

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 JUNE 2018

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: NOT APPLICABLE

COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights items scheduled in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2018/19 and includes details of those that have yet to be assigned to a specific meeting.
- 1.2 The work programme includes both items previously agreed by the Committee and those that the Committee is required by the Constitution to consider.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes and comments where appropriate on the items scheduled for inclusion in the work programme.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees the list of items to be considered at its meeting of 24 July 2018.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To allow the Committee to set a work programme which provides meaningful Member oversight, encourages open debate and seeks to achieve service improvement through effective policy development and meaningful policy and service change.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Over recent years, the Committee has varied its approach to overview and scrutiny activity. Most recently, it has been entering the process of policy development at an earlier stage and consequently on occasion may consider items associated with service action plans.
- 4.2 The need to ensure constitutional requirements are observed remains a key aspect of work programming as does the monitoring of the Forward Plan for appropriate items to scrutinise.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Each Committee meeting includes the opportunity for Members to comment on and input to the Committee's work programme.
- 5.2 Work is currently being undertaken to establish the types of training provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in order to develop a training proposal that addresses amongst others:
- the identification and prioritisation of issues and topics for scrutiny review (minute 16, June 2017)
 - the maximisation of the benefits of scrutiny (minute 31, July 2017)
 - effective methods of overview and scrutiny (minute 32, July 2017)

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.
- 6.2 The Committee is asked to review the Forward Plan at each regular meeting and identify potential issues for inclusion in the work programme. Identification of a focus for the Committee's future activity should be identified at this stage if appropriate.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Regular presentations on a rotational basis are no longer delivered by Executive Members. It was determined that more benefit could be derived from Executive Members being invited to either speak on a specific issues of interest to the Committee or present a report being considered for constitutional reasons.
- 7.2 The Committee is now considering a wider range of topics as potential agenda items and if appropriate, seeking to commence its reviews earlier in the policy development process. By doing this it seeks to ensure assumptions are challenged at an early stage, mistakes are avoided and eventual outcomes provide optimal benefit to the community.
- 7.3 The Committee will continue to use the Forward Plan and meet its statutory obligations when setting the work programme. This approach may be adapted in the light of outcomes from the proposed training event.
- 7.4 The Committee seeks to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests made should be for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Committee.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Work Programme

- 8.1 A work programme is set out at **Appendix B** for the Committee's consideration.

Forward Plan

- 8.2 The Forward Plan for 25 April 2018 is attached at **Appendix C**

Other Topics

- 8.3 Potential topics for consideration and inclusion in the Committee's work programme will be considered as part of this meeting. When considering additional topics, the Committee might wish to risk assess and prioritise them to ensure that the most appropriate items are reviewed.
- 8.4 If items for consideration by the Committee are identified between Committee meeting, the Chairman will agree any amendments to the work programme following risk assessment and reprioritisation of previously agreed items if required.

List of Lessons Learnt from Projects

- 8.8 The current lessons learned log from previous projects is attached as **Appendix A**. All project managers are advised to review the lessons learnt log prior to the commencement of a project to ensure that errors of the past are not replicated.
- 8.9 Given the broad ranging nature of the items included in the log, Members views are sought on how best to progress this issue. If a workshop, attended by all Heads of Service and those Members of this Committee available, is deemed the most appropriate way forward, Members views on the focus of the workshop are sought.
- 8.10 Section 6 of the Constitution, which relates to Scrutiny, has been attached as **Appendix D** for your information

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Under Section 6.2.5 of the Constitution, the Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme. However, it must ensure it retains sufficient capacity within the work programme to meet its statutory obligations.
- 9.2 Section 6.2.7 (u) of the Constitution allows the Committee "to appoint time limited task and finish Topic Groups to undertake detailed scrutiny work and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Cabinet."

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Dependent on how they are applied in practice, the scope of the options presented in Sections 7 and 8 has the potential to be wide reaching. As detailed Section 14, Human Resource Implications, the wider the reach, the more significant the impact on officer time in terms of report writing, data analysis and committee meeting attendance. Given recent funding pressures and the consequent reduction in officer numbers, significant requests to support scrutiny work would inevitably limit officer time available to spend on activities such as identifying and delivering cost reductions, income generation and project management.
- 10.2 Although not significant, a committee attendance allowance of £24.20 per officer per meeting is payable to officers below Senior Management level there. This is in addition to providing time off in lieu.
- 10.3 Attention is drawn to the fact that should the Committee wish to go ahead with a training event delivered by an external provider; this will accrue a cost although the value of this is as yet unknown.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Effective overview and scrutiny of policy, administrative, service delivery and expenditure decisions helps reduce the risk of an inappropriate decision being made. The scope and time frame for scrutiny interventions should be considered in the light of the potential impact of inappropriate scrutiny leading to decisions not being made, inappropriately made or not made at the right time.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no direct equality implications arising from the report. Effective scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains transparent, accountable and open which ensures that the delivery of public services benefits all aspects of the community, where practical.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The widening of the reach of scrutiny reviews has the potential to significantly impact on officer time in terms of the reprioritisation of already agreed projects, their scope or timetabling and resources. There is also the potential for additional resource requirements in relation to report writing, information collection and analysis and committee attendance. Delivery of service plans to achieve the Council’s agreed Corporate Plan objectives might, therefore, be potentially negatively impacted.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix A – Corporate Lessons Log
- 15.2 Appendix B – Work Programme for future Committee meetings
- 15.3 Appendix C – Forward Plan for 25 April 2018
- 15.4 Appendix D - Section 6 of the Constitution

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 None