop and deliver a workforce plan	Overarching framework for workforce plan to be developed		X			Cabinet has approved deferring this to 2024/25.	Deferred
	Review of the trial of the hybrid working model and policy development	X				The review of the pilot has slipped due to capacity issues within the HR team. The intention is to complete this in Q1 2024/25.	✘
Be a responsible Council that lives within its means and is accountable for its actions							
Set a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rolling MTFS produced each year 	X	X	X	X	The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been produced and was approved by Council in February.	★

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of savings for the budgets for 23/24 and 24/25 	X	X	X	X	A significant proportion of the savings have been delivered in 23/24 and others have been re-profiled as part of the MTFS for 24/25.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and transformation of shared services, including the delivery of savings 	X	X	X	X	The new joint Leadership Team was established at the beginning of the year. Consultation has now been completed on the manager tier and the new structure for this will come into effect from 1 June.	
Make the best use of our assets							
Undertake a corporate wide review of our assets and develop a new Asset Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a programme of strategic review of the Council's non-HRA land and property assets 	X	X			An initial review has been undertaken and a number of assets are undergoing an options appraisal. Progress with the Asset Management Strategy is now paused pending wider review of one combined strategy with SBC.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the business case to create a new Civic Hub in Cannock town centre as part of the Levelling Up Fund scheme 		X			The plans for a new civic hub are being considered alongside the review of the scope of the LUF scheme.	
Identify opportunities for funding for green initiatives to improve energy efficiency of our buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Energy Management Strategy 	X				An Energy Management Strategy has been drafted. This document will be reviewed following a wider review of the Asset Management & Sustainability Strategy in Q3 of 2024/25	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop asset management plans 			X	X	An Asset Management Strategy was approved in June 2022. However, the strategy now needs to be refreshed, working with colleagues from Stafford Borough Council and asset management plans will be developed as part of this. Options to externally resource this piece of work are currently being considered.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify `green` funding opportunities to support asset requirements 	X	X	X	X	Funding secured to put Solar PV on Rugeley leisure centre.	

KPIs for Priority 4 - Responsible Council

Description	Symbol	Number of KPIs
Performance exceeds target		3
Performance on target		
Performance below target		5

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Local Taxation and Benefits								
Days taken to process new HB / CT Claims	20 days	37.6	40.2	21.9	12.5	27.0		Performance in the final quarter was well ahead of target and maintained the improvements from Q3. Unfortunately, the problems encountered earlier in the year meant that the whole year average did not achieve target.
Days taken to process new HB / CT change of circumstances	9 days	8.3	7.8	5.4	4.7	6.2		Changes to benefit claims continue to be dealt with quickly and ahead of target.

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
% of Council Tax collected annually	98% by year end	28.0%	54.7%	81.6%	96.8%	96.8%	✘	Recovery from the effects of Covid and current cost of living issues have prevented us from achieving the 98% collections of the pre Covid era. The 96.8% collection rate is a significant improvement on last year's 95.9% and so we would hope to achieve 97.5% in 2024-25 and 98% in 2025-26
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98% by year end	25.7%	54.2%	80.1%	97.3%	97.3%	✘	Collection rates continue to improve but fall short of the 98%+ of the pre Covid era. Last year's rate was 96.6% and so a similar improvement in 2024-25 would see us achieve target.
Land Charges Searches								
Turnaround time for land charges searches (excluding personal searches) - average no. of working days	10 working days	12.54	11.62	8.77	8.54	10.36	✘	
Calls, Complaints and FOI requests								
% of calls answered	94%	94.9%	93.7%	81.6%	87%	88.8%	✘	The high call volumes for the garden waste subscription service during December and January affected performance in Q3 and Q4.

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Average call wait time	2 min	1.02min	1.18min	2.53min	2.18min	1.55min	★	Despite the high call volumes for the Garden Waste subscription service resulting in longer wait times during December and January, the average call wait time for the year is lower than the target.
Complaints received and upheld:								
Total stage 1 complaints		15	15	10	14	54		
<i>Upheld in full</i>		3	3	6	8	20	n/a	
<i>Upheld in part</i>		0	3	1	2	6		
Total stage 2 complaints		3	3	4	2	12		
<i>Upheld in full</i>		0	1	0	0	1		
<i>Upheld in part</i>		1	1	0	0	2		
FOI requests within time i.e. 20 working days	85%	89%	79%	90%	87.5%		★	

Work Programme 2024-25

Committee: Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 9 July 2024

Report of: Head of Transformation and Assurance

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out the draft work programme for the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee for 2024-25.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee review the draft work programme for 2024-25 and advise on what they wish to include for the forthcoming year (see Appendix 4).

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The scrutiny committee is responsible for ensuring effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's priorities and strategic objectives as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the element of the Corporate Plan that relates to the priority for being a Responsible Council. An extract from the Corporate Plan for 2022-2026 setting out details of the priority and strategic objectives is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The services or functions of the Council falling with the remit of the Committee are set out at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to identify corporate issues and/or ones that are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider.

The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Guidance on selecting reviews is included in Appendices 3A and 3B.

- 3.4 Members are invited to comment on the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 4. Members are also encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme may be revised during the year as necessary.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
- (i) It provides for effective scrutiny of the Council's priority for being a "Responsible Council".

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 A new Corporate Plan for 2022-26 was approved by Council on 27 April 2022. The Plan sets out 4 priorities and this Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising Priority 4 – Responsible Council.
- 5.2 The Responsible Council Priority has 5 objectives:
- (i) Improve our customers' access to services.
 - (ii) Enhance the use of technology and new ways of working.
 - (iii) Develop our workforce to ensure they are suitably skilled.
 - (iv) Be a responsible Council that lives within its means and is accountable for its actions.
 - (v) Make the best use of our assets.

An extract from the Corporate Plan setting out details of the priority, the strategic objectives and actions is attached at Appendix 1.

- 5.3 The Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility for scrutinising the corporate and support functions of the Council as set out in Appendix 2.

Developing the Work Programme

- 5.4 To support Members in their Scrutiny role and in particular in developing a work programme a Scrutiny Toolkit has been produced; a copy of this has been circulated separately to Members. An extract from the toolkit relating to developing a work programme is attached at Appendix 3A and an extract from the LGA's guidance is attached at Appendix 3B.
- 5.5 In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:
- Is the matter a concern to local people (you may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing)?
 - Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?
 - Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance?
 - What difference could scrutiny make?
 - What would happen if you did not look at this issue?
- 5.6 The work programme can be revised during the year to reflect emerging priorities, but it is important to plan ahead and allow time for reports to be prepared and invitations to be sent to relevant parties.

- 5.7 Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they want to include in the Work Programme, a draft work programme is attached at Appendix 4 to this report which includes some standing items (e.g., performance progress reports) and suggestions as to potential reviews.

Undertaking the Scrutiny Reviews

- 5.8 Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Committee. A template to assist with scoping the review is also attached at Appendix 5.
- 5.9 Members may wish to:
- Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice).
 - Invite expert witnesses to give their views.
 - Seeking the views of service users and/or the general public.
- 5.10 Members should also consider what they can do to support the review e.g.:
- Undertaking research e.g., via the internet.
 - Seeking the views of ward members or specific interest groups.

Reporting on Scrutiny Reviews

- 5.11 In addition to reporting to the Committee on the outcome of any reviews, the Committee may wish to make recommendations to Cabinet or another Committee.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Any costs to be incurred in undertaking any review will need to be contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

None.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

None.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact. Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

6.6 Health

None.

6.7 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Extract from the Corporate Plan – Priority 4 Responsible Council

Appendix 2: Overview of services falling with the Committee's remit

Appendix 3A: Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Appendix 3B: Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Appendix 4: Draft Work Programme 2024/25

Appendix 5: Template for Scoping a Scrutiny Review

8 Previous Consideration

None.

9 Background Papers

None.

Cannock Chase Council - Corporate Plan 2022-26**PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL****`To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council`**

We aim to:

- **Improve our customers' access to services.**
- **Enhance the use of technology and new ways of working.**
- **Develop our workforce to ensure they are suitably skilled.**
- **Be a responsible Council that lives within its means and is accountable for its actions.**
- **Make the best use of our assets.**

We want to improve the ways in which customers can access our services and at a time that suits them through better use of technology; while continuing to provide contact via the telephone or face-to-face for those customers who need more personal support.

Building on the lessons we have learned during the pandemic; we will develop a hybrid working model that supports employees to continue to work flexibly and in a way that best suits their role. Alongside this we want to ensure that our staff are trained to deliver the services that our residents need. The Council faces a challenging financial future, so it is important that we live within our means and make the best use of the assets we have. We will communicate with our residents to provide updates on the progress we are making in delivering our priorities and key decisions that affect the future of services.

Over the next 4 years we will:

- Develop a new customer portal to deliver better access to services online.
- Update our digital technology strategy and plan future improvements.
- Develop and deliver a workforce plan.
- Set a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- Undertake a corporate wide review of our assets and develop a new Asset Strategy.
- Identify opportunities for funding for green initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings.
- Communicate with residents and stakeholders using language that is clear and easy to understand.
- Provide updates on our progress in delivering the priorities set out in this plan.

**Services / Function Falling Within the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee's Remit**

Service Area	Sub-Areas
Corporate Issues	
Tim Clegg - Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints (including Ombudsman and MP enquiries) • Corporate / cross cutting Issues
Corporate Issues	
Chris Forrester - Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget consultation (as appropriate)
Resources	Deputy S151 Officer (Finance Services)
Chris Forrester - Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management accounts • Financial planning • Exchequer • Financial systems support
	Local Taxation and Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) collection • Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits
Transformation & Assurance	Internal Audit & Risk
Judith Aupers - Head of Transformation & Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit • Risk Management • Insurance • Health & Safety
	Technology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Reprographics
	Human Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Learning and organisational development • Payroll • Equality and Diversity
	Communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR & marketing • Graphic design • Website & intranet • Consultation, engagement & research

Service Area	Sub-Areas
	Customer Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services (telephony and reception services)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement • Policy • Performance
Law & Governance	Legal Services
Ian Curran - Head of Law & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services • Information Governance <i>(Data Protection and Freedom of Information)</i>
	Democratic and Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Services • Electoral Services • Corporate Services • Executive / Civic Support • Support Services
Housing & Corporate Assets	Corporate Assets
Nirmal Samrai - Head of Housing & Corporate Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land and Property Holdings (excluding HRA Property) – Maintenance of Assets and Purchases / Disposals • Estate Management • Leasehold Management of Commercial Premises • Utilities Management • Caretaking and Cleaning
Regulatory Services	
Gabrielle Whitehouse - Head of Regulatory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Contingencies - <i>(Emergency Planning and Business Continuity)</i> • Land Charges • Street Naming and Numbering

Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Developing the Work Programme

Members have a key role to play in developing the work programme for the Scrutiny Committees and it is important that manageable programmes are developed. The Scrutiny Committees will need to filter potential items of work; to be selective and to prioritise.

Given the limited resources available, in particular the constraints on member and officer time, it is unrealistic to select more than a few items for intensive review. Realistically, a single committee cannot undertake more than two in-depth reviews per year.

In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

Public interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen. Things to think about include:

- Any issues raised with you when canvassing.
- Have any surveys or research undertaken by the Council identified any concerns.
- Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?

Ability to change - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence. Think about what difference Scrutiny could make and what would happen if you did not look at this issue.

Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well. You should consider, the scale of the underperformance, whether it is a one off or whether there is an ongoing issue. Has the service been flagged up in an external inspection report for poor performance?

Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the District

Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort

Work programmes should be determined at the start of each municipal year and reviewed and revised regularly. Any reviews not started or completed by the year end can be referred for consideration as part of the following year's work programme. The best advice is to start small, learn what works well and what does not and then be more ambitious. It is far easier to add items to the workload than to remove them

Stage 1: Agree the Issue

The first step is for scrutiny members to be sure that the subject to be reviewed is significant. Undertaking in-depth reviews is resource-intensive – of member and officer resources. Investing such a high level of resources should only be undertaken for **high priority issues**. The following are criteria which could be used to 'check' a topic against, to ensure that it would make a worthwhile review:

- Issue identified by members as key issue (through members' surgeries and other constituency activities).
- Performance issues within a service (e.g., significant under or overachievement of targets).
- Service considered to be important by the community (through market research, citizens' panels and so on).
- High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service.
- Public interest issue highlighted in local media.
- High level of budgetary commitment to policy/service area.
- Persistent financial issues e.g., significant under or overspends.
- Council corporate priority area.
- Central government priority area.
- Issue raised in Inspection Reports.
- Issue referred by the Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee.
- New government guidance or legislation.

Stage 2: Determine the nature of member involvement

The committee will need to decide how members will drive the review. There are three possible approaches to member involvement:

- The whole committee investigates the issue.
- A task and finish working group is established to drive the investigation.
- Individual or paired members drive the review.

Vital to the whole review activity is that members take full control of which policy problems and solutions are explored and how that exploration takes place. Members need to take responsibility for, and ownership of, the outputs and outcomes of reviews.

Stage 3: Scoping Exercise

There are 4 key issues to consider when scoping the review:

- What are the core questions the review is seeking to answer? (**no more than 3**)
- What is the purpose of the Review? (**in one sentence**)
- What will **not** be included?
- What is the timescale?

Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

The role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures. However, it is not possible to examine every service in detail, so it is important for the scrutiny committee to prioritise and plan its workload. Some councils do this at the beginning of each year and some do it on an ongoing basis.

Planned scrutiny

Work programming is the process for determining which topics scrutiny will look at over the coming year, either at committee meetings or

in task and finish groups. This involves evaluating a number of factors to decide which topics are to be investigated and when. The process will typically involve long-listing and then short-listing topics before making a final decision.

Responsive scrutiny

Whether planned scrutiny takes place at the beginning of the year or on an ongoing basis, the priorities for scrutiny need to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. This makes sure scrutiny can be flexible and responsive to high-priority issues or policy changes that occur throughout the year.



The scrutiny topic selection process

Each council has its own method for selecting topics for scrutiny; in some councils there may be a very structured selection process, whilst in others it may be more informal. Whatever level of detail is involved, the general process should include the following activities.

1. Identify issues

You can identify potential issues by:

- consulting with all members of scrutiny committees, senior officers, cabinet members and council officers
- looking at corporate priorities, business plans and the Forward Plan of the council (and the council's neighbours)
- considering events and decisions in the council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets
- evaluating previous council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work
- carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.

2. Prioritise topics

Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

3. Plan scrutiny work

Decide which scrutiny topics to review and include them in the work programme.

4. Review and evaluate

Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added by scrutiny.



Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics

The following criteria provide a useful guide for prioritising and selecting which topics are suitable for scrutiny to review.

Topics **are** suitable for scrutiny when:

- scrutiny could have an impact and add value
- the topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people
- the resources are available that would be required to conduct the review, in terms of manpower and budget
- it avoids work duplication elsewhere
- the issue is one that the committee can realistically influence
- the issue is related to an area where the council, or one of its partners, is not performing well
- the issue is relevant to all or large parts of the local area
- the review would be in the council's interests.

Topics **are not** suitable for scrutiny when:

- the issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent
- the topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there)
- scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact upon outcomes
- the topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial to the council's interest
- the topic is too broad to make a review realistic
- new legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year
- the topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

Defining scrutiny topics

For every item on the work programme/new referral, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
- What is scrutiny being asked to do?
- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of involving scrutiny in the matter?
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?



Exercise 1 – prioritising topics

Consider the issues that are important to the people you represent in your ward. List the five issues you think are the most important, then put them in order of priority; make a note of your reasoning. Do you know all the information you need to handle complaints effectively? Consider these statements to identify any gaps. If you answer 'no' to any of them, take some time to find the answers from your council's website or your work colleagues.

1

2

3

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Think about how you would translate these into strategic issues. Here is an example:

The issue

A number of residents have been complaining that the trees in the local area are not being pruned regularly enough, becoming a hazard and presenting a potential danger to the public. Complaints include difficulty in walking on the pavement, damage to tall vehicles, trip hazards from tree roots and gardens being overshadowed by trees.

Strategic considerations

The council needs to consider how it allocates its Environmental Services' resources so that it can be efficient whilst also meeting the needs of local residents. It can look at:

- how services are procured, commissioned and contracted
- which are the most hazardous streets and where the biggest improvements can be made
- prioritising and planning a programme of work for tree pruning.

**Proposed Work Programme for 2024-25 for the
Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date	Item
9 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Year Performance Report for 2023-24 for the Responsible Council PDP • Determine Review Programme for 2024-25
4 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 1 Progress Report April to June 2024 • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)
12 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 2 Progress Report July to September 2024 • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)
20 January 2025	This meeting is for consultation on the budget/financial strategy only
1 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Council PDP – Qtr 3 Progress Report October to December 2024 • Outcome of Scrutiny Review(s)

Suggested Items for Reviews:

- Development of Executive Scrutiny Protocol (as recommended by full Council held on 6 March 2024).
- Inclusivity of the Council (carried over from 2023/24).



Scrutiny Review Template

Review Title
Scope of the Review / Terms of Reference
Reason for Scrutiny
Membership of the Review Group
Key Tasks / Review Plan
Sources of Evidence
Timescale