



Corporate Overview Group

Tuesday, 2 September 2025

Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

1.1. The terms of reference for the Corporate Overview Group accepted at Council in May 2019 clearly state that a key responsibility of this Group is to:

- Create and receive feedback on work programmes for the Growth and Development, Communities, and Governance Scrutiny Groups based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation and Efficiency Programme/Productivity Plan.

1.2. Each meeting of the Corporate Overview Group considers the work programmes for the Growth and Development, Communities, and Governance Scrutiny Groups as well as any new Scrutiny Requests put forward by Councillors and Officers. Those items that are agreed for scrutiny are included on a future work programme for one of the four Scrutiny Groups.

1.3. Work programmes for each of the groups were reviewed in June 2025 to ensure they reflected the current priorities of the Council.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Overview Group:

- a) consider any additional items for scrutiny from the current Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation and Efficiency Programme (Appendix One)
- b) determine any additional topics to be included in a scrutiny group work programme for 2025/26 for each of the scrutiny groups as presented on newly submitted scrutiny requests (Appendix Two)
- c) review the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Three).

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1. To fulfil the requirements of the terms of reference for the Corporate Overview Group and ensure effective scrutiny of decisions.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Council's scrutiny structure comprises of one Corporate Overview Group and three additional Scrutiny Groups focused on Growth and Development, Communities, and Governance. The Corporate Overview Group is responsible for setting the work programmes for all scrutiny groups based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation and Efficiency Programme/Productivity Plan. Links to these documents can be found at Appendix One.
- 4.2. The Corporate Overview Group considers potential items for scrutiny (submitted by officers and Councillors on a Scrutiny Request Form) at each meeting of the Corporate Overview Group. There are five scrutiny requests submitted for consideration at this meeting as outlined in Appendix Two. It should be noted that two scrutiny requests cover the same topic - shared ownership and other types of affordable housing - highlighting that on this occasion it has not been possible for councillors and officers to agree key lines of enquiry collaboratively.
- 4.3. Draft scrutiny requests were received from councillors to consider LGR Consultation, Digital Transfer, and Hedges and Hedgerows. After discussion with officers, all three were withdrawn. With regard to the Hedges and Hedgerows request, officers will undertake (as an alternative to scrutiny) to produce a short Good Practice Guide on hedgerow management and enhancement which can be made available on line (and physically where appropriate) to farmers, landowners and developers.
- 4.4. Appendix Three shows the work programmes for all scrutiny groups as agreed in June 2025 by the Corporate Overview Group. The Group is asked to consider if the work programmes remain appropriate and achievable for the current year.
- 4.5. There are no items on the work programme for Growth and Development Scrutiny Group and no new Scrutiny Requests for this Group have been received. Therefore it is proposed that the October meeting of this Group is cancelled for lack of business.
- 4.6. Any additional items identified from the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation and Efficiency Programme/Productivity Plan, highlighted by members of the Group or raised by officers, should be assessed against the scrutiny request form to inform the decision to include them on a scrutiny group work programme.
- 4.7. It is important to note that the purpose of scrutiny is to:
 - scrutinise a topic in more depth than the Cabinet can in advance of a Cabinet decision with the purpose of informing the decision to be made by Cabinet

- investigate topics of concern to residents resulting in recommendations to Cabinet with the purpose of improving Council services
- monitor the progress of the Corporate Strategy to ensure the Council is meeting its stated priorities accepting that this may require more in-depth scrutiny of specific strategic projects at appropriate times
- hold the Executive to account on behalf of the residents of the Borough to ensure sound decisions are made.

4.8. The Group is reminded that there will be cases in which scrutiny is not necessary or appropriate at this time. Officers will be clear in providing reasons where they feel this is the case. Councillors are also asked to be mindful of the resources available for scrutiny and listen to the advice of Officers present in the meeting.

4.9. A light touch review of the scrutiny process will be undertaken during 2025/26. This will include a demonstration of 'good' scrutiny (videos or visits), and an evaluation of RBC scrutiny against what is considered to be best practice identifying what's different and recommending any changes to Council. All Councillors have been asked to submit You Tube links of what they consider to be good scrutiny and to send recommendations of what to do more of, do less of and what to stop doing to the Head of Corporate Services.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

5.1. There are no direct risks associated with this report.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.2. Legal Implications

This report supports effective scrutiny. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct Section 17 implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no direct biodiversity net gain implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

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| The Environment | Scrutiny of issues of concern to residents can lead to improvements in the Environment. |
| Quality of Life | Scrutiny of issues of concern to residents can lead to improvements in their perceived Quality of Life. |
| Efficient Services | Scrutiny of issues of concern to residents can lead to more efficient services. |
| Sustainable Growth | Scrutiny of issues of concern to residents can lead to Sustainable Growth. |

8. Recommendations

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| Background papers available for Inspection: | None |
| List of appendices: | Appendix One – Document Links Appendix Two – Scrutiny Requests Appendix Three – Work Programmes 2025/26 |