

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Scrutiny & Overview Committee
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Scrutiny
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons – Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	Public

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	At its meeting on 30 March 2021, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee approved the findings from the Scrutiny Improvement Review conducted by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny. This report sets out how the new approach based on the recommendations will start to be delivered.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to endorse the proposed approach for delivering the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Improvement Review.

## 1. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- 1.1. At its meeting on 30 March 2021 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee approved the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Improvement Review conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny of the scrutiny function in Croydon. The review was originally commissioned by the Committee in March 2020 and had taken into account the findings of the Report in the Public Interest and other Council reports in making its conclusions
- 1.2. In total there were 13 recommendations set out in the report. These were:-
  - Recommendation 1:** Take action to ensure that scrutiny can play an immediate role in the Council's financial recovery.
  - Recommendation 2:** Secure meaningful commitment to scrutiny from the executive side of the organisation.
  - Recommendation 3:** Determine scrutiny's role within the wider governance framework, particularly with regard to quarterly progress monitoring on the Council's new Action Plan.
  - Recommendation 4:** Establish a Scrutiny Co-ordination Group.
  - Recommendation 5:** Set a more consistent approach to the provision of information to scrutiny councillors.
  - Recommendation 6:** More systematic prioritisation of the work programme.
  - Recommendation 7:** Bring more focus and rigour to scrutiny in committee.
  - Recommendation 8:** Identify and act on short term member and officer training and development needs to address the above.

**Recommendation 9:** In the medium term, scrutiny needs to be closer to commercial operations.

**Recommendation 10:** In the medium term, take steps to expand public participation and community involvement in the work of scrutiny.

**Recommendation 11:** In the medium term, a more robust role for scrutiny in the pre-decision scrutiny process.

**Recommendation 12:** In the medium term, adopt a Member and Officer scrutiny development and skills programme which embeds learning opportunities into scrutiny's substantive work.

**Recommendation 13:** Ensure cabinet member advisory committees (CMACs) and Scrutiny are co-ordinated, and that there is also co-ordination with the Council's member audit committee (GPAC).

- 1.3. When these recommendations were agreed by the Committee, it was also agreed that recommendations 1, 5 and 6 would be the initial priorities for delivery, along with recommendation 8 to ensure that the appropriate training was included to embed the new approach.
- 1.4. It was agreed that the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny would be asked to work with the Council on the delivery of these recommendations. A Scrutiny Improvement Reference Group made up of six Scrutiny Councillors was set up to provide its insight on the proposals as they were developed.
- 1.5. The Reference Group has met on three occasions, initially in May and June to help shape the thinking on the proposals and again on 25 August to review the final report from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny setting out the new approach, which is attached at Appendix A. The Reference Group welcomed the proposals and agreed to recommend its endorsement to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.
- 1.6. Recognising that it was equally important to have the buy-in from the officer side of the Council, the report was also review by the Executive Leadership Team on 24 August 2021, with the approach set out in the paper receiving their endorsement.
- 1.7. Providing the proposal is endorsed by the Committee, the next steps with be to move ahead at pace with its delivery, with it anticipated that a training session on the new approach will be held for Councillors by the end of September, providing a convenient date can be found in the Council calendar. Appendix A provides further information on the delivery of the new approach.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Centre for Governance & Scrutiny proposal for a new approach to Scrutiny