

Committee	Date	Classification	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Overview and Scrutiny	9th September 2008	Unrestricted		
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive Originating Officer(s): Afazul Hoque, Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager		Title: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2008/09 Ward(s) affected: All		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for municipal year 2008/09

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposed work programme.
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Scrutiny and Equalities after consultation with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the work programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper

N/A

Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection

Afazul Hoque
020 7364 4636

3 Background

- 3.1 For the last two years, the OSC has agreed and largely delivered on an annual work programme. This has helped:
- Improve the link between scrutiny's work and the Council's improvement agenda
 - ensure scrutiny contributed to achieving outcomes that benefit the community
 - improve the co-ordination, management and continuity of work both at OSC and its reviews and investigations.
- 3.2 This strength of scrutiny has been recognised by the Audit Commission in the Council's Corporate Assessment. The inspectors assessed that the scrutiny function in Tower Hamlets is 'effective and has made a positive impact on local residents. Scrutiny is systematic and well-run and has an impact on performance especially through reviews'¹. This judgement validates how scrutiny has grown and flourished locally and also should give us a confidence to build and develop upon this in this year's and future years' work programmes.
- 3.3 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has proposed extending the scrutiny powers in a number of ways. This involves further responsibility to scrutinise partner agencies through scrutiny of Local Area Agreements. The Act also enables all councillors to refer matters relating to any function of the authority and affecting the Councillor's ward or constituents to Overview and Scrutiny through the 'Councillor Call for Action'. We are currently awaiting guidance from government as to how these powers will work before introducing a pilot project to explore the new proposed powers. The Act therefore further legitimises community leaders' mandate to ensure services meet the needs of local residents and continue to improve.
- 3.4 In the municipal year 2007/08 OSC completed the work programme agreed on 31st July 2007. This included the following reviews/ challenge sessions:

Reviews

- Licensing of Strip Clubs
- Tobacco Cessation
- Use of Consultants
- Young People's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics
- Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- Evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Challenge Sessions

- Determination of Major Planning Applications
- Evaluation of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)
- Re-visiting Youth Services Scrutiny Review
- Re-visiting Access to GP / Dentistry Services Scrutiny Review
- Use of Translation Services

- 3.2 Building on last year's proposals to ensure continuity, but also to reflect the new members' input, the Work Programme for 2008/9 is now being updated to include issues which have arisen throughout the year and also consider any items remaining from the preceding year. The new draft programme is attached and includes analysis

¹ LBTH Corporate Assessment Report – July 2008, Audit Commission

required to develop a coherent programme for the in-depth review aspects of the Committee's work. Some further work will be undertaken in-year to strengthen this.

- 3.3 As both an evaluation of last year and preparation for the coming year a members' session was facilitated by the Council's Learning & Development Team in May. Members of OSC and the Health Scrutiny Panel felt generally positive about the work of the Committee and reviews undertaken last year. However they were keen to improve public engagement and awareness of the scrutiny process in particular through arranging review working group meetings outside the Town Hall. In addition, they wanted to see further engagement and involvement of all Members to ensure that scrutiny is truly a Member led process. Utilising the skills of co-opted Members and expert advisors better was also highlighted particularly during in-depth investigations. These issues have been addressed in the development of this year's programme including a commitment to hold at least 10 meetings outside the Town Hall, co-opt six local residents on to scrutiny working groups and engage more non-executive councilors in the scrutiny process.
- 3.4 The Community Plan refresh and the establishment of the new Scrutiny Lead Portfolios also provides further challenges to undertake more strategic and cross cutting work. The new portfolios include the five new themes in the Community Plan plus an additional Lead for Excellent Public Services focusing on improving public services to make sure they represent good value for money and meet local needs. In addition, this Scrutiny Lead portfolio has a champion role to lead the Committee's work on performance monitoring.

4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 A draft 2008/09 "Forward Plan" for OSC is attached at Appendix 1. This is based on the schedule of reports and issues considered by OSC in 2007/08. Amongst the issues the Committee will consider are:
- Regular monitoring reports such as the Tower Hamlets Index Six-monthly Strategic Plan monitoring report;
 - Budget and policy framework items such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and Revenue Budget preparation
- 4.2 Call-ins and pre-decision scrutiny are dependent on Cabinet decisions and reports and these need to be programmed in when they arise. OSC also considers the reports arising from its investigations and reviews before they are passed through to Cabinet and again, these will be added when they arise. Twice a year the Committee will also monitor the recommendations arising from scrutiny reviews through their recommendation tracking report.
- 4.3 Since last year the Committee introduced regular Scrutiny Spotlight sessions for all the Cabinet Members which was highlighted as an excellent way of holding the Cabinet to account in the evaluation session. The relevant Cabinet Member and directors attended to present the key performance challenges facing the Council, focusing on issues arising from the TH Index. This gave OSC members the opportunity to discuss issues with them. The new Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has indicated a desire that these should continue and a Scrutiny Spotlight will be held at every meeting. This would assist in meeting CPA criteria by demonstrating that OSC is holding the Executive to account.

5 Reviews and Challenge Sessions

- 5.1 Appendix 2 outlines the investigations, reviews and challenge sessions that Overview and Scrutiny could undertake in 2008/09. As last year, the issues will focus on the Council's improvement agenda and contribute to achieving outcomes that benefit the community. In addition, the review topics would add to the Council's value for money agenda and the community leadership role of non-executive councillors. The role of Scrutiny Leads is also to monitor and suggest areas for improvements in work related to their Community Plan theme.
- 5.2 In drawing up the work programme we have undertaken an analysis of key documents to identify potential scrutiny issues. We have also considered issues raised through Scrutiny's own work in 2007/08. Discussions have taken place between Scrutiny Leads and relevant directorates to explore some of the issues and to seek recommendations for additional topics around challenges faced by services and where Overview and Scrutiny can add value to existing work. The outcome of these discussions and analysis is reflected in the proposed programme.
- 5.3 Against each item on the draft Work Plan, objectives and areas for analysis are indicated and include:
- Methodology – the approach used for the scrutiny investigation
 - Performance and Improvement - the links to performance improvement issues and Value For Money (VFM)
 - Planned Work – work either currently underway or scheduled, which the scrutiny review may feed into.
 - OSC Criteria – how the topic and Members' contribution could improve services
- 5.4 Scrutiny topics are prioritised against defined criteria to ensure that the work:
- would assist in tackling an area of poor or challenging performance (bottom quartile or equivalent) that has priority within the Strategic Plan
 - would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan
 - would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable
 - relates to a planned service inspection and member input would be valuable in providing a robustness test before inspection (or submission of self-assessment)
 - would help address a gap between community perception or concern and objective performance by utilising the members' leadership role
 - would contribute particularly toward improving VFM
- 5.5 Research into effective scrutiny has highlighted the importance of members' commitment and enthusiasm to undertaking their work. They need to believe that their work will impact positively upon their constituents' lives and help solve the problems presented at their surgeries and other community forums. The revised draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 2 applies the objective criteria outlined above but also reflects the members' consideration of their respective OSC work areas.
- 5.6 The work will follow one of four different approaches, as follows:

- **Scrutiny Challenge Sessions**
These are one-off sessions chaired by Scrutiny Leads which explore issues in a question and answer format. To date these have proved useful for improving members' understanding of new policies or guidelines or as part of the preparation for an inspection or report. There is potential for Challenge Sessions to be used to inform policy development and future service improvement work more widely.
- **Mini-reviews**
These examine a topic over perhaps two or three meetings which allow members to consider different perspectives in greater depth, for example the work on hostels strategy undertaken in 2006/07 included various visits to hostels and session with service providers.
- **Reviews**
These are more extensive pieces of work spanning several months. They enable more in-depth research to be undertaken, visits to see practice elsewhere, participation of external experts, etc.
- **Developing the Scrutiny Lead champion role**
In addition to the more formal settings above, it is important for the Scrutiny Leads to develop expertise in championing issues within the work of OSC and with fellow frontline councillors. This would be particularly useful for topics where it is more challenging to engage councillors, such as VFM/ efficiency. Potentially each Scrutiny Lead would undertake this role within their portfolio. It is probably better decided on a topic base rather than a matter of course.

- 5.7 It is envisaged that over the next year there will be up to six reviews and two challenge sessions with others added throughout the year, subject to resources. This represents a manageable work programme which allows all the OSC portfolio holders to be involved as well as ensuring there is joint working. It is worth stressing that there is some flexibility built into the programme. This ensures capacity if the regular monitoring at OSC indicates a need to either remove or add items.
- 5.8 In all cases, once the issues are agreed, the scope of the work and timing will be developed in close consultation with the relevant directorates and services. This will also ensure that the investigations are focused and can deliver on their objectives. Once agreed, it will be circulated to CMT and Cabinet for information. A review will be undertaken of the work programme at six month stage which will also include issues for next year's review. This will be drawn from the Committee's performance monitoring role in the first six month as well as the improvement plan arising from the Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review.
- 5.10 The merging of the scrutiny and equalities function has also provided an opportunity to address issues of inequalities more precisely through understanding how Members' community leadership role relates to scrutiny. All scrutiny reviews will consider the equalities and community cohesion implications to contribute to the development of One Tower Hamlets.

6 Health Scrutiny Panel

- 6.1 Following an extensive Induction process this year which included a number of visits to all the local health trusts and a meeting at the Town Hall the Health Scrutiny Panel has agreed a work programme for 2008/09 and 2009/10. This builds on the four year work programme agreed in 2006/07 with the key theme of reducing health inequalities. Following the previous reviews on access to GP / Dentistry Services and Tobacco Cessation the Panel has agreed to undertake a review on End of Life Care. The work programme also includes service visits, briefings on key issues, consultation on reviews or changes to services as well participation in the Annual Health Check process which is an assessment of local health trusts by the Healthcare Commission. Furthermore the Panel will hold Scrutiny Spotlight Sessions for Health and develop thematic meetings to engage all three local trusts in the work of the Panel. The development of the Local Involvement Network also provides further opportunity to engage local residents in the work of the Panel.

7 Communication and Profile of Scrutiny

- 7.1 To maintain good communication about Overview and Scrutiny's work, it is proposed to circulate regular updates on the Work Programme considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet. This is provisionally scheduled for November and April 2008. The update will cover all aspects of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme including call-ins, performance monitoring and Budget and Policy Framework items. A short summary of the OSC and Health Scrutiny Panel meetings will also be placed in the Members Bulletin.
- 7.2 The Council will be hosting a Conference on Scrutiny of Local Strategic Partnership in November 2008. Funded by Capital Ambition this is the last of a series of scrutiny related events across London and will give us the opportunity to raise the profile of the borough and in particular scrutiny function in Tower Hamlets. The event will be an opportunity to also highlight the excellent partnership arrangements in Tower Hamlets and how they are held accountable by local elected members.
- 7.3 All Scrutiny Reviews will be publicised through East End Life and seek to engage and involve local residents in the process. In addition, scrutiny meetings will be held outside the Town Hall where appropriate to improve access for local residents.
- 7.4 As a number of the reviews cut across the work of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, discussions have taken place around presenting the review reports to the relevant Community Plan Delivery Groups. Over the last year this proved useful when the Living Well and Learning Achievement CPAGs were consulted prior to the beginning of the reviews on Choice Based Lettings Scheme and Young People's participation in Sports Leading up to the Olympics.

8 Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

- 8.1 The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on the Council to deliver a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function. The Committee's work programme is a contributory element towards discharging that responsibility. There are no other immediate legal implications.

9 Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 9.1 This report details the proposed work programme of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. All costs involved in achieving this work programme will need to be met from within existing budgetary provisions.

10 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 10.1 Reducing poverty is central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is reflected in the review on child poverty.

11 Equal Opportunity Implications

- 11.1 Equal opportunities are central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is reflected in the monitoring the Council's progress in its Diversity and Equality Action Plan twice a year. Furthermore all scrutiny reviews will give specific consideration to equalities and community cohesion issues.

12 Risk Management

- 12.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2008/09

Forward Plan

10 th June 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People Plan (BPF) • Tower Hamlets Community Plan (BPF) • Councils Strategic Plan 2006 to 2011 (BPF) • Diversity and Equality Action Plan – End of Year Monitoring Report (PM) • Terms of reference and Protocol (OSMM) • Membership / Appointment of Scrutiny Leads (OSMM)
1 st July 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Complaints Report (PM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Employment and Skills
29 July 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Outlook (BPF) • Tower Hamlets Index (PM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Finance and Resources
9 Sep 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (BPF) • Tower Hamlets Index (PM) • OSC Work Programme (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Cleaner, Safer, Greener
7 Oct 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members Enquiries (PM) • OSC Recommendation Tracking Report Update (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Health and Well being
4 Nov 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Report - six month report (PM) • OSC Work Programme (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Deputy Leader of the Council
2 Dec 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan and Corporate Revenue Monitoring report 2008-09 (PM) • OSC Work Programme – Six Month Review (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships
13 Jan 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Equality Action Plan- six month report (PM) • OSC Work Programme (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Children's Services
10 Feb 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (BPF) • Budget Requirement and Council Tax (BPF) • Tower Hamlets Index (PM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Culture
10 Mar 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework Core Strategy (BPF) • Tower Hamlets Index (PM) • OSC Work Programme (OSMM) • OSC Recommendation Tracking Report Update (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Development and Housing
7 Apr 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report (OSMM) • Scrutiny Spotlight – Leader of the Council
5 May 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be confirmed

BPF - Budget and Policy Framework

PM - Performance Management

OSMM - Overview and Scrutiny Monitoring and Management

NB

Call-ins will be added where accepted

Pre-decision questions are a standing item on the agenda

The Committee will also consider reports arising from the investigations and reviews conducted by the Scrutiny Leads

May 2008 - Apr 2009

One Tower Hamlets (Lead: Cllr Ann Jackson)

Issue	Child Poverty	Method	Review
Lead officer	Natalie Parish		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a baseline profile of child poverty in Tower Hamlets • Contribute to the development of future work on reducing child poverty including development of strategy. • Develop proposals to address particular local needs. 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of key targets in Local Area Agreements relate to reducing unemployment and benefit claimants which are indicators of poverty • Specific target in LAA to reduce child poverty 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Poverty Commission report outlined London child poverty rates are higher than elsewhere in the country • Some of the indicators for poverty highlighted in the report illustrates that Tower Hamlets could have highest levels of child poverty in London and the country 		
Other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires focus to avoid potentially substantial and wide ranging review • Can contribute to the application for Beacon Status on Child Poverty 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would assist in addressing an area of national (regional) policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this 		

Issue	Community Engagement in the Democratic Process	Method	Challenge Session/ scrutiny event
Lead officer	Michael Keating / John Williams		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness, understanding and access to the democratic process and the role of local councillors. • Develop proposals to increase participation in the democratic process. 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key priority in the Strategic Plan to improve democratic engagement. • Improve customer perception of the Council 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' suggestion 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan 		

Safe and Supportive Community (Lead: Cllr Shiria Khatun)

Issue	Alcohol Misuse amongst Young People ('Smashed')	Method	Review
Lead Officer	Andy Bamber / Gilly Cottew		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a consistent approach to education and preventative initiatives • Focus on the work carried out by the Council and its partners in tackling underage drinking; • Contribute to the development of effective treatment for young people • Develop understanding and work on impact of alcohol misuse 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High number of alcohol related crime • Crime remains the main area of concern for local people in the 2007/8 Residents' Survey 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' suggestion • National and local area of concern particularly following the death of young person relating to alcohol 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this 		

Prosperous Community (Lead: Cllr Abdul Aziz Sardar)

Issue	Parental Involvement in Secondary Education	Method	Review
Lead officer	Helen Jenner / Sarah Gale		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposals to increase parental involvement in secondary education • Develop understanding of parental attitude towards education • Fulfilment of community leadership role in an area of community concern • Contribute to development of strategy to increase involvement of BME parents 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of education indicators relate to improving education attainment of secondary school pupils • A key LAA target is to improve school attendance 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposals to reduce number of 16-18 who fall in the NEET category 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria:		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in tackling an area of poor or challenging performance (bottom quartile or equivalent) that has priority within the Strategic Plan Increase Member understanding of key challenges and responses
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A Great Place to Live (Lead: Cllr Waiseul Islam)

Issue	Affordable Home Ownership	Method	Review
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Evans / Jackie Odunoye 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proposals to increase local access to affordable home ownership Develop proposals to assist alleviate pressures of overcrowding Assist residents on low income to become homeowners Consider how rent and service charge calculations are made with a view to making them more affordable Consider the role of developers in addressing the needs of the borough 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key LAA target is to increase percentage of affordable homes A number of other targets relate to providing affordable housing and strong neighbourhoods 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National credit crunch impact High levels of overcrowding in the borough Addressing concerns about affordability of larger size family units High number of developments taking place in the borough which could be used to maximise benefits for local residents. 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where member input and understanding would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable would help address a gap between community perception or concern 		

Excellent Public Services (Lead: Cllr Bill Turner)

Issue	Child Protection - Early Intervention	Method	Review
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kamini Rambellas / Paul McGee 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether current services provide value for money. Undertake mapping exercise to develop understanding on the level of needs 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in service and develop proposals to address this Develop proposals to access hard to reach communities
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in referrals by 40% over the last twelve months In 2007/08 300% more initial assessments compared to 2006/07
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members' suggestion Tower Hamlets has one of the fastest growing children population in Europe Link to 'Every Child Matters'
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable would help address a gap between community perception or concern

Issue	Tower Hamlets Index – Sixth month monitoring	Method	Challenge Session
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alan Steward / Lucy Sutton 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide in-depth critical friend challenge to performance on a number of indicators Develop proposals to improve performance Identify areas of particular concerns where performance is poor Provide a link between performance and budget 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key performance monitoring role for committee to look in depth at a number of indicators 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the role of this portfolio Develop capacity of OSC to challenge and examine in detail performance information 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would assist in tackling an area of poor or challenging performance that has priority within the strategic plan Would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan would help address a gap between community perception or concern and objective performance by utilising the members' leadership role 		

Healthy Community (Lead: Cllr Stephanie Eaton)

Issue	End of Life Care Services	Method	Review
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alison Roberts, Palliative Care Service Improvement Lead - PCT 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing assumptions behind the End of Life Care Services Improvement Programme Evaluate equity of access to end of Life Care Services for BME groups / other equalities groups Improve the availability of information on services for patients, carers and professionals Assessing effectiveness of integration between health and social care services at end of life Effectiveness of transition of services for young people as they become adults Local case study for evaluating implications of Darzi and Next Stages Review 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased levels of end of life care services being provided within the community Fewer unplanned admissions and deaths in Hospital Improved integration between End Of Life services provided by Health and Social Care Services 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members' suggestion Unplanned admissions are a significant cost to the NHS Services are accessed unequally and there are significant cultural differences in attitudes to death and dying that Services need to respond to 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in addressing an area of local policy development and where member input would be valuable would help address a gap between community perception or concern 		