



## Public Accounts Select Committee

### Report title: Select Committee work programme report

**Date:** 3 December 2020

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1 (open)

**Wards affected:** All

**Contributor:** Assistant Chief Executive

### Outline and recommendations

This report gives Committee members an opportunity to review the Committee's work programme and make any necessary changes.

- To review the work programme attached at appendix D.
- To consider the items for the next meeting and specify the information that the Committee requires.
- To review the forward plan of key decisions at appendix E to consider whether there are any items for further scrutiny.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Committee proposed a draft work programme at the beginning of the municipal year. This was considered alongside the draft work programmes of the other select committees and agreed by Business Panel on 29 September 2020.
- 1.2. The work programme should be reviewed at each meeting to take account of changing priorities.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
  - To review the work programme attached at Appendix D.
  - Consider the items for the next meeting and specify what evidence is required - being clear about the information the Committee wishes to be included in officer reports;
  - To review the forward plan of key decisions at Appendix E to consider whether there are any items for further scrutiny.

### 3. Work programming and prioritising

- 3.1. When reviewing the work programme (appendix D), the Committee should consider:
- The Committee's terms of reference (appendix A).
  - Whether any urgent issues arisen that require scrutiny. If so, refer to the prioritisation process (appendix B) and the effective scrutiny guidelines (appendix C)
  - Whether a Committee meeting is the most effective setting for scrutinising any newly identified issues;
  - Whether there is space on the Committee's work programme to consider additional items (could any work programme items be removed or rescheduled?)
- 3.2. The Committee should also consider how each item links to the priorities set out in the [Corporate Strategy for 2018-2022](#):
- [Open Lewisham](#) - Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all, where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.
  - [Tackling the housing crisis](#) - Everyone has a decent home that is secure and affordable.
  - [Giving children and young people the best start in life](#) - Every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education, and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.
  - [Building an inclusive local economy](#) - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
  - [Delivering and defending: health, social care and support](#) - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
  - [Making Lewisham greener](#) - Everyone enjoys our green spaces, and benefits from a healthy environment as we work to protect and improve our local environment.
  - [Building safer communities](#) - Every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

### 4. The next meeting

- 4.1. The following items are scheduled for the next meeting. For each item, the Committee should clearly define the information and analysis it wishes to see in officer reports.
- 4.2. The Committee should also consider whether to invite any expert witnesses to provide evidence, and whether site visits or engagement would assist the the effective scrutiny of the item.

Agenda item	Information and analysis	Corporate priority
Council budget 2021-22	This report will provide details of the Council's spending requirements for the next financial year	All

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Financial forecasts	This report will provide details of Directorate's in-year spending.	All
Budget cuts	As advised in the cuts report (and scrutiny meetings) November/December 2020	All

## 5. Activity between meetings

5.1. This is a list of briefings the Committee has received (or is due to receive) outside of its formal meetings.

Agenda Item	Date	Corporate priority
Financial results 2019-20	July 2020	All
Reserves briefing	December 2020	All
Annual complaints report	Tbc	All
Asset strategy update	Tbc	All
Audit Panel Update	March 2021	All

## 6. Referrals

6.1. This is a list of the referrals the Committee has made to Mayor and Cabinet in this municipal year.

Referral title	Date of referral	Date considered by Mayor and Cabinet	Response due at Mayor and Cabinet	Response due at Committee
Financial stabilisation – budget update and medium term plan	24 Sep 20	7 Oct 20	Tbc	Tbc
Commercialisation and culture change in-depth review report	24 Sep 20	7 Oct 20	Tbc	tbc

## 7. Financial implications

7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme will have financial implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

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## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1. Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.2. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.3. There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

## **10. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 10.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. However, in February 2019 Lewisham Council declared a Climate Emergency and proposed a target to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. Items on the Committee's work programme may well have climate change implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **11. Crime and disorder implications**

- 11.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have crime and disorder implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **12. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 12.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have health and wellbeing implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

## **Report author and contact**

If you have any questions about this report please contact: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) [timothy.andrew@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:timothy.andrew@lewisham.gov.uk)

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## **Appendix A – Select Committee terms of reference**

- (a) To exercise all the functions and roles of the overview and scrutiny committee in relation to the following matters:
- To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Executive which promote the better custodianship of the Council's finances and to make recommendations for best financial practice across the authority.
  - To investigate the possibilities for improving the Council's financial management practice and to make reports and recommendations to Executive or Council as appropriate.
  - To encourage the highest standards of financial custodianship where necessary overseeing training activity for all members in this area.
  - To consult on and to comment on and make recommendations to the Executive in respect of the actual and proposed contents of the Council's budget and without limiting the general remit of the committee, to hold the Executive to account for its performance in respect of all budgetary matters.
  - To receive reports as appropriate from the Audit Panel in respect of their overview of contract procedure rules and financial regulations.
  - To make recommendations and reports for consideration by the Executive or Council to improve procurement practice.
  - To scrutinise the effectiveness of the Audit Panel.

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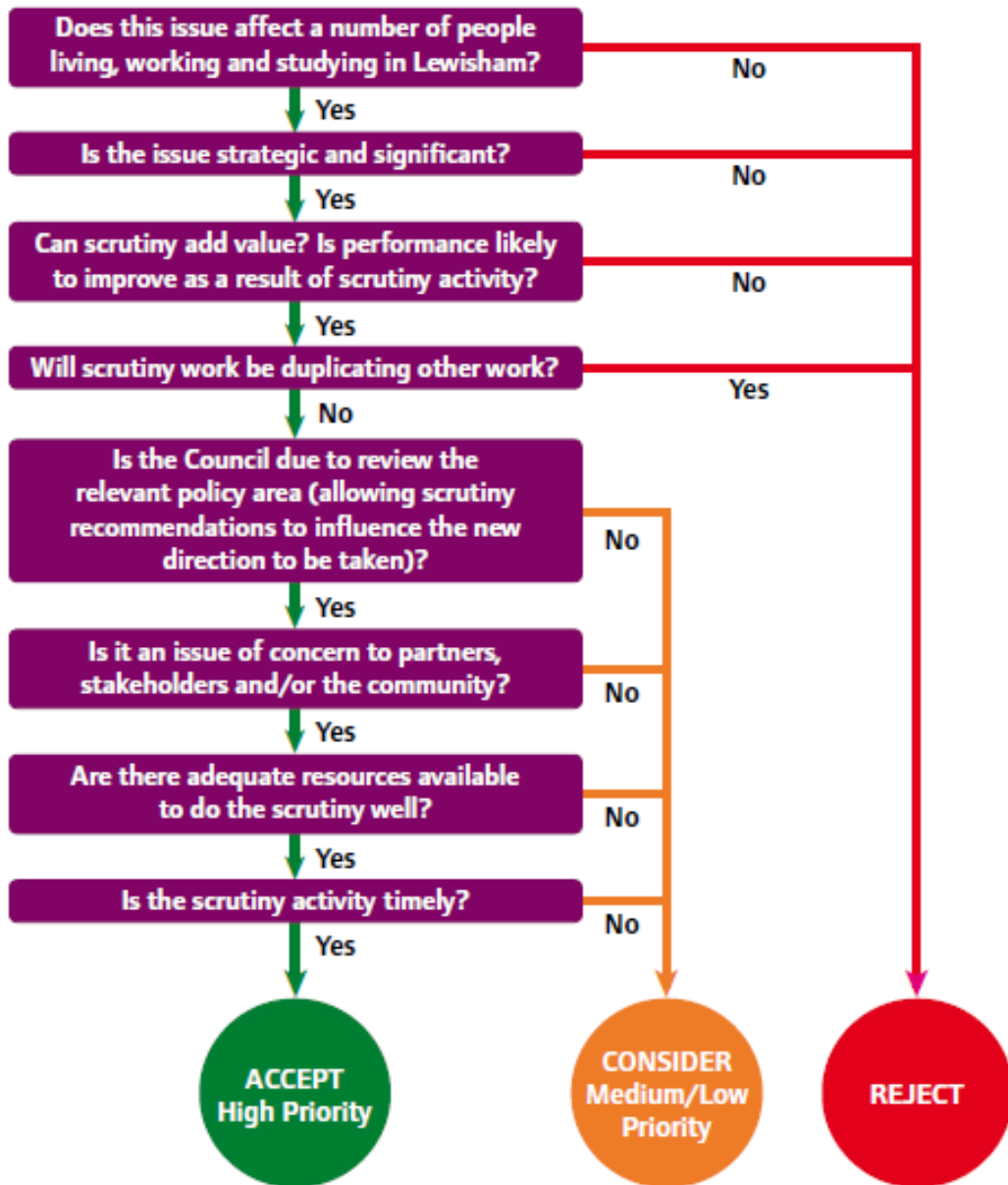
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## Appendix B

The flowchart below is designed to help Members decide which items should be added to the work programme. It is important to focus on areas where the Committee will influence decision-making.

### Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process



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## Appendix C

### Effective Scrutiny Guidelines

**At Lewisham we:**

#### **1. Prioritise**

It is more effective to look at a small number of key issues in an in-depth way, than skim the surface of everything falling within scrutiny's remit. We try to focus on issues of concern to the community and/or matters that are linked to our corporate priorities. We only add items to the work programme if we are certain our consideration of the matter will make a real and tangible difference.

#### **2. Are independent**

Scrutiny is led by Scrutiny Members. Scrutiny Members are in charge of the work programme and, for every item, we specify what evidence we require and what information we would like to see in any officer reports that are prepared. We are not whipped by our political party or unduly influenced by the Cabinet or senior officers.

#### **3. Work collectively**

If we collectively agree in advance what we want to achieve in relation to each item under consideration, including what the key lines of enquiry should be, we can work as a team to question witnesses and ensure that all the required evidence is gathered. Scrutiny is impartial and the scrutiny process should be free from political point scoring and not used to further party political objectives.

#### **4. Engage**

Involving residents helps scrutiny access a wider range of ideas and knowledge, listen to a broader range of voices and better understand the opinions of residents and service users. Engagement helps ensure that recommendations result in residents' wants and needs being more effectively met.

#### **5. Make SMART evidence-based recommendations**

We make recommendations that are based on solid, triangulated evidence – where a variety of sources of evidence point to a change in practice that will positively alter outcomes. We recognise that recommendations are more powerful if they are:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

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