

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Work Programme for 2024-25

**REPORT OF:** Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance

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## Summary

This report details the draft work programme for the Families OSC for the 2024-25 municipal year and sets out the role and remit of the Committee.

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1. Families OSC received a report in April 2024 setting out the work programme setting process for 2024/25, including suggestions that had been received to date from Elected Members and relevant officers.
2. A key component to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function is work programme planning that seeks input from a wide variety of sources and identifies priority areas where scrutiny can seek to add the most value.

## Terms of reference and remit

3. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Overview and scrutiny committees may make recommendations to the authority in relation to matters that affect the authority's area and residents. Recommendations from scrutiny can enable improvements to the made to policies and how they are implemented. Overview and scrutiny committee can also play a valuable role in developing policy. Whilst scrutiny committees are not decision making bodies, they have an important role in being able to influence decision makers.
4. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution sets out the aims and objectives of the scrutiny function in Gateshead Council. In particular it should be an integral part of the Council's framework and a constructive process which works alongside other parts of the Council's structure, contributing towards policy development. Importantly it will enhance rather than duplicate activity and it will look to broader issues affecting local people rather than just internal Council issues.
5. All of the overview and scrutiny committees have a role in:
  - Reviewing decisions, holding decision makers to account
  - The Call – in of executive decisions in accordance with the procedure set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee rules
  - Contributing to the policy making process through:-
    - o Policy reviews agreed as part of the service planning cycle

- o Advice given to the Cabinet as part of the Council's performance management system
  - o Scrutinising and developing the Council's Improvement Programme
  - o Examining Issues in the Schedule of Decisions
- Ensuring other agencies, public and private, play their part in achieving a better quality of life for Gateshead residents.
6. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Families OSC performs the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following functions:
1. as an education authority
  2. in respect of the provision of social services, and other services to children and young people, including specific health services for children and young people (including the function of reviewing and scrutinising matters relating to the health service as set out on the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and associated regulations).
  3. to receive and consider monitoring reports on children in the Council's care.
  4. to keep under review the Council's arrangements for ensuring that the Council fulfils its role as corporate parent.
7. All of the Council's scrutiny activity should be underpinned by the four fundamental principles of good scrutiny set out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny:
- provide constructive "critical friend" challenge;
  - amplify the voice and concerns of the public
  - be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
  - drive improvement in public services.
8. The following Members have been appointed to the Families OSC for the 2024/25 municipal year:
- Councillor J Green (Chair)  
Councillor P Burns (Vice Chair)  
Councillor L Caffrey  
Councillor B Clelland  
Councillor P Craig  
Councillor R Hart  
Councillor K Henderson  
Councillor H Kelly  
Councillor K McCartney  
Councillor E McMaster  
Councillor J Mohammed  
Councillor L Moir  
Councillor A Ord  
Councillor M Ord  
Councillor I Patterson  
Councillor D Robson  
Councillor D Weatherley

9. A draft work programme based on the suggestions received in relation to the remit of Families OSC is attached at Appendix 1. Members of the Committee are invited comment on the content of the work programme and put forward any additional suggestions they may have.

### **Scrutiny Guidance**

10. The government has recently updated statutory guidance in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Function. This can be accessed [here](#)

The guidance sets out the legislative context to overview and scrutiny, roles of committees, the powers scrutiny has to access information and methods for the scrutiny function in undertaking work.

Refresher training in relation to the role of overview and scrutiny will be delivered in June and July and will be open to all Elected Members to attend.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Committee is asked to:-
  - a) Approve the draft work programme as set out at Appendix 1; and
  - b) Highlight any additional priority areas that Members feel it is important for the Committee to consider.