

# Briefing Note

## Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25



**To:** Scrutiny and Improvement  
Committees  
**From:** Governance Manager

**Date:**  
**Ref:**

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### 1 What is the purpose of this report?

1.1 To provide an update on scrutiny's work programme 2024/25.

### 2 What is the background to this report?

2.1 The LGA and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) advise that robust work programming is an essential part of a successful scrutiny process.

2.2 Scrutiny and Improvement Committees are an important part of the Council's overall political management arrangements and provide an opportunity for non-executive Members to maintain an overview of progress against delivery of corporate strategy, to be involved in policy development and improvement work, and to hold decisions makers to account. With carefully planned work, coupled with the experience and insights elected members have of their local communities, scrutiny can play a valuable and effective role in making sure services are as efficient and effective as they can be.

2.3 The work of Scrutiny and Improvement Committees generally falls into the following broad categories:

#### Policy and Strategy Development

Scrutiny provides opportunities to examine matters in more depth, to inform policy and strategy development and to drive service improvement. These topics should be clearly aligned to the Council's corporate priorities and strategic plans. It is likely that much of this work could be progressed through the scheduled Committee meetings, perhaps spreading the work over 2-3 meetings where the subject matter warrants it. For particular 'in-depth' review work, there may be the opportunity to undertake some of this work outside of the committee cycle via task and finish panels. These would be supported by Democratic Service Officers where resources allow.

#### Pre-Decision Scrutiny

In addition to policy and strategy development and review, Scrutiny Committees will undertake 'pre-decision' scrutiny by considering Cabinet reports that are listed for the current cycle.

#### Monitoring and Oversight

Committees also have the opportunity to examine a mix of annual reports and performance monitoring documents in their role as 'critical friends'.

2.4 Work programmes do need to include some degree of flexibility throughout the year so that they are able to respond to emerging issues and the business needs of the Council. It is good practice to routinely monitor progress against the work programme, therefore, the work programme will remain a standing item on agendas to allow Members to monitor upcoming items and make suggestions for the future topics.

## 2.5 **Approach to agreeing work programme for 2024/25**

Members' views were sought on potential areas of focus for Scrutiny work. New suggestions were collated with previously identified topics and considered by the Chair and Vice Chair of each committee, together with the relevant Director and Cabinet Members with a view to prioritising the suggestions using a simple flow chart technique. This flow chart is attached as an appendix for information and also to serve as a guide for prioritising any new or emerging work programme topics.

2.6 The results of this exercise have been translated into a proposed workplan for the year for each committee, also setting out the how each topic relates to the various categories of scrutiny work as described in para 2.3 above. With agreement of the Chairs, section headings have also been added to the agendas reflect these broad categories and assist in the management of the meeting.

2.7 Current scrutiny task and finish panel work includes:

- Volunteer Strategy
- Flood Management Strategy
- Waste Management Strategy (will commence once Flood Management Strategy work completes)

2.8 In addition to this, Members are involved in other broader Council task and finish work such as:

- Collaborative Working Group looking at Crustacean Deaths
- Budget task and finish group work flowing from the all Member Conference
- Litter bin provision Task and Finish Group agreed by Council on 16 May

2.9 These demands, on both Members and Officers, have been taken account of when prioritising and setting indicative timeframes around scrutiny work, particularly any proposed policy and strategy development work which is likely to require more in-depth consideration and a greater time commitment.

2.10 Unpaid carers and care services were identified as priority topics for in-depth review for the 24/25 work programme of the Adults, Wellbeing & Health Scrutiny & Improvement Committee. Vaping in young people will be referred to the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for consideration and Social Care transitional services was retained for future consideration by a joint panel of Adults & Children's Scrutiny Committees.

2.11 A further suggestion arising out of the work programming work was for each committee to spend a short time, as part of this item, giving some thought to the key lines of enquiry or information requirements for upcoming items, enabling Officers to prepare information to meet those requirements and facilitate effective scrutiny.

### **3.0 Conclusions & Recommendations**

#### **3.1 Members are asked to:**

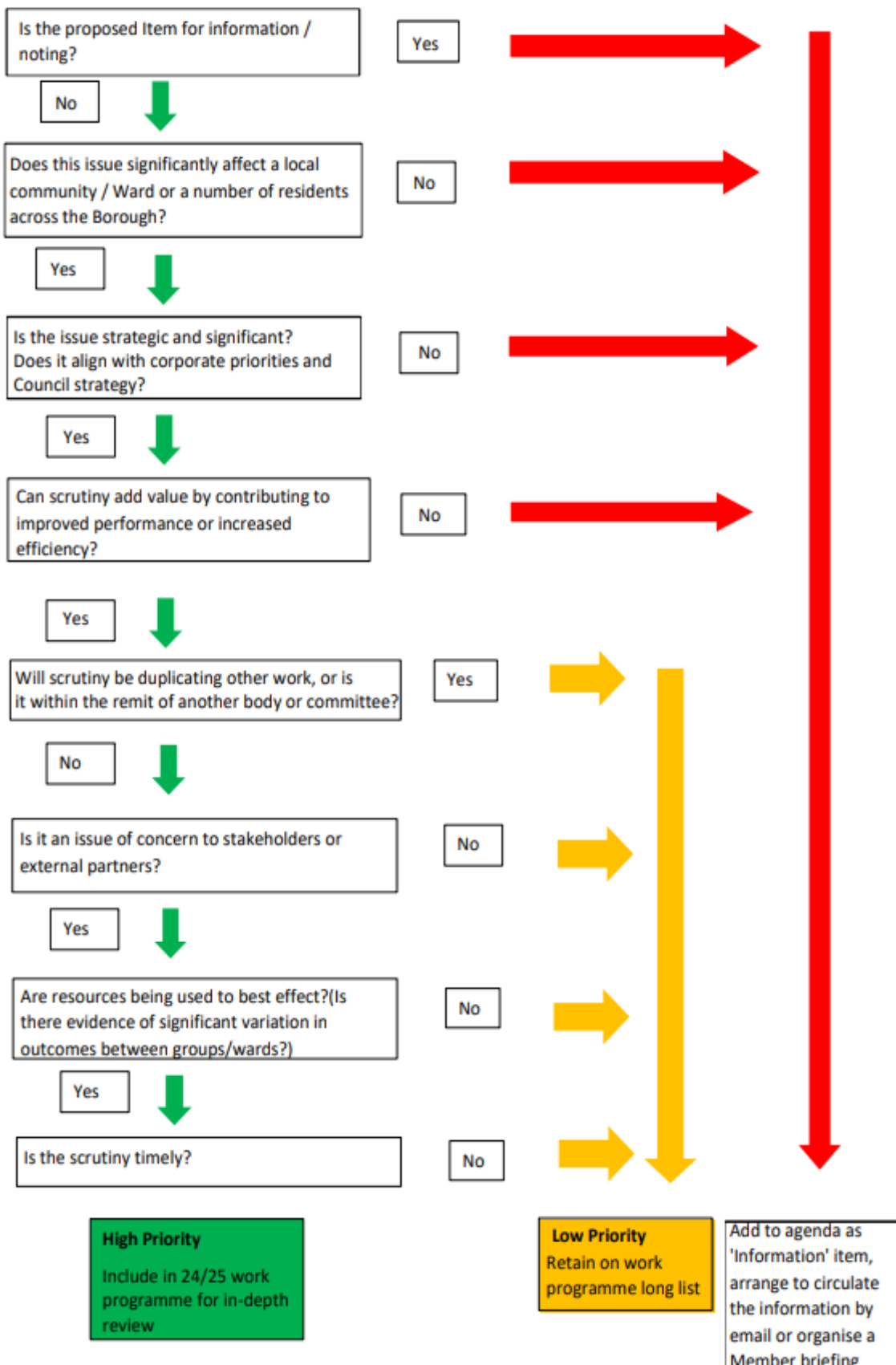
1. Agree the proposed work programmes for 2024/25 for their relevant Scrutiny and Improvement Committee.
2. Consider the key lines of enquiry or information requirements for upcoming topics.

### **4.0 Appendices**

Appendix A – Prioritisation flow chart.

Appendix B – Proposed Scrutiny & Improvement Committee work programme.

**Flow Chart for Prioritisation of Scrutiny Review Topics**



Appendix B

Meeting date	Report	Officer/Lead	Scrutiny role	Cabinet date
15 July 2024	Scrutiny Review of Unpaid Carers	Director of Adults & Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Annual Safeguarding Report	Director of Adults & Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Public Health Update	Director of Public Health	Information Items	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
09 September 2024	Q1 reports - six monthly Corporate Plan/Strategy delivery update report	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	17-Sep-24
	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Pre-decision Scrutiny	17-Sep-24
	Scrutiny Review of Unpaid Carers	Director of Adults & Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
21 October 2024	Scrutiny Review of Unpaid Carers	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Public Health Update	Director of Public Health	Information Items	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	

02 December 2024	Q2 reports - six monthly directorate specific performance report	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Scrutiny Review of Unpaid Carers	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
03 February 2025	Q3 reports - six monthly Corporate Plan/Strategy delivery update report	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	n/a
	Scrutiny Review of Care Services	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Public Health Update	Director of Public Health	Information Items	
	Annual Safeguarding Adults Report	Chair, TSAB	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
10 March 2025	Scrutiny Review of Care Services	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	ASCOF	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	
21 April 2025	Scrutiny Review of Care Services	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Public Health Update	Director of Public Health	Information Items	

	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
02 June 2025	Corporate Performance Annual Overview report	Head of Strategic Performance, Policy and Improvement / Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Q4 reports - six monthly directorate specific performance report	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Scrutiny Review of Care Services	Executive Director for Adults and Communities	Strategy and Policy Development/Review	
	Principal Social Worker's Report	Principal Social Worker	Monitoring and Oversight	
	Work Programme 24/25	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Outside Bodies Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	
	Health Partners Update	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	Information Items	