

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 November 2023	Meeting Name: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan – Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		N/a	
From:		Head of Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the overview and scrutiny committee note the proposed time frame for implementation of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) scrutiny improvement review recommendations, set out in the action plan (Appendix 1 of the report). Time frame for key actions summarised in paragraphs 7 – 11 of the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The overview and scrutiny committee agreed the recommendations of the CfGS, arising from the scrutiny improvement review process at its meeting held on 4 October 2023.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3. The action plan sets out the time frame for implementation of the various recommendations and identified actions. The recommendations and actions can be summarised as falling into the following categories:
 - Those which are already part of the council’s scrutiny procedures but may require refinement,
 - those which can be implemented immediately,
 - those which require consultation with the council’s leadership
 - those which can be implemented after agreement is reached on how scrutiny, cabinet, and senior officer leadership will work with each other (leading to the development of cabinet and scrutiny protocol)
 - recommendations and actions that need to wait until the 2024/25 year (May 2024 onwards), due to resource limitations or need to be factored in after the main recommendations have been implemented.
4. The overview and scrutiny committee and its commissions have agreed work programmes for the 2023/24 year, which are being progressed within existing arrangements. The main objectives in terms of timescales for

implementation of the recommendations is to have new arrangements in place by the start of the next municipal year that will inform the work programmes for the scrutiny function for 2024/25. In addition, to incorporate the beneficial practices highlighted in the scrutiny improvement review that will assist the work of scrutiny during the current municipal year (2023/24).

5. The action plan (Appendix 1) captures recommendations and actions in the order raised in the scrutiny improvement review report – below are the summarised key actions in the order of intended implementation.
6. November / December 2023 Actions that are already, or ought to be in place or can be implemented immediately.
 - Introduction of Scrutiny Pre-Meetings, individual scrutiny chairs training, group training for scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs, general training for members on matters relating to scrutiny. Ongoing member learning and development commencing from start of 'new member induction programme' (commenced May 2022).
 - Updating and including information on the council's internal 'intranet' on the role of scrutiny.
 - Recruitment to vacant scrutiny officer post (shortlisting and interviews to take place January/February 2024).
7. January to March 2024 Strengthening collaborative relationships between scrutiny, cabinet and directors, leading to development of a 'cabinet and scrutiny' protocol.
 - Discussions to be held between scrutiny representatives and senior leadership (cabinet members and management team) to establish process which enables scrutiny to identify issues, trends and topics where it can focus for accountability and impact.
 - Pre-decision scrutiny, policy development, scrutiny recommendations and cabinet responses to them, strategic role of scrutiny team, and clarification of mutual expectations will form part of the strengthening collaborative relationship discussions.
 - Development of cabinet and scrutiny protocol, arising from strengthening collaborative discussions, to be signed off at March 2024 council assembly.
8. February 2024 Approval of new call-in arrangements
 - Approval by council assembly of new call-in arrangements. Call-in review has been undertaken and arising report is currently in draft form.

9. April / May 2024 Training and development support for officers around the work of scrutiny – dissemination of information / strengthening work planning.
- Council's internal 'intranet' and website to updated with relevant information, and briefings to be undertaken at Departmental Management Team meetings.
 - Agreed Cabinet and Scrutiny Protocol (collaborative working) used to inform OSC and commission work programmes for 2024/25 year, and incorporation of actions to strengthen work planning process.
10. 2024/25 Future development work, improving what is in place
- Repositioning the scrutiny function to emphasise significance of the strategic elements of the role.
 - Looking at ways to improve engagement with local partners and stakeholders to identify key lines of enquiry on impact of local decisions.
 - Addressing potential barriers to greater collaboration.
 - Mapping of local specialists and partners in Southwark.
 - Enhancing role of scrutiny commission co-opted members
 - Focus on how to better engage with the public
11. May 2025 Scrutiny holding itself to account for its work and impact
- The work of scrutiny through the 2024/25 municipal, which will have incorporated the majority of the proposed actions, will provide the platform for assessing performance of the new arrangements, to be indicated through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee annual report to council assembly in May 2025.
12. Progress on implementation of recommendations and action will be kept under review and periodically reported to the committee.

Policy framework implications

13. There are no specific policy implications

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

14. There are no specific community, equality or health impacts arising from this report.

Climate change implications

15. There are no specific climate change implications.

Resource implications

16. There are no specific resource implications.

Legal implications

17. There are no specific legal implications.

Financial implications

18. There are no specific financial implications.

Consultation

19. None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda – 4 October 2023 (Item 7)	Southwark Council Website	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=308&MId=7726&Ver=4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Report Author	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
Version	Final	
Dated	23 November 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team	23 November 2023	