

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 JUNE 2016**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

15

TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Committee's work programme for 2016/17.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on its work programme.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To enable the Committee to plan its work effectively.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

5.1 None.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

7.1 The Committee will continue receive an overview of each Executive Member's portfolio. The schedule for their attendance is:

- June – Cllr Lovewell (not including housing matters);
- July - Cllr Hone;
- September - Cllr Burt;
- December – Cllr Cunningham;
- January – Cllr Levett;
- March – Cllr Needham;
- June – Cllr Gray;
- July – Cllr Hunter

- 7.2 Cllr Lovewell will also attend in July to speak about housing matters and to coincide with housing update reports which are scheduled for July's Cabinet.
- 7.3 A provisional work programme for the Committee's meetings is attached at **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration, along with the Forward Plan for 13 May at **Appendix B**.

8. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Quality of Council Reports

- 8.1 The Report of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) on the **Quality of Council Reports** will be considered by Cabinet on 14 June.

The Council's Approach to Managing Larger Projects

- 8.2 Pressure on members' diaries has caused problems in scheduling the first meeting of the TFG on the **Council's Approach to Managing Larger Projects**. After discussion with the Chair of the TFG, Cllr Weeks and the Chair of the Committee, the review will be conducted more flexibly by dividing the material between the members of the review. This will allow it to cover the ground more efficiently and complete the TFG in a reasonable time.
- 8.3 A report should be ready for the Committee's meeting in September.

Performance Indicators

- 8.4 At its last meeting, the Committee prioritised Performance Indicators as an urgent subject to address. The lead in time for organising a TFG is about 3 months; and there are difficulties in considering it quickly and in depth as a formal committee item.
- 8.5 The easiest way to do this urgently is as a one off TFG held directly before the Committee's meeting in July starting at 6pm, but with the whole Committee invited so that proportionality is maintained.
- 8.6 The Scrutiny Officer will draft the scope and would welcome the Committee's input into it both at the meeting and afterwards so we get the coverage right. We can also do some work by correspondence between June's and July's Committee meetings so the TFG meeting can focus immediately on the key issues.
- 8.7 If councillors can't attend the TFG they can still feed in their comments via their colleagues, the Chair or the Scrutiny Officer; and they will still see and comment on the final recommendations when the Committee proper gets under way. We can draft the recommendations on the night and get the formal agreement of the Committee to them. They can then go straight to July's Cabinet meeting as a referral from the Committee.

Future Task and Finish Groups

- 8.8 The Committee is asked to review its future Task and Finish Group programme. The next TFG scheduled for the autumn is **Recharges and Value for Money**.

- 8.9 At its meeting in March, the Committee highlighted some topics which it wished to review as TFGs:
- the urban/rural divide;
 - the Council's management of risk;
 - how the Council awards contracts; and
 - consultation with the community.
- 8.10 In previous meetings, the Committee has also indicated that it may wish to look at the following topics as future task and finish groups:
- a review of NHDC's Document Centre;
 - keeping North Herts tidy;
 - balancing cost savings against possible environmental impacts;
 - Section 106 Agreements.
- 8.11 A number of issues were highlighted by the TFG on Council reports which were outside the scope of the review. The Committee may wish to consider picking some or all of them up in future. The issues included:
- Making policy and operational changes through over-arching strategies like the Medium Term Financial Strategy with little visibility;
 - The suitability of the Council's decision making processes for some of its faster moving services;
 - Taking reports through the Committee system to avoid making decisions and taking responsibility for them;
 - The efficiency of the process of bringing reports to Cabinet and other Committees.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5 April 2011. There is a general duty, described below, that public bodies must meet, and this is underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

- 12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions: give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 12.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no social value implications arising from this report.

14. APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix A – Programme for Committee Meetings

14.2 Appendix B – Forward Plan for 13 May 2016

15. CONTACT OFFICERS

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16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None