



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

8 January 2024

Report Title	Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24
Cabinet Portfolio	Corporate Services
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the process followed by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its thematic committees in determining their work programmes for municipal year 2023/24. Given resource constraints, new approaches have been introduced to further strengthen the process. The outcome of the committee's work programme conclusions is attached for confirmation.

2. **Recommendation for Decision**

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (i) **Review the items listed in the work programme document and agree priorities and timescales.**

3. **Purpose of this report**

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the process followed in drawing up work programmes for 2023/24.

4. **Background / Reason for the recommendations**

- 4.1 Overview and scrutiny activities play a key role in a successful democratic process, holding decision makers to account for future (overview) and past (scrutiny) decisions and in turn, contributing to the delivery of positive outcomes for residents and the Council's workforce and resources.
- 4.2 A comprehensive work programme is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Commission and its thematic scrutiny committees. It enables them to plan and manage their workloads to make best use of the available time and resources, ensure a focus on the Borough's priorities and add the most value to the performance of the Council and outcomes for residents.
- 4.3 Each committee agreed an allocation of up to two scrutiny reviews for the year.

Delivering an enhanced scrutiny programme for 2023/24

- 4.4 The Children and Young People scrutiny committee met on 9 June 2023 to agree a framework for conducting overview and scrutiny in the coming year. The committees and Link Officers then met to agree their approaches. On 13 June, the Commission then drew together the outcomes and confirmed the overall approach which has been compiled into the work programmes attached to the report.
- 4.5 Three new approaches to working were agreed as follows:
- 1) a 'golden thread' for the year was agreed. In short, this is described as the 'Cost of Living Crisis'. This summarises the complex interplay of economic and social impacts on residents and the Council of the sudden rise in inflation and interest rates, food and input shortages, and changing demands. As part of their usual scrutinising work, members will be able to explore:
 - How is the 'Cost of Living Crisis affecting residents and our services?

- How have the Council and its partners adjusted?
 - What needs to change to cope with the Shock?
- 2) the Commission and thematic committees agreed to two linked reviews whereby all committees would examine a topic from their own perspectives and the product would be a multi-faceted report drawn together to provide a more holistic scrutiny. The two topics agreed are SEND and Alcohol.
- 3) improve the timeliness of Performance Indicator consideration. Quarterly Performance Report briefings with members could be taken in the same cycle, following the Cabinet's consideration.

Reviewing the Work Programme

- 4.6 The Commission and Scrutiny Committees are required to review and agree their work programme at every committee meeting. When reviewing the work programme, new items can be added and items that no longer require scrutiny or are not considered to be a priority for action or monitoring can be removed.
- 4.7 When considering whether to add, remove and prioritise items for consideration Members should be mindful of the following:
- Would the Committee be able to add value through its work on the issue?
 - Is the issue linked to a Borough Priority?
 - Is the issue a priority/concern for partners, stakeholders, and the public?
 - Is the issue related to poorly performing services?
 - Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends?
 - Are there significant levels of public/service user dissatisfaction with the service?
 - Has there been media coverage of the issue?
 - Is the issue related to new Government guidance?
 - Would consideration of the issue be timely?
 - Are there sufficient resources (e.g., officer capacity to support a review or provide a report) to effectively consider the issue at this time?
 - Would Scrutiny be duplicating work being undertaken elsewhere?
 - Is the matter subject to judicial review (sub judice)?
- 4.8 The Work Programme Prioritisation Aid attached to this report is designed to assist members in considering whether a suggested addition to the work programme is suitable and meets the necessary criteria. If members consider that a suggestion would not be suitable for scrutiny, the Scrutiny Committee could choose to refer the matter elsewhere. If an item is considered important issue but not a priority at this time an item may be added to the end of the work programme to be monitored for further

consideration in the future.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

5.1 None.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Having agreed the initial work programme, the Committee is able to discuss its next steps on how to deliver it.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 N/A

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 N/A

9. Social Value

9.1 N/A

10. Net Zero and Environment

10.1 N/A

11. Health and Wellbeing

11.1 N/A

12. Customer and Resident

12.1 N/A

13. Asset and Property

13.1 N/A

14. Staffing and People Management

14.1 N/A

15. Risks

15.1 Failure to effectively manage the work programme could lead to inefficient use of the Committee's time and resources, negatively affecting the Committee's ability to add value and help the Council achieve its priorities. By examining the work programme regularly and following the prioritisation aid as recommended, the Committee should minimize the risk of using time and resources on ineffective items.

16. **Finance**

16.1 N/A

17. **Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 N/A

18. **Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 N/A

19. **Background Documents**

19.1 None.

20. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Work Programme Prioritisation Aid

Appendix 2 – Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Appendix 1
Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Aid



