

SCRUTINY



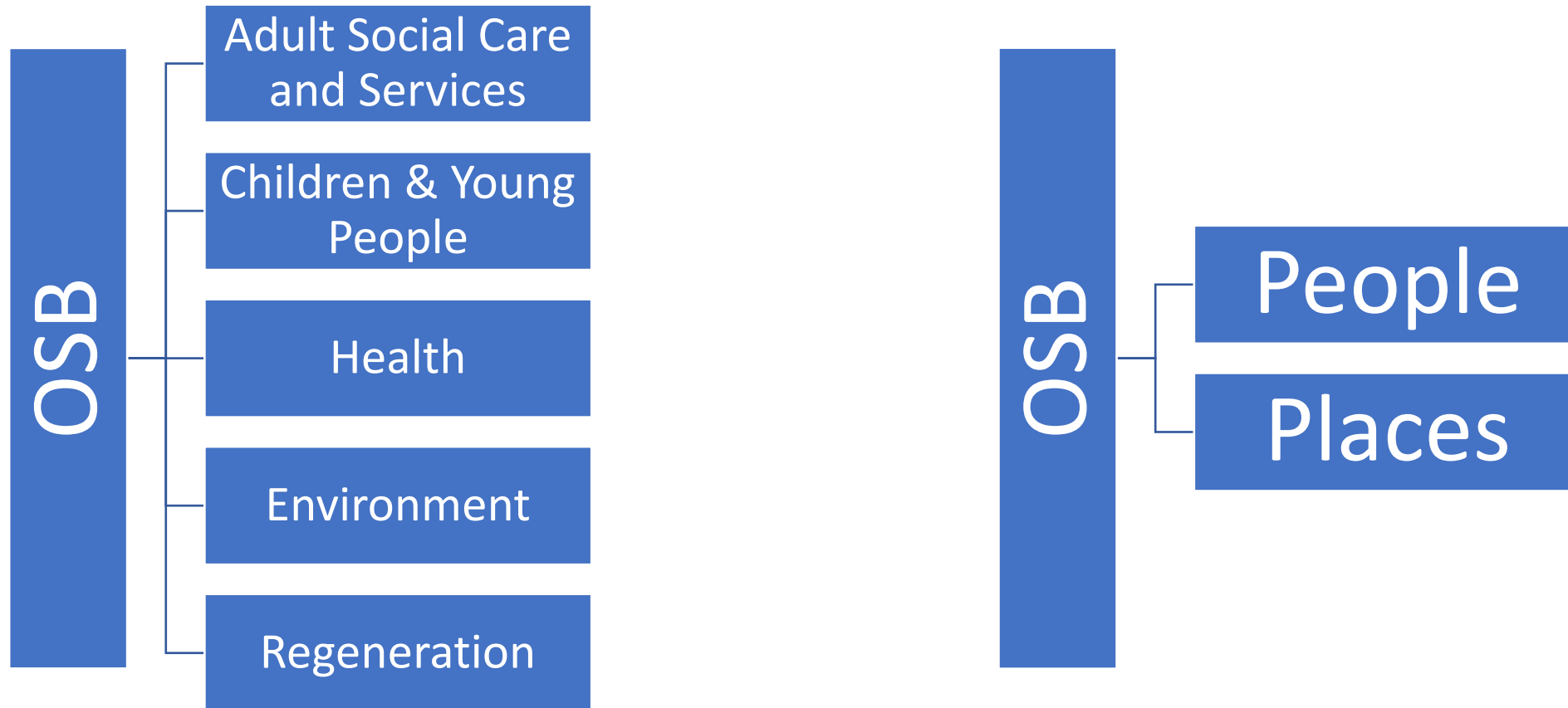
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Scrutiny Background

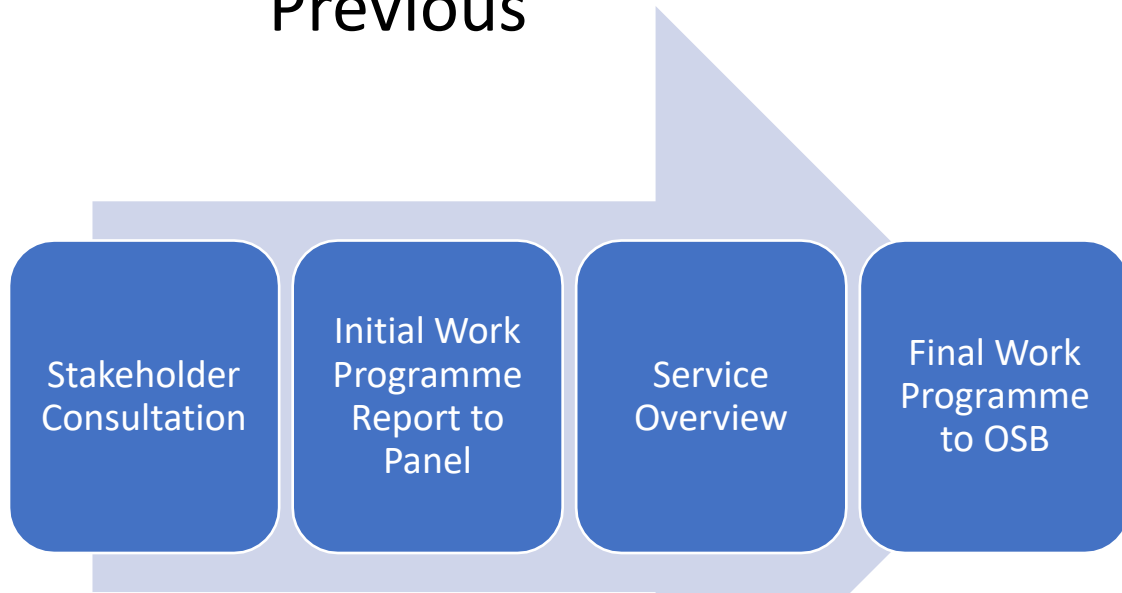
- Overview and Scrutiny was introduced into local government by the Local Government Act 2000.
- It is a function whereby non-executive Councillors:
 - ✓ review the effectiveness of policies and services that affect Middlesbrough
 - ✓ hold the decision makers to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities (Executive/Council/ some outside organisations)
 - ✓ act as a critical friend.

Scrutiny Changes - Structure

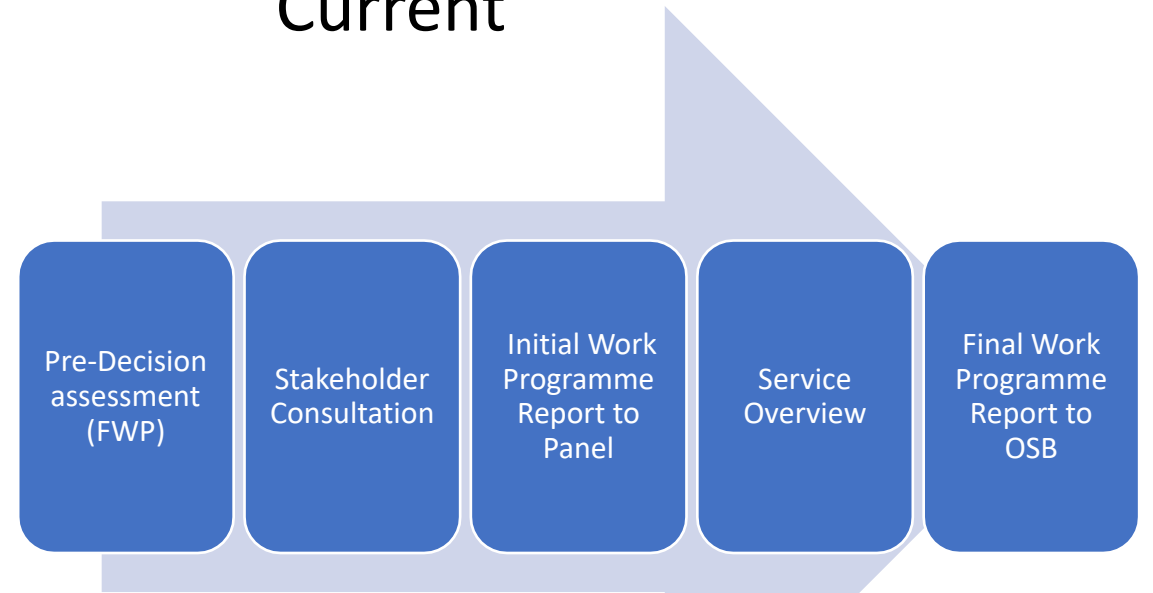


Scrutiny Changes – Mechanics

Previous



Current



Responsibilities of the Chair

General

- Agree panel meeting timetable for the Municipal Year.
- Work with the Panel to select topics for investigation and submit to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for approval.
- Provide regular updates on the Panel's work to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Assist in the compilation of Final Reports.
- Present an overview of Final Reports and the findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Present Final Reports to Executive and answer any questions.

Responsibilities of the Chair

Before a Review/Scrutiny Investigation

- Work with the panel to determine key lines of enquiry and the terms of reference for the review/scrutiny investigation.
- Develop knowledge of topic.
- Hold a planning meeting with Democratic Services Officers.

During a Review/Scrutiny Investigation (in conjunction with Democratic Services Officers)

- Ensure the review adheres to the terms of reference.
- Ensure witnesses are briefed.
- Consider where the meetings would best be held and the format.

Responsibilities of the Chair

During a Meeting

- Introduce the meeting and explain the purpose of it.
- Ensure people are welcomed and introductions are held.
- Ensure that the meeting does not become confrontational or adversarial.
- Keep the meeting on topic.
- Identify/allocate tasks.
- Recap at the end and identify any actions.

All Panel Members

Agenda Setting

- Suggest areas for investigation that would contribute to the current topic.
- Identify any witnesses to invite.

Preparation

- Ensure meetings are in diary.
- Read the agenda pack before the meeting.
- Prepare some questions/challenge.
- Stick to the agenda/stay on topic.

Evidence Gathering

- Research topic, question witnesses, make visits to other organisations.

Role of Democratic Services Team

In general, the Democratic Services Team's responsibilities are to:

- Arrange meetings.
- Prepare and publish agendas, reports and minutes.
- Carry out research when requested by the Panel.
- Liaise with external organisations and services regarding input to the Review.
- Brief witnesses/people giving evidence.
- Support Chairs to write final reports and arrange for submission to Overview and Scrutiny Board and Executive.
- Monitor progress of scrutiny recommendations and feed back to Panels.

Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025

June 2024

- At the first meeting of the Municipal Year, the Overview and Scrutiny Board will consider topics from the Executive Forward Work Programme, suggestions from Councillors, Members of the Public, Outside Organisations and Service Areas.
- Democratic Services Officers will scope potential topics suggested by Overview and Scrutiny Board for inclusion in the Work Programme Reports which will be submitted to the People and Place Scrutiny Panels.

July 2024

- People and Place Scrutiny Panels will receive the usual overview presentations from the relevant Directorates.
- It is suggested that each Scrutiny Panel selects 3 topics for the forthcoming year.
- Overview and Scrutiny Board will consider/approve the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025.

Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-2025

August/September 2024

- Chairs and Vice Chairs will meet with Democratic Services Officers to scope the 3 selected topics for review.
- Statutory updates will be added to each Panel's programme as appropriate.
- September meetings – scrutiny reviews to commence.

NOTE: With the approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, emerging/urgent issues can be added to the work programme as required throughout the year.

Any comments/questions/suggestions?



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Work programming

What makes a good scrutiny topic?

What makes a good work plan?

- **Member-led** – team activity with leadership from Chairs
- **Clear process & methodology** – use criteria and selection tools
- **Design with the end in mind:** objective, outcome, opportunity
- **Understand context:** people, priorities, politics
- **Plan what is achievable:** capability, competence, capacity
- **Draw on members skills & knowledge**
- **Use your resources:** officers, partners, experts (including residents)
- **Reflect community interests & council priorities**
- **Be flexible** – work planning is an ongoing process
- **Aim for impact!**



Inputs to the work plan



Where ideas come from...

- Council's Corporate plan
- Other strategic documents / delivery plans
- Executive forward plans & key decisions
- Monitoring information: performance data, risk registers, complaints data
- Evidence from external sources: peer reviews, CQC/OFSTED inspections
- Officer recommendations
- Portfolio Member discussions
- Partner organisations
- Community groups
- Parish/Town councils

What makes a good scrutiny topic?

- Mission critical – council strategic plan
- Big priority or concern to community – affecting all or lots
- Major potential risk or threat
- Important opportunity or policy change

What makes a weak scrutiny topic?

- Parochial
- Hobbyhorse
- Politically motivated
- Repetitious
- Showcasing
- Micro managing
- Too backward looking

Work planning tools

Selection Criteria

- ✓ Review likely to improve to result in improvements for local people
- ✓ Topic falls within community / corporate priority
- ✓ Topic identified by partners of joint concern
- ✓ Topic represents key issue for public based on community consultation
- ✓ Service proposed is performing poorly or high level of dissatisfaction

Rejection Criteria

- ✗ Topic already addressed
- ✗ Proposed topic just to provide committee with information
- ✗ Proposed topic is unlikely to result in improvements for the community
- ✗ Scrutiny activity unlikely to add value to council priorities

Implementing your work plan

- **Rolling work plan:** Scrutiny's business is dynamic – priorities change as new issues emerge. Scrutiny should review and reflect on its overall priorities, and seek to refine the work plan.
- **Single integrated work plan:**
 - Allows for better co-ordination, identification of cross-cutting issues and avoiding duplication.
 - Ensures that scrutiny, overall, is consistently focused on the most important issues for the area, and that resources are directed appropriately;
 - Makes executive, and partner, engagement in the work programming process easier to manage
- **Separate plans for each committee:** Corporate / Community
- **Ensure results and outputs are monitored and evaluated**

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