

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	17 December 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Refresh of Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Improvement Select Committee (CISC)
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Colin Sweeney, Statutory Scrutiny Officer Michael Edley, Scrutiny Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix A:</b> Draft refreshed Forward Work Programme Jan 2025 - April 2025 <b>Appendix B:</b> Workplan as at 26 November 2024 <b>Appendix C:</b> Selecting Topics For Scrutiny: A Guide For Scrutiny Councillors <b>Appendix D:</b> Template for evaluating proposals.

### 1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out the latest version of the work programme for the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC), included at Appendix A. It follows a review and refresh, by members, of the then current workplan Appendix B, and also includes key training workshops and Briefings for members,

#### Recommendations:

1.2 The Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- review and agree the refreshed Forward Work Programme (Appendix A).

#### ***Commissioner Review***

Any council in intervention generates far more areas meriting scrutiny than there are resources to do justice to the issues. It is very difficult for members to settle on a programme without missing out key areas. Commissioners would encourage members to be clear about the criteria they are using to select topics so that the rationale for their choices are open and understood. Unless the council improves the functioning of its most basic internal processes and meets the requirements of the MHCLG directions it is unlikely to be able to deliver on many of the service ambitions that councillors and residents have. Accordingly, Commissioners would anticipate that scrutinising the delivery of the improvement plan would form the bulk of the committee's work.

## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC) is invited to agree this revised work programme (Appendix A) whilst noting that it is a living document and is intended to continue to evolve in response to events over the course of the period covered. In the usual course of things, it will also be fully refreshed after each Annual Council.
- 2.2 Work programmes always evolve over time, and this version (Appendix A) is the result of a review and refresh of the June 2024-April 2025 Forward Plan that took place on 26 November for which residents, members and senior officers were invited to submit proposals for new topics/issues to which they felt CISC might be able to add value.
- 2.3 Guidelines for this process (Appendix C) had been circulated to members earlier in November. This includes a word template or online form for residents or member/s to complete. This approach had also been adopted in May 2024 in shaping the June 2024-April 2025 Forward Plan
- 2.4 Five proposals were submitted and reviewed at a joint officer and member workshop on November 26, 2024. Proposers introduced their suggestion/s and colleagues (members and officers) discussed each offering further elaboration, clarification and explanation as necessary. The 5 topics were:
  - a. Recycling and waste management in Slough;
  - b. The Council's Trusts;
  - c. Invitation to Frimley Integrated Care Board to present its local delivery strategy for Slough;
  - d. Public Health: The whole system approach to Healthy Weight; and
  - e. Public Health: Tobacco reduction in Slough.
- 2.5 A member only workshop followed at which members discussed and then scored the proposals using the form provided (Appendix D).
- 2.6 All 5 topics constituted credible scrutiny topics, 2 of which emerged as clear front-runners for inclusion in the forward plan for Jan 2025-April 2025. These were topics C and D above and have been provisionally included on the February and March Agendas respectively. The remaining 3 topics have been placed on the reserve list of topics in Appendix Ai

## **3. Implications of the Recommendations**

### *Financial implications*

- 3.1 This is not a decision-making report so there are no direct financial implications. Where further work is required to respond to the issues identified, any recommendations from CISC will be made to Cabinet.

### *Legal implications*

- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new political management system for local councils in England and Wales, requiring them to have a separate 'executive' in the form of a leader, or elected mayor, and cabinet. To provide a

counterweight for this, the Act also introduced the concept of ‘overview and scrutiny’ – sometimes referred to simply as ‘scrutiny’ – whereby every council with an executive management structure is required to have an overview and scrutiny committee. This enables the rest of the council to scrutinise the executive by investigating their decisions; policies; issuing reports and recommendations where any shortcomings are identified. Four key roles for overview and scrutiny are: holding executive, individual cabinet members and chief officers to account to ensure corporate priorities are met; policy development and review; external scrutiny, and performance management and best value.

### *Risk management implications*

3.3 Overview and Scrutiny, commonly referred to as Scrutiny, is a statutory function and is currently subject to government direction in Slough. Failure to develop and approve a Forward Work Programme for Corporate Improvement and Scrutiny would increase the risk of challenge and criticism. The process of scrutiny itself can often serve as an early risk warning mechanism for the organisation.

### 3.4 *Equality implications*

3.5 The FWP and the covering report include reference to the CfGS scrutiny guidance – which together with the general Public Sector Equality Duty and Nolan’s principles, incorporates provisions that are linked to the Equality Act duties, including, inter alia, a requirement to maintaining integrity, respect the rule of law, consideration of any disproportionate impact of decision-making process, ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

## 4. **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Draft refreshed Forward Work Programme January to April 2025

**Appendix B:** Forward Work Programme as at November 2024.

**Appendix C:** Selecting Topics For Scrutiny: A Guide For Scrutiny Councillors

**Appendix D:** Template for members’ evaluating proposals