

Scrutiny & Overview Committee Supplementary Agenda



6. Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 (Pages 3 - 24)

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to review the draft version of the Scrutiny Annual Report, with a view to making suggestions or amendments to be incorporated in the final version to be submitted to Council.

7. Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22 (Pages 25 - 38)

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to:-

1. Agree the initial Annual Scrutiny Work Programme,
2. Review and agree the process that will be used to manage the work programme as the year progresses.

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Agenda Item 6

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 15 June 2021
SUBJECT:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Scrutiny
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons – Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	It is a requirement set out in part 4E: Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to submit an annual report on the work of itself and its sub-committees to the first full meeting of the Council of the new year.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to review the draft version of the Scrutiny Annual Report, with a view to making suggestions or amendments to be incorporated in the final version to be submitted to Council.

1. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

- 1.1. The Council's Constitution required the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to make an annual report to Council summarising its work over the previous year.
- 1.2. A draft version of the Scrutiny Annual Report is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee to review. The Committee is asked for its suggestions or amendments, which will be included in the final version of the report, which will be presented to the Council meeting on 5 July 2021.

CONTACT OFFICER: Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer - Scrutiny

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1: Draft Scrutiny Annual Report

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SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Introduction

Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee and Health & Social Care Sub-Committee

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons

Introduction to be added after Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 15 June 2021.

Chair of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Councillor Robert Ward

Introduction to be added after Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 15 June 2021.

Chair of the Streets, Environment & Housing Sub-Committee

Councillor Leila Ben Hassel

Introduction to be added after Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 15 June 2021.

Scrutiny and Overview Committee

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee directs the performance of all overview and scrutiny functions at the Council, including the development of procedures governing the operation of both the Committee and its Sub-Committees. It also has responsibility for scrutinising crime and disorder matters and flood risk management within the borough. The Committee will consider any call-in of Cabinet decisions other than those relating to education matters, which are heard by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Cllr Sean
Fitzsimons
(C)**



**Cllr Robert
Ward (VC)**



**Cllr Leila
Ben Hassel
(DC)**



**Cllr Jeet
Bains**
Until Nov 20



**Cllr Jerry
Fitzpatrick**



**Cllr Oni
Oviri**
From Nov 20



**Cllr Joy
Prince**

Scrutiny & Overview Committee – Work Programme 2020-21

Throughout 2020-21 the work of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee has primarily been focussed on helping the Council respond to its financial challenges. This has included reviewing the action plan prepared in response to the Report in the Public Interest issued by the Council's external auditor, reviewing the action plan from the review of the Council's companies and reviewing in detail the budget proposals for 2021-22.

Another area of work that has dominated the Committee's work plan during the year has been responding to call-in requests. In total five separate call-in requests were received, three of which are outlined in further detail below. The other two call-ins consider by the Committee concerned decisions taken on a Parking Charges Review – January 2021 and the closure of the Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School.

At its meeting on 30 March, the Committee was presented with the findings from the Scrutiny Improvement Review conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. The review was initially commissioned by the Committee in March 2020 to accompany the wider review, but had been delayed to ensure that full account could be taken of the issues raised by Report in the Public Interest. Further information on the review is also provided below.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who would like more information, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting

can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Scrutiny & Overview Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

Call-In: Key Decisions set out in Cabinet Reports 'Responding to the Local Government Funding Challenge' and 'July Financial Review' (25 August 2020)

In light of concerns about the size of the financial challenge facing the Council, it was agreed by the Committee that the key decisions set out in two separate Cabinet reports on the Council's finances would be called-in to allow for further scrutiny. The meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to review these decisions was held on 25 August 2020.

At the meeting the Committee questioned the advice of the Council's Section 151 Officer regarding the Council's financial challenges, with assurance unable to be given on the delivery of the 2020-21 budget. The Committee was particularly interested to find out the reasons why this advice had changed since the Cabinet meeting in July. It was accepted that the uncertainty created by the covid-19 pandemic was having a significant impact on the Council's budget, which meant it was increasingly likely a Section 114 notice would need to be issued. The Committee welcomed the frank assessment of the Council's financial situation given by the Section 151 Officer and agreed that greater financial scrutiny was needed going forward to ensure greater fiscal responsibility was being taken across the Council.

The Committee concluded that the funding gap would not be met by in-year savings and use of balances, and would only be met through the provision of additional Government support, in conjunction with the robust savings programme being developed.

Report in the Public Interest - Action Plan (8 December 2020)

Following the publication of the Report in the Public Interest (RIPI) by the Council's external auditor, which highlighted significant issues relating to the Council's finance and governance processes, an action plan was developed to address these findings. The Committee had the opportunity to review this action plan at its meeting on 8 December 2021.

In reviewing the action plan the Committee made 25 recommendations relating to the actions contained in the report, including requests for additional training for Members on various aspects of the Council's budget and the approach to risk. The Committee also recognised that greater clarity was needed to define the role of both Scrutiny and Audit.

Overall the Committee concluded that the action plan was a robust piece of work, especially when considering the time frame available for its preparation. Although the ambition displayed in the action plan was commendable, it was recommended that a system of prioritisation be used to ensure the plan could be delivered within the capacity restraints of the Council.

Strategic Review of Companies – Action Plan (21 December 2020)

In addition to the action plan for the RIPI, the Committee also had the opportunity to review an action plan created to address issues raised by a Strategic Review of the Council's Companies undertaken by PwC.

From this review, the Committee concluded that a lack of governance and appropriate management systems was a reoccurring theme in both the Strategic Review and the RIPI. In total the Committee made 24 recommendations on action plan, most notably that achieving value for money should be the guiding principle in any future relationship with the Council's companies.

On a similar theme the Committee welcomed the confirmation that a 'fire sale' of Council assets to raise funds was not planned. The Committee recommended that any future disposal of assets needed to be informed by a detailed assessment of the asset to ensure best value for money was obtained.

Call-In: Emission Based Parking Charges (7 January 2021)

At its meeting on 7 January 2021 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reviewed a call-in request made on a key decision to introduce emission based parking charges.

Although the Committee in principle supported the introduction of emission-based parking charges, there was significant concern about the potential impact it would have upon the local economy in district centres across the borough. As it was concluded there was not enough evidence to determine whether there was sufficient mitigation available to offset the introduction of the new charges, the Committee concluded that it would refer the decision to the Cabinet for reconsideration. The ground for making this referral asked that further consideration be given to retaining the free parking bays, which would have been lost under the original decision.

When the decision was reconsidered by the Cabinet, it was agreed that the existing free parking bays would be retained in district centres for the foreseeable future.

Budget 2021-22 (16 February 2021)

In a change to the usual approach to budget scrutiny, prior to the Committee meeting on 16 February 2021, the three Scrutiny Sub-Committees met to review the budget proposals for the areas covered under their respective remits. The conclusions from these meetings were then fed into the discussion of the Committee on 16 February.

From the reassurance provided by the Leader, Cabinet Members and officers at the meeting, the Committee was hopeful that robust financial control systems would be put in place to help with the delivery of 2021-22 budget. However, given that similar assurance had been given in previous years, which in hindsight had been optimistic at best, there remained serious concerns that could only be allayed through the actual delivery of the budget.

In particular, there was concern about the deliverability of the Adults and Children's Social Care budgets, especially as the savings targeted a reduction in the number

adults and children in the care system. To ensure there was not an adverse impact upon care receivers, it was agreed that both the budget and performance of these services would be regularly monitored by their respective Scrutiny Sub-Committees in the year ahead.

The Committee recognised that there may be unintended consequences arising as a result of any savings and agreed that further thought needed to be given on how this would be picked up through the corporate monitoring process. It was also agreed that the potential impact upon the workload of staff would need to be closely monitored corporately.

Call-In: Crystal Palace & South Norwood Low Traffic Neighbourhood (23 March 2021)

At its meeting on 23 March 2021 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reviewed a call-in request that had been submitted on the key decision to implement an experimental Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme in Crystal Palace and South Norwood. To inform their consideration of this item, the Committee received representations from the London Borough of Bromley and local community groups both for and against the scheme.

At the meeting the Committee questioned the Cabinet Member and officers extensively on the reasons for introducing the scheme, with it queried whether there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate the environmental benefits of low traffic neighbourhood schemes. However, the Committee acknowledged that a benefit of using an experimental scheme was it would allow the Council to gather data to indicate whether it had been effective or not.

Having considered the representations made at the meeting, along with the answers provided to their question, the Committee concluded that it had a number of concerns about the delivery of the experimental scheme that needed further consideration before it commenced. As such, it was agreed that the decision would be referred to Cabinet for reconsideration to address concerns relating to areas such as the base evidence to be used, the success criteria for the scheme, mitigation available in the event of a negative impact on surrounding areas and consultation and engagement with stakeholders. This referral is due to be considered by Cabinet in June 2021.

Scrutiny Improvement Review (30 March 2021)

At its meeting on 30 March 2021 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee was presented with a report from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGs) outlining the findings from their review of scrutiny in Croydon. The review had initially been commissioned by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee in March 2020 and had been due to complete in the autumn of 2020. However, when the RIPI was published by the Council's external auditor in October 2020, completion of the review was delayed to ensure that account could be taken of the concerns raised about scrutiny in the RIPI and other reviews conducted as a result of the RIPI.

When considering the report the Committee commended its quality and agreed that the findings had highlighted their own areas of concern, with issues such as access to information being longstanding concerns for scrutiny members. The report set out thirteen recommended areas for improvement, which the Committee accepted and agreed would be used as a basis for an improvement programme going forward. The initial priorities for the improvement programme were identified as ensuring scrutiny could play an immediate role in the financial recovery of the Council, ensuring scrutiny was provided with the right information to undertake its role successfully and ensuring there was a proper process in place to coordinate the scrutiny work programme.

It was confirmed that CFGS would continue to work with the Council on the delivery of the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Improvement Review. The Committee welcomed the continued support CFGS, along with confirmation that the support would be provided without cost to the Council. It was agreed that a follow-up report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 15 June 2021 to provide more information on the delivery of the recommendations.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises key issues affecting children and young people in the borough as well as the services provided by the Council and its partners. It has the power to scrutinise the functions of the Council as a Local Education Authority and examine the Dedicated Schools Grant on a yearly basis.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

Membership



**Cllr
Robert
Ward (C)**



**Cllr Sean
Fitzsimons
(VC)**



**Cllr Jamie
Audsley**



**Cllr Sue
Bennett**



**Cllr Jerry
Fitzpatrick**



**Cllr
Bernadette
Khan**



**Cllr Helen
Pollard**



**Cllr
Louisa
Woodley**

**Josephine
Copeland**
Teacher
Rep

**Elaine
Jones**
Catholic
Diocesan
Rep

**Leo
Morrell**
Diocesan
Rep

**Paul
O'Donnell**
Parent
Governor
Rep

Children & Young People Sub-Committee Work Programme 2020-21

The 2020-21 work programme of the Sub-Committee was primarily focussed on the Children's improvement journey following the re-inspection of the service by Ofsted in February 2020. As a result of the covid-19 pandemic, the work programme had to be amended to ensure that children and young people were safeguarded throughout the unprecedented times facing the borough and country.

Focus in the latter part of the municipal year turned to the Children's budget, due to the Council's financial position, with the impact of savings upon the service and recovery proposals scrutinised in detail. Through the work of the Sub-Committee, recommendations were made on a range of items that were critical to the lives of young people in Croydon.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Children & Young People Sub-Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service

At its meeting on 23 June 2020 a report was received from voluntary services as well as the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) on the services they provided and changes made to delivery as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee learnt that in the voluntary sector, face to face contact had been suspended during lockdown, although following reconfiguration, many aspects of these services had been able to continue using online means of access. Both staff and young people had adapted well to this new approach, which meant that resources could be appropriately distributed. As a result of these changes, there had been an increased maintenance of contact with parents, young people and their guardians. SLaM had continued to maintain face to face interactions where necessary for high risk, crisis and inpatient services.

The dedication and commitment of the staff providing these services during pandemic was commended. It was also recognised that the use of technology to find innovative way increase accessibility to services was a benefit that had arisen from the pandemic.

Childrens Improvement Plan Update

The Sub-Committee was presented with the revised Children's Improvement Plan following the Ofsted standard ILACS inspection of Early Help and Children's Social Care where the service had been given a judgement of 'Good'. The improvement made since the last inspection in 2017 was noted and the hard work and dedication of the leadership and staff was commended.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it must continue to hold the executive to account, to maintain line of sight over service delivery and provide robust challenge whenever necessary to ensure that high levels of performance continued to be maintained.

Children's Services Response to Covid 19

Following lockdown in March 2020, the Sub-Committee had its first opportunity to receive detailed information on the Council's response and support for vulnerable children.

The Sub-Committee commended the initiative, innovative and collaborative response by children's services, schools, community and voluntary groups in supporting the young people and families in the Borough.

Members and officers were united in their concern on the potential disproportionate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable sections of the community. The Sub-Committee was clear that officers needed to have explored in detail how to ensure appropriate support would be provided to children who had experienced neglect in advance of school reopening in September 2020.

Children's Social Care and Education Dashboards

Throughout the municipal year, the Sub-Committee received the performance dashboards it had requested following the revision of the Children's Improvement Plan 2021. This allowed the Sub-Committee to have continued oversight of performance of the service and provided the ability to spot any emerging trends for further investigation.

The data provided in these dashboards continued to be refined over the year, in response to concerns that there was a lack of consistency in the way that information was provided. It was agreed that the programme director would design the dashboard to be more streamlined, in order to minimise the level of resources required to produce similar dashboards for different purposes.

From the outset the Chair of the Sub-Committee had requested a set of diagnostic indicators be presented at each meeting to enable Members to identify areas for further scrutiny which would shape future work programming.

It was also agreed that it was important to have access to benchmarking tools such as LG inform to enable comparison and analysis of performance data in local regional and national context.

Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report

At its meeting of 3 November 2020 the Sub-Committee received the annual report from the Safeguarding Children's Board, with the Chairs of the Board in attendance as well as representatives from the partnership. However there was disappointment that there was no representation from the Police, who made up one third of the partnership.

The Sub-Committee raised concern about the level of antenatal and health visits in the borough, which were significantly lower than the rest of London, and had been an area of concern for a number of years. Members were not satisfied that rapid action was being taken to address the issues involved and it was agreed that a report specifically focussed on this issue would be brought before the Sub-Committee to discuss the points raised, with reassurance sought that action was being taken to make radical improvements to the service.

The Sub-Committee challenged the effectiveness of the partnership, in particular in fulfilling its function to support neglected children, as it was evidenced that their targets had only been partially met. There was also reference made to the lack of evidence to demonstrate there had been adequate communication with and an understanding of the experience of children in disability groups. As a result, it was requested that further detail be provided on what actions were being taken to address these outcomes.

Blended Learning Overview

The Sub-Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise the blended learning process and were joined by a panel of school head teachers who were able to provide insight on how the process was being managed in individual schools and the different provision across the borough.

It was agreed that this item be brought to the Sub-Committee for further discussion following the meeting of 15 September 2020, where an update on the reopening of schools was provided. At that meeting there had been concerns raised on what the recovery curriculum would look like in different schools and the development of blended learning plans

Members were keen to learn about the different methods adopted by schools to ensure that learning continued to be delivered for children and young people despite the current climate.

The Sub-Committee was reassured by the innovative use of resources and technology, and by the dedication and tireless effort of staff working within schools as well as the education directorate to provide learning to pupils. The innovative use of technology was commended and the data on the level of engagement was positive and reassuring.

Challenges and barriers experienced by schools were reviewed and included to the provision of devices for virtual learning and strengthening parental skills, knowledge and ability to support their children's learning. The Sub-Committee identified the inequality of the attainment gap as a direct result of the pandemic as a key concern and recommended work to explore different ways of close the gap should be made a priority.

Service Impact and Response to Budget Reduction

As a result of the S114 notice and the Council's savings plans to balance its budget, it was decided that a report would be brought to each meeting on the budget for Children's Services from January 2021.

The Sub-Committee questioned whether the Council's spending would be reduced to a statutory minimum, but reassurance was given that the proposals do not require services to be reduced to this level. However, the proposals detailed what action would have to be taken in the event that the Council received a minimum statutory offer from Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government.

The Sub-Committee agreed it was essential that any savings proposals were not only based on service delivery, but that voices of services users continued to be central to provision.

Additional reassurance was sought on the preparation of detailed alternative plans in the event of more extensive cuts. Of particular concern was the potential impact a reduction in Early Help provision may have on schools. It was recommended that the Executive Leadership Team give careful consideration to the risks arising should approval not be given to the capitalisation directive.

There was also concern about the retention of core skills during any reconfiguration of services in light of the ongoing challenges. This was especially concerning given the historic difficulties experienced with recruitment and retention of good quality staff.

Education Budget

The Sub-Committee received the annual report on the Education Budget, which detailed an overall national schools funding increase for 2021/22 and 2022/23. There was also an increase to the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation but the High Needs Overspend remained an area of priority and was still being addressed.

The Sub-Committee had concern about the deficit created through the closure of two schools in the borough which would fall on the General Fund. Members were not reassured about the Council's ability to close the gap on the deficit and agreed to continue to maintain a watching brief on this issue.

Higher Education Journey of Croydon Residents

For the first time, the Sub-Committee received a detailed report with data that had been collected and confirmed by officers over a number of years on the higher education journey of Croydon residents as well as the whole of London.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the information provided in the report was beneficial due to the comparative data included as well as inequalities it highlighted. It was agreed that the report contained valuable information on achievements and educational choices of young people in the Borough which would be useful to draw out possible subjects for further scrutiny in future work programmes.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises the work of local healthcare organisations and social care services provided to adult residents of the borough. It also, in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities, investigates and respond to emerging health and social care issues and changes affecting more than one borough.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

Members of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee



**Cllr Sean
Fitzsimons(C)**



**Cllr Andy
Stranack
(VC) until
Nov 20**



**Cllr
Richard
Chatterjee
(VC) from
Nov 20**



**Cllr Pat
Clouder**



**Cllr Jerry
Fitzpatrick**



**Cllr Steve
Hollands
from Nov
20**



**Cllr
Andrew
Pelling**



**Cllr Scott
Roche
until Nov
20**



**Gordon
Kay
Healthwatch
Co-optee**

Health & Social Care Sub-Committee Work Programme

As would be expected in a year of global disruption caused by the covid-19 pandemic, the work of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee has primarily focussed on the response provided locally to the pandemic. In the first half of the year the Sub-Committee paid close attention to the initial emergency response to the pandemic. The focus has changed since the New Year, with scrutiny of the vaccination programme and the recovery of services taking precedence.

Given the budgetary pressure being experienced by the Council, the other main focus for the Sub-Committee was the budget for Adult Social Care services. With reports received at a number of meetings providing an update on the current budget position and the development of savings proposals for 2021-22. It has been agreed

that regular scrutiny of the Adult Social Care budget will continue to be a primary focus for the Sub-Committee in 2021-22, in order to ensure that the proposed budget remains on track for delivery.

Apart from scrutinising the response to covid-19 and the Council's budget challenges, the other main item scrutinised by the Sub-Committee was the opportunity to review the draft Autism Strategy before it was considered by the Cabinet.

What follows below is a short summary of these highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Health & Social Care Sub-Committee – Agendas and Minutes](#)

Covid-19: Pandemic Response & Vaccination Programme

Throughout the year the Sub-Committee has received updates at each of its meetings on the ongoing response in the borough to the covid-19 pandemic. During this time, the Sub-Committee continued to be highly impressed by the commitment of staff in the NHS, Social Care and Public Health who had continued to provide vital services, despite the often difficult circumstances and challenges created by the pandemic

Although it was recognised that services in Croydon had performed well during the pandemic, especially in regards to managing the spread of covid-19 in care settings, the Sub-Committee continued to raise concerns when these were identified. These included the lack of pace in expanding testing capacity in the borough, although it was recognised that this was outside the control of the Council. The Sub-Committee repeatedly emphasised the need for an increasing granularity of data on areas such as testing to help coordinate the pandemic response.

The Sub-Committee also had concerns about how the pandemic was impacting upon care packages and sought reassurance that measures were in place to safeguard individuals who accepted reduced care packages. Reassurance was given that people had only been contacted about the possibility of reducing care packages as a contingency measure and in actual fact only a small number of people had needed to reduce their care, with any reduction carefully managed with families.

The Sub-Committee agreed that it was important to learn lessons from the delivery of the pandemic response and has suggested that areas such as the shielding system and hospital discharges should be reviewed to identify possible improvements that can be used in the event of further waves of the pandemic.

Covid-19: Vaccination Programme

Following approval for the roll out of vaccinations to the general public in late 2020, the focus of the Sub-Committee turned to the local vaccination programme. In the early stages, it was clear that the success of the programme would be determined by

the availability of vaccine supplies. Thankfully the availability of the vaccines has improved as the programme has progressed.

A key concern of the Sub-Committee, that it continues to monitor, was vaccine hesitancy and engagement with harder to reach groups. The Sub-Committee was reassured that work was ongoing both locally and nationally to understand the reason for vaccine hesitancy. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would keep a watching brief on the vaccination programme to gain reassurance that the work to engage with hard to reach groups was having the desired impact.

The Sub-Committee commended the work to vaccinate care homes as a priority and agreed that the management of infection in that environment had been excellent.

Adult Social Care Budget

In light of the ongoing financial challenges facing the Council, the Sub-Committee had a number of updates provided throughout the year on the Adult Social Care budget. It was recognised that there was a number of big challenges in delivering a balanced budget for Adult Social Care, which was likely to have the biggest impact for those in receipt of care in the 18-65 age groups.

From its review of the budget setting process, the Sub-Committee welcomed the use of comparative data to design a realistic savings programme. However, given there was a history of not achieving budgets, its deliverability would need to be tested and monitored throughout the forthcoming year. As part of this, it was agreed that a deep dive on commissioning would be included in the work programme for 2021-22.

Although it was concluded the savings programme presented to the Sub-Committee seemed to address the budget deficit and identified further savings, it was also agreed that it was difficult to make any definitive judgement on the likelihood of it being delivered. If the budget was going to be delivered, it was essential that a robust system of ongoing monitoring was put in place to provide greater budgetary control. Monitoring was also essential to understand the impact on residents from the changes to prevent creating further issues in the future.

Autism Strategy

At its meeting on 9 March the Sub-Committee had the opportunity to review the draft Autism Strategy prior to its consideration by the Cabinet. To help inform the discussion on this item members of the Autism Partnership Board were invited to the meeting to share their own experiences of autism services in the borough.

From the discussion at the meeting, the Sub-Committee welcomed the broad commitment from both the Council and its partners to the Autism Partnership Board and the creation of the Autism Strategy. The Sub-Committee suggested that the Board should consider engaging with Healthwatch Croydon to inform its work going forward. It also supported the need to improve data collection around autism.

The Sub-Committee commended the work that had been undertaken to deliver the strategy and agreed that it would be useful to be updated on progress made with delivery at a future meeting.

Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2019/20

The Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a broad remit. It investigates services and issues relating to housing, public and private transport, Croydon's highways, waste management and environmental issues. In all its work, the Sub-Committee seeks to promote sustainability and to promote the health and wellbeing of Croydon's residents.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

Membership



**Cllr Leila
Ben
Hassel (C)**



**Cllr
Richard
Chatterjee
(VC) until
Nov 20**



**Cllr Jeet
Bains (VC)
appt Nov
20**



**Cllr Jamie
Audsley**



**Cllr Luke
Clancy**



**Cllr
Stephen
Mann**



**Cllr Vidhi
Mohan**



**Cllr
Caragh
Skipper**

Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee Work Programme 2019-20

The Sub-Committee identified key work streams on the Climate Commission, the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper and the Local Plan Review. As a result of the Council's financial position, the latter part of the municipal year concentrated on the budget for the Place Service, including the potential service impact of any savings and recovery proposals. The work of the Sub-Committee has resulted in a range of recommendations made on a range of important topics.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each

meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

Croydon Climate Crisis Commission

To aid the Sub-Committee in its consideration of this item, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and representatives from the Citizen's Assembly were invited to participate in the meeting. A key line of inquiry for the Sub-Committee was the pace of progressing the Commission, which was felt to be lacking since declaration of the emergency took place in 2019. There was an acknowledgement that there had been a lack of pace due to a number of different factors, not least the covid-19 pandemic which had severely impacted the services both locally and nationally.

It was agreed that as the climate crisis was such important issue, that political leadership should be shared by all Cabinet Members. The importance of stakeholders, community groups and residents in delivering the intended outcome of the being Carbon Neutral by 2030 could not be underestimated. The Sub-Committee welcomed confirmation that the Council remained committed to engagement with both the public and stakeholders despite difficulties presented by the covid-19 pandemic and steps were being taken to finalise a robust engagement plan informed by activities of the Commission.

Alongside the engagement and action plans, there were various activities taking place to maximise the use of local expertise, with ideas welcomed on how best to harness the potential of local action groups to contribute towards delivering work streams and projects as a way of counteracting financial pressures and alleviating the lack of resources.

Although there was criticism of the pace of activity, it was acknowledged that there has been a number of positive outcomes experienced as a direct result of the pandemic such as the opportunity to introduce a Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme and further proposed changes to the transport network to support pedestrians and cyclists. It was agreed that a collective case needed to be made to both the Mayor of London and Central Government for increased investment in the green economy and jobs.

'Planning for the Future' White Paper

The Sub-Committee received a report detailing the key elements of the White Paper published by the Government on 6 August 2020. The Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to discuss the implications of this paper upon the planning system in the borough, with the feedback given being used to inform the Council's response to the consultation.

One concern arising was the possibility that some of the ideas set out in the White Paper may not work as well in London boroughs as they may in other parts of the country. As such, the Sub-Committee agreed that it was important to present the case for Croydon and London, in order to allow consideration to be given to the

implications of the new planning arrangement in the absence of London specific details in the proposals.

The challenge of producing, streamlining and implementing design codes to cover the whole borough was highlighted, in particular their restrictive nature and the lack of fluidity that it may present. The Sub-Committee welcomed the move to produce detailed guidance, as it would help ensure developers met good practice and adhered to strict guidelines.

The Sub-Committee also welcomed the proposed protection offered for parks and open spaces due to the importance of these spaces within local infrastructure, and to the community wellbeing of the borough and its residents. It was agreed that Councillors should be lobbying for greater protection of nature and natural spaces across the borough and country.

Staff Changes, Service Impact and Response to Budget Reductions

The meeting of 2 February 2021 was attended by a large proportion of the Cabinet due to the Place Budget cutting across several portfolios.

The Place department was commended for having met its budget in recent years. In order to deliver targeted savings proposals going forward, it would require tighter budgetary control, frequent reviews of team structures and routine reviews of risk to ensure that any investment was having the intended impact. Although the proposals would have some impact upon staff, the focus would be on maximising income from external clients.

The Sub-Committee discussed its concerns about the deliverability of the savings proposed, which mainly arose from a lack of confidence on both an individual and organisational level due to previous experience which indicated there was cultural resistance to change. Reassurance was given that the track record of the Place department demonstrated that previous savings had been delivered and would continue to build on this reputation, with confidence placed in senior staff to deliver the savings required.

The Sub-Committee was reassured by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration that the Libraries consultation would be brought before scrutiny for discussion and that consideration would be given to the view of residents. Further reassurance was given that any ideas brought forward on community ownership or other models of operation that would be cost effective and/or cost neutral to the Council would be given careful consideration and supported where appropriate.

The Sub-Committee raised concern that some services such as the Highways provided a reactive rather than preventative service, which officers acknowledged, advising that the service was being reviewed with different operating models being assessed for the potential benefits they could deliver.

Officers were confident that the proposals and savings identified would not reduce vital resources and policies in key statutory service areas and it was agreed that it

was important for the department to continue monitoring all areas through its risk management processes, holding officers to account as needed.

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy

At its meeting of 16 March 2021, the Sub-Committee received a report detailing the background to the management of Section 106 and CIL, what income had been received and how this income had been allocated.

In order to ensure maintenance of the meaningful proportion of CIL, the Council's Infrastructure Finance Group had been established to manage and oversee the process for accessing funding for projects

The Sub-Committee discussed the approach used for the allocation of funds and it was agreed that there was a lack of engagement and participation in the process, which needed to be reviewed to create a process that better engaged community groups and residents in decision making. It was also suggested that consideration be given to Member representation on the Community Fund Panel to further inform decision making on the allocation of community funds.

Croydon Local Plan Review

The meeting of the 16 March 2021 also included an extensive discussion on the Review of the Local Plan which was taking place in response to issues such as the housing crisis, declaration of the Climate Emergency in July 2019, the new London Plan 2021 and the need to align with National Planning Policy Framework. The Strategy would consider growth, jobs, services, maximisation of current infrastructure and sustainable development.

The Sub-Committee highlighted the need for the Local Plan to be underpinned by a core principle of extensive engagement with key stakeholders, including local communities. It was also recommended that the review process should take account of ideas and feedback gathered from various events and consultations, as well as learning from best practice at other Local Authorities.

The importance of meeting sustainability objectives was discussed and it was agreed that the policy needed to be more specific on the adoption of growing trends which could be beneficial for the future of the Borough.

Agenda Item 7

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 15 June 2021
SUBJECT:	Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Scrutiny
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons – Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	It is a requirement set out in part 4E: Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to agree an initial annual work programme for itself and its sub-committees at its first full meeting of the new Council year.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to:- <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree the initial Annual Scrutiny Work Programme,2. Review and agree the process that will be used to manage the work programme as the year progresses.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the initial annual work programme for 2021 – 2022 for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee and its three sub-committees, namely the Children & Young People Sub-Committee, Health & Social Care Sub-Committee and the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee. A copy of the initial work programme can be found at Appendix A to this report.
- 1.2. Although the work programme has been populated as far as possible at this stage, it is recognised that given the challenges facing the Council, the work programme needs to remain flexible enough to respond to emerging priorities during the year. To ensure that there is a consistent process for prioritisation of the work programme, this report also sets out how this will be managed.

2. ANNUAL SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

- 2.1. At its meeting held on 30 March 2021 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed to accept the 13 recommendations made by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS), which were the end result of a Scrutiny Improvement Review conduct by CfGS. When agreeing these recommendations, the Committee agreed that the following three recommendations would be prioritised for delivery in the short term:-

1. Take action to ensure that scrutiny can play an immediate role in the Council's financial recovery.
 2. Set a more consistent approach to the provision of information to scrutiny councillors.
 3. More systematic prioritisation of the work programme.
- 2.2. The Committee also agreed that CfGS would be asked to continue working with the Council to use their expertise in the delivery of the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Improvement Review. To that end, since the Committee meeting on 30 March, CfGS has engaged with officers and Members to develop an approach to delivering the three recommendations highlighted above.
- 2.3. As part of the work to frame an effective scrutiny function CfGS has suggested the following practical principles should be used to govern activity in 2021/22. These will be that:
- Scrutiny will focus only on business-critical activities, and in particular the Renewal Improvement Plan;
 - Scrutiny activity will be better co-ordinated between committees, and will be anchored by a method of escalating important items to committee;
 - The work programme will be more dynamic, although there will be certain matters on which in-depth scrutiny will be carried out (in committee by default although where necessary in task and finish groups);
 - Scrutiny will receive regular advice from the s151 officer and Monitoring Officer to assist in the development of the work programme and to ensure that scrutiny's work aligns with wider improvement activity;
 - The timely and proportionate provision of accurate and relevant information will be central to the above.
- 2.4. Given the challenges facing the Council, CfGS have proposed an initial approach to delivering the three recommendations which are interim measures. These are designed to support the stabilisation of the authority and the delivery of a balanced budget in 2021/22. Towards the end of 2021/22 (before the election) councillors will need to consider how effectively this system is working and how recommendations might be put to the new Council on how scrutiny is carried out. It is anticipated that this will involve further action on CfGS's wider recommendations.
- 2.5. Scrutiny Councillors have further identified a need for the Scrutiny Committee/Sub-Committees to ensure that any review of services undertaken also considers the quality of customer care, and the need to listen to the voice of the service user, carer/parents, and front-line workers. The importance of this has been recently underlined by the experience of the council tenants who lived in Regina Road.

3. ACCESSING INFORMATION

- 3.1. In order for Scrutiny Members to be able to effectively prioritise their work programme towards the areas where focus is most needed, it is essential that there is timely access to a range of information and data if it is to be able to

make an assessment on progress made with the Croydon Renewal & Improvement Plan and delivery of the 2021-22 budget. To this end, CfGS is liaising with senior officers to ensure a process for regularly sharing information with scrutiny members is put in place as soon as possible.

3.2. Although the approach is still to be finalised, CfGS has suggest that information could be shared informally through the production of an information digest, which would be distributed as information becomes available. This would not preclude Members from making their own individual requests for specific information as needed.

3.3. As well as information on the ongoing delivery and management of services, it is important that information on the development of key policies is shared informally. As far as possible it is recommended that senior officers should:

- Submit for inclusion in an information digest brief summaries of any plans or policies under development with a twelve-month horizon;
- A gateway process should be built into all matters which will eventually form the basis of a report to Cabinet setting out how scrutiny involvement might be built in at the design stage.

3.4. If during 2021/22 cabinet advisory committees are established, this element of the scrutiny role will need to be revisited

4. WORK PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

4.1. In the report from CfGS, summarising the findings from their Scrutiny Improvement Review, it was recommended that the work programme should be exclusively focussed on “business critical” activities in 2021-22. CfGS has worked to refine these activities and is suggesting the following workstreams are allocated to each Committee/Sub-Committee:-

Scrutiny & Overview Committee

W 1: Corporate recovery, including corporate oversight by exception.

W 2: Understanding and acting on risks. To initially focus substantively on BBB and the council’s reserves position

Children & Young People Sub-Committee

W 3: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus particularly on the council’s unaccompanied asylum seeking children obligations, post-pandemic child safety and safeguarding, and special educational needs

Health & Social Care Sub-Committee

W4: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus on improvement plans arising from the LGA’s diagnostic review and the ongoing health and social care integration;

Street, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee

W 5: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus on sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic (especially the Growth Zone) and on the expansion in social housing stock

4.2. At present planning of the work programme is overseen by the three Scrutiny Chairs. CfGS has suggested that there would be a benefit in identifying

workstream leads amongst the scrutiny membership for each of the above workstreams to assist the Chairs with reviewing information outside of meetings and prioritising items that should go to Committee/Sub-Committee for discussion.

- 4.3. It is proposed that this group of Scrutiny Chairs and Leads meets on a monthly basis, using the information provided in the digests to identify items for escalation. It is recommended that the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer attend these meeting to provide advice and guidance.

The purpose of these meetings will be to support scrutiny to:

- Adopt a risk-based approach to
 - The oversight of capital projects which complements the role of GPAC. Scrutiny's role here will be to understand how risk and the mitigation of risk impacts on how services are experienced by local people. Scrutiny will do this through regular liaison with the s151 officer and chair of GPAC to understand emergent risks and concerns attached to the delivery of the programme, which can then be brought to committee as part of the relevant workstream;
 - The oversight of the delivery of a balanced budget. Scrutiny can align itself to the work of GPAC by understanding where GPAC identifies pressures in the budget and seeking to investigate, understand and recommend action on those issues in detail;
 - The management by the Council of significant liabilities which may impact on the future financial position (BBB, Fairfield Halls, for example);
 - The delivery of a budget which aligns with the MTFs. Advice can be taken on the extent that the MTFs targets are being met.
- Ensure that oversight and management of finances is informed by a wider awareness of the experiences of local people;
- Ensure that matters of concern in respect of the workstream areas can be promptly identified and work designed to address them; again, based on an assessment of risk;
- Ensure that scrutiny can transact its continuing statutory functions, and other constitutional obligations. There are certain matters that scrutiny must periodically review (community safety, substantial variations of local health services). These meetings will ensure that those obligations are met.

- 4.4. It is recommended that summaries of the discussions at these informal meetings are reported back to each meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

5. WORK SCHEDULING

- 5.1. CfGS has recommended that a maximum of two substantive items should be scheduled for any scrutiny meeting. No reports should be submitted to scrutiny for update or information; everything should go via the escalation matter for members to determine the format in which they wish to engage with the topic.

5.2. There are certain matters where the importance of the ongoing issue will require regular scheduled items and/or the establishment of task and finish groups. We suggest that these be:

- Oversight of the council's improvement journey generally, with a particular focus on culture (as part of workstream 1);
- Oversight of the establishment of a new culture and approach on risk – including direct member input into understanding the most significant strategic risks affecting the authority (as part of workstream 2);
- Creating a sustainable post-pandemic recovery for Croydon (as part of workstream 5).

5.3. A task and finish group has been set up to look at the economic recovery of the town centre. Given there is limited officer capacity to support task and finish reviews, it is suggest that this is the only group set up this year, with other work (including matters subject to escalation) being dealt with in committee.

5.4. Call-in remains a vital tool for councillors to be able to highlight decisions made, but not implemented, which cause significant worry and concern. It has been agreed that the call-in process will be reviewed to ensure it meets best practice, but it is not intended that this will result in any restriction to the process currently available for Members.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee is asked to approve the initial Annual Scrutiny Work Programme set out in Appendix A.
- 6.2. The Committee should also review the suggested approach for the ongoing management of the work programme, considering whether any changes are needed,

CONTACT OFFICER: Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer - Scrutiny

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix A – Initial Annual Scrutiny Work Programme

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Scrutiny & Overview Committee**Chair:** Sean Fitzsimons**Committee Members:** Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair), Robert Ward (Vice-Chair), Shafi Khan, Oni Oviri, Joy Prince

Workstream Priorities

W 1: Corporate recovery, including corporate oversight by exception.

W 2: Understanding and acting on risks. To initially focus substantively on BBB and the council's reserves position

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Officer
15 June 2021	Update from the Leader of the Council	
	Croydon Renewal and Improvement Plan – Performance Reporting Framework & Measures	Caroline Bruce
	RIPI – Quarter 1 Update	Henry Butt
	Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22	Simon Trevaskis
	Scrutiny Annual Report	Simon Trevaskis
6 July 2021	Brick by Brick	Chris Buss
	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce
	Review of the Digital Strategy	Neil Williams
7 September 2021	Annual Complaints/FOI/SAR Report	Savio Fernandes
	RIPI – Quarter 2 Update	Henry Butt
	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce
	Savings Proposal 2022-23	Chris Buss

19 October 2021	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce
7 December 2021	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce
8 February 2022	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce
	RIPI – Quarter 3 Update	Henry Butt
	Annual Community Safety Review	Sarah Hayward
22 February 2022	Budget 2022-2023	Chris Buss
29 March 2022	Monthly Report on Corporate Finance, Performance & Risk	Caroline Bruce

Children & Young People Sub-Committee**Chair:** Robert Ward**Committee Members:** Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair), Sue Bennett, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Louisa Woodley,**Co-optees:** Josephine Copeland (Teacher Rep), Leo Morrell (Catholic Diocese Rep), Elaine Jones (CofE Rep), Paul O'Donnell (Parent Governor Rep), Vacancy (Parent Governor Rep).

Workstream Priority

W 3: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus particularly on the council's UASC obligations, post-pandemic child safety and safeguarding, and Special Educational Needs

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Lead
22 June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help CSC and Education Dashboard • Service Impact and Budget Update • Refreshed Children's Improvement Journey Plan • Impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health • Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children 	Kerry Crichlow/Shelley Davies Kerry Crichlow Pasquale Brammer Debbie Jones
14 September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Board Annual Report (TBC) • Task and Finish Group Final Report: Exclusions and Off-rolling in Croydon Schools • Update on Antenatal and Development Check Visits. 	Maureen Floyd Councillor Jerry Fitzpatrick Maureen Floyd
2 November 2021	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 3, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
18 January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question Time: Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning 	Debbie Jones Kate Bingham

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Budget• Education Quality & Standards	Shelley Davies
1 March 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 3, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
5 April 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 3, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	

Health & Social Care Sub-Committee**Chair:** Sean Fitzsimons**Committee Members:** Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Alison Butler, Steve Hollands, Toni Letts, Andrew Pelling**Co-optee:** Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon)

Workstream Priority

W4: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus on improvement plans arising from the LGA's diagnostic review and the ongoing health and social care integration.

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Lead
11 May 2021	Update on the Vaccination Programme	Public Health & NHS
	Adult Social Care Budget 2021-22	Annette McPartland
29 June 2021	Post Pandemic Mental Health Provision in the Borough	
	Adult Social Care Budget 2021-22	Annette McPartland
21 September 2021	Review of transitions between Health & Mental Health Care Services.	
9 November 2021	Adult Social Care Budget Proposals 2022-23	
25 January 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 4, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
8 March 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 4, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure	

	that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
24 May 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 4, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	

Streets, Environment & Homes Committee**Chair:** Leila Ben-Hassel**Committee Members:** Jeet Bains (Vice-Chair), Luke Clancy, Stuart Collins, Paul Scott, Caragh Skipper

Workstream Priority

W 5: Supporting local people and keeping them safe. To focus on sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic (especially the Growth Zone) and on the expansion in social housing stock.

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Report Lead
13 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axis Contract Review • Review of Temporary Accommodation 	
28 September 2020	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 5, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
16 November 2021	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 5, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
1 February 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 5, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	
15 March 2022	It is anticipated that this meeting will focus on the priority areas in workstream 5, however the agenda will be confirmed as soon as possible before the date to ensure that there is capacity for the Committee to consider any other emerging urgent issues.	

