

**Agenda Item No:**



Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21**

---

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked:**

1. To endorse the proposals to update the O&S Reports Tracker.
  2. Consider if there are any new items that the Committee wishes to suggest. These will be assessed according to the proposed Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix and will then be brought back to a future meeting.
- 

**Date of O&S meeting:** 21 January 2020

**Chair of O&S Committee:** Cllr N Ovenden

**Relevant Portfolio(s):**

**Summary:**

**Exempt from Publication:** NO

**Background Papers:** Report of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, O&S 21 January 2020

**Contact:** Abi Moffatt, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
[abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk) – Tel: (01233) 330394

## **Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21**

### **Introduction and Background**

1. Each year the Committee is asked to suggest items that could be considered for future scrutiny. The tracker is then updated and a copy of this is attached at Appendix A. On this basis, the Committee's work plan for 2020/21 is formed.
2. Items have previously been kept on the tracker for long periods of time without a review of whether scrutiny is still required. Therefore, items have been recommended to be removed from the tracker due to the length of time passed and the changes in the Committee's membership. The tracker has been updated to reflect the date that each topic was proposed as an area of interest for the Committee.
3. The Committee usually looks at one in depth topic each year, for example, Wye3 Masterplan and Air Quality review, and submits an Annual Report to Full Council. It also considers suggestions made from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group and certain topics annually including the work of the Crime and Reduction Partnership, Safeguarding and monitoring of the council's performance.
4. This paper sets out the topics that are outstanding on the tracker and seeks the Committee's views. The Committee are also asked to consider if there are other topics that would benefit from scrutiny during 2020/21.
5. The process used to select future scrutiny topics has been considered during the review of the work programme for 2020/21. Members are asked to approve a developed approach to selecting and prioritising topics for future scrutiny review as outlined in this report.
6. It is recommended that once potential topics have been identified, they will be put through a topic selection assessment using the Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix, which is also set out on this agenda (Appendix B) together with the tracker. The matrix is based on the criteria in the current Topic Selection Flow Chart which assists the Committee with evaluating the level of influence the Committee has over each new suggestion made, whether they are strategic or of public interest etc. The scoring element in the proposed matrix has the added benefit of providing a mechanism for the Committee to prioritise areas of interest for scrutiny and helps to ensure that the Committee focuses on topics that can make a meaningful difference.

## **Recent Scrutiny Suggestions**

It is proposed these items remain on the tracker and are allocated to upcoming meetings in the 2020/21 Work Programme:

Homelessness, *Housing*

7. A review on homelessness has been proposed recently in a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group and as a response to one year following the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act. If approved, there is scope for a report to be brought forward to the Committee over the next coming months.

The Delivering of Carbon Neutrality, *Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications*

8. In a recent meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, the issue of carbon neutrality was raised as an area where future scrutiny would be beneficial. The Council's Carbon Neutral Strategy is being produced and is expected to be finished in the first few months of 2020. The Committee may want to look in to whether the goals outlined in the strategy are achievable.

## **Current Scrutiny Programme**

It is proposed that the following items could be removed from the tracker going forward, subject to the Committee's views. The current position is set out for each item below:

Kent Fire and Rescue Service

9. This issue was raised in May 2018 by the Committee in regards to a shortage of volunteer support for Kent Fire Rescue Service being noted at Tenterden. Due to the time passed since this topic was suggested and the change in Committee membership, it has been suggested that this should be removed from the upcoming programme.

Broadband provision and planning, *Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications/Planning and Development*

10. The issue concerning broadband was suggested in May 2018 by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in regards to the council's work on delivering high-speed broadband to new and existing properties within the borough.
11. The Committee could consider removing this from the future work plan due to the amount of time passed, however, following recent changes in central government, the council's corporate policy team can keep watch for any relevant briefings and government announcements regarding broadband provisions.

Staff Resources, *Legal and Democracy*

12. In July 2019, the issue of staff resourcing in the legal service was requested to be considered by Budget Scrutiny Task Group.

#### Ashford Waste Water Treatment Works, *Community Safety and Wellbeing*

13. Waste Water Treatment Works was considered a future scrutiny issue in August 2018. This was initially requested in relation to the odours impact on the quality of residents' lives in Kennington and Little Burton Farm. This can be a topic revisited at a later date if necessary.

#### Accessibility concerns at Elwick Place, *Corporate Property and Projects*

14. The issues around accessibility at Elwick Place were raised in March 2019 and were requested by the Committee in response to concerns raised by the Ashford Access Group.
15. During last year, a representative from Ashford Access Group has been appointed to the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board. Therefore, accessibility concerns are being addressed and updated regularly through the Board.

#### Future plans for public transport, *Community Safety and Wellbeing*

16. In August 2019, it was suggested that the Committee look at the future plans for public transport in the Borough. This was requested by the Vice Chairman in regard to the use of low emission and fit for purpose buses in Ashford.
17. A 'Big 8' project is to look at the council's transport and infrastructure. Elements will also be covered by the carbon neutrality strategy. This is a wide ranging topic and so there could be potential to narrow the scope to a specific area of transport, if the Committee wished to do so.

#### Void Properties, *Housing*

18. Following discussions raised during scrutiny of the 2018/19 draft budget, the Committee has requested a report on work undertaken to address void properties in the PSL sector in July 2019.

## **Topic Assessment and Prioritisation**

#### Current Approach

19. Previously, the Committee adopted a Topic Selection Flowchart (appendix C) that is put in practice when an idea for scrutiny is suggested. The flowchart questions different elements that are required for scrutiny and the respondent is taken through the flowchart depending on whether the

answer is yes or no. By the end of the exercise, the item is either rejected or considered a low/high priority.

### Proposed Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix

20. Whilst the Committee's current approach has been acceptable to scrutiny topic selection, it has been proposed that the current flowchart could be developed further to include more detail for Members.
21. Using key ideas from the Topic Selection Flowchart, the matrix presents a series of statements and allows you to input a score from 1-5, depending on how 'fitting' the statement is in relation to the topic being considered. Therefore, the topics with the best 'fit' will achieve the highest score and a more likelihood that the scrutiny review will be established. However, it should be noted that the Committee are still able to consider investigating topics that achieve lower scores, if they wished to do so as there may be reasons outside of the criteria for bringing a topic forward.
22. The matrix includes a 'review type' section that identifies what action the Committee wishes to take regarding each issue and so establishes a clear route for the work carried out by the Committee once the topic has been selected.
23. Subject to the Committee's approval of the matrix, a one year trial period is suggested in order to test the matrix as an evaluation tool for future scrutiny topics. Following the end of the trial period, a review would follow.

### Next Steps

24. **The Committee is asked to endorse the proposals to update the O&S Reports Tracker.**
25. **Consider if there are any new items that the Committee wishes to suggest. These will be assessed according to the Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix and will then be brought back to a future meeting.**

### Contact and Email

26. Abi Moffatt, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
[abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk) 01233 330394

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Report Tracker – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020

Current Work Programme			
Report Title	Date due to O&S	Reporting Service	Scope of what is to be scrutinised
Budget Scrutiny Task Group – Final Report	21 January 2020	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications/ Finance and IT	Presentation of the findings of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for discussion and endorsement by the Committee.
Review of Scrutiny Report Tracker	21 January 2020	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	A review of the items to be considered for future scrutiny.
Community Safety Partnership	11 February 2020	Community Safety and Wellbeing	A review of the decisions made and action taken in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions by the members of the Community Safety Partnership. The Committee operates as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the council.
Safeguarding Update	11 February 2020	Housing	Annual update to the committee on the council's work on safeguarding adults and children at risk.
Quarter 3 Performance	11 February 2020	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.

Items for future consideration			
Report Title	Date proposed to O&S	Reporting Service	Scope of what is to be scrutinised
Kent Fire and Rescue Service – volunteer support	May 2018	Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Committee in regard to a shortage of volunteer support for KFRS being noted at Tenterden.
Broadband provision and planning	May 2018	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications/ Planning and Development	Requested by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in regard to the council's work on delivering high-speed broadband to new and existing properties within the borough.
Staff Resources – Legal & Democratic	July 2018	Legal and Democratic	Requested to be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group
Ashford Waste Water Treatment Works	August 2018	Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Leader in regard to odours impacting on the quality of residents' lives in Kennington/Little Burton Farm
Accessibility concerns at Elwick Place	March 2019	Corporate Property and Projects	Requested by the Committee in response to concerns raised by Ashford Access group.
Void properties	July 2019	Housing	Following discussions raised during scrutiny of the 2018/19 draft budget, the Committee has requested a report on work undertaken to address void properties in the PSL sector.
Future plans for public transport	August 2019	Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Vice-Chairman in regard to the use of low emission and fit for purpose buses in Ashford
Homelessness	December 2019	Housing	Responding to the Homelessness Reduction Act – one year on.
Carbon Neutrality	December 2019	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Carbon Neutral Strategy and action plan

<u><b>Scrutiny Topic Selection Matrix</b></u>	1. Represents a key issue for local people.	2. The issue is strategic and significant.	3. The topic falls within a community or corporate priority area.	4. Scrutiny of the issue will lead to effective outcomes.	5. Has the topic been covered elsewhere in other services. (Yes = low score No = high score)	6. Represents an issue of concern to stakeholders and partners	7. The issue is of community concern or there is a high level of dissatisfaction with one or more services.	8. The scrutiny activity is timely.	Score	Rank	Review Type
Homelessness	5	5	5	4	3	2	4	4	32	1	R
Carbon Neutrality	5	5	5	3	2	4	4	2	30	2	TG

Each of the topics are scored for degree of 'fit', e.g. 1 (low) to 5 (high). The reviews with the best fit achieve the highest score.

1. Represents a key issue for local people.
2. The issue is strategic and significant.
3. The topic falls within a community or corporate priority area.
4. Scrutiny of the issue will lead to effective outcomes.
5. Has the topic been covered elsewhere in other services? (Yes = low score      No = high score)
6. Represents an issue of concern to stakeholders and partners
7. The issue is of community concern or there is a high level dissatisfaction with one or more services.
8. The scrutiny activity is timely.

#### Review Type:

Each topic has an indicated review type: Task Group (TG), One-off report (R), Member Briefing (B), Other (O)

Score	What the score means
31 to 40	The issue/item has a high likelihood of entering the Scrutiny Work Programme but should be prioritised according to score
20 to 30	Item/issue has less chance of gaining a place on the Scrutiny Work Programme and should be held in abeyance
Under 20	Item/issue should not normally gain a place on the Scrutiny Work Programme

## Overview and Scrutiny - Topic Selection assessment

Topic under consideration.....

**1. Does the topic represent a key issue for local people and is it likely to result in improvements for local people?**

		Yes
		No

**2. Is the issue strategic and significant?**

		Yes
		No

**3. Does the topic fall within a Community or Corporate priority area?**

		Yes
		No

**4. Is it likely to lead to effective outcomes?**

		Yes
		No

*Stage 1 (validity) assessment - reject any topic with a 'No' response to any of questions 1 to 4.*

**5. Will scrutiny involvement be duplicating some other work?**

		Yes
		No

*Stage 2 (validity) assessment - reject any topic with a 'Yes' response to question 5*

**6. Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?**

		Yes
		No

**7. Is it an issue of community concern or is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?**

		Yes
		No

**8. Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?**

		Yes
		No

**9. Is the scrutiny activity timely?**

		Yes
		No

### **Stage 3 (priority) assessment**

*Topics with a 'No' response to any of questions 6 to 9 should be deemed **LOW PRIORITY**  
Topics with a 'Yes' response to all of questions 6 to 9 should be deemed **HIGH PRIORITY***

