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CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2019

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019-20

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To set out the draft work programme for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for 2019-20.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee review the draft work programme for 2019-20 and advise on what they wish to include for the forthcoming year (see Appendix 1).

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The scrutiny structure has been designed to ensure effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's key outcomes set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-23.

3.2 Although there is no longer a corporate priority in the new Corporate Plan, there are still a number of corporate issues which need to be addressed and these form the basis of the Corporate Priority Delivery Plan (PDP). The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the Corporate PDP. This is the subject of a separate item on the agenda.

3.3 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to identify corporate issues and/or ones that are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider. The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Guidance on selecting reviews is included in Appendices 2A and 2B.

3.4   Members are invited to comment on the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 1. Members are also encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme may be revised during the year as necessary.

4	Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   The remit of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee is linked to the Council's Corporate PDP.

5	Report Detail

Background

5.1   The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the Corporate PDP.

5.2   Although there is no longer a corporate priority in the new Corporate Plan, there Tare still a number of corporate issues which need to be addressed and these form the basis of the Corporate Priority Delivery Plan (PDP).

5.3   The Corporate PDP is split into 2 themes:

(i)   Delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible - giving choice to our customers in how they access our services; and

(ii)   Making the best use of limited resources – managing our people, money and assets

Developing the Work Programme

5.4   To support Members in their Scrutiny role and in particular in developing a work programme a Scrutiny Toolkit has been produced; a copy of this has been circulated separately to Members. An extract from the toolkit relating to developing a work programme is attached at Appendix 2A and an extract from the LGA's guidance is attached at Appendix 2B.

5.5   In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- Is the matter a concern to local people? (You may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing).
- Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?
- Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance?
- What difference could scrutiny make?
- What would happen if you did not look at this issue?

5.6   To further assist Members in developing the work programme:

- A copy of the Corporate PDP is attached as a separate item on the agenda; and
- Details of the services that fall within the remit of the Committee, together with key projects and topical issues, are given in Appendix 3.

5.7   The Work Programme can be revised during the year to reflect emerging priorities, but it is important to plan ahead and allow time for reports to be prepared and invitations to be sent to relevant parties.

5.8   Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they want to include in the Work Programme, a draft Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 to this report which includes some standing items (eg PDP updates) and some suggestions as to potential reviews.

Undertaking the Scrutiny reviews

5.9   Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Committee. A template to assist with scoping the review is also attached at Appendix 4.

5.10   Members may wish to:

- Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice);
- Invite expert witnesses to give their views;
- Seek the views of service users and/or the general public.

5.11   Members should also consider what they can do to support the review e.g.:

- Undertaking research e.g. via the internet;
- Seeking the views of ward members or specific interest groups.

Reporting on Scrutiny Reviews

5.12   In addition to reporting to the Committee on the outcome of any reviews, the Committee may wish to make recommendations to Cabinet or another Committee.

5.13   At the year end, the Chair of the Committee will prepare a report for Council on the outcome of the Committee's Work Programme.

6	Implications

6.1 Financial

Any costs to be incurred in undertaking any review will need to be contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

The key aspects of risk management in regard to scrutiny work programmes are:

- ensuring that there are clear outcomes from the scrutiny process that impact positively upon the services users/communities within the District and link to corporate priorities; and

- that there is adequate capacity for the committee to complete the work that has been agreed.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact. Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

6.9 Best Value

Work programmes which are effectively prioritised will ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit.

7	**Appendices to the Report**

Appendix 1   Draft Work Programme 2019/20

Appendix 2A   Extract from the Council's Scrutiny Toolkit

Appendix 2B   Extract from the LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Appendix 3   Overview of services and issues falling with the Committee's remit

Appendix 4   Template for scoping a scrutiny review

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None

**Proposed Work Programme for 2019-20 for
the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date	Item
18 July 2019	• End of Year Outturn for Corporate PDP for 2018-19 • Complaints - Annual Report 2018-19 • Annual Report on Work of the Committee for 2018-19 • Corporate PDP for 2019-20 • Determine Review Programme for 2019-20
19 November 2019	• Corporate PDP Progress Report April to September 2019 • Complaints Report • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)
14 January 2020	This meeting is for consultation on the budget/financial strategy only
10 March 2020	• Corporate PDP Progress Report October to December 2019 • Complaints Report • Scrutiny Review (to be determined)

Suggestions for Reviews:

- Continuation of review Members Access to Information (ICT) and Training
- Customer Service Standards / Access Strategy

Extract from Scrutiny Toolkit

DEVELOPING THE WORK PROGRAMME

Members have a key role to play in developing the work programme for the Scrutiny Committees and it is important that manageable programmes are developed. The Scrutiny Committees will need to filter potential items of work; to be selective and to prioritise.

Given the limited resources available, in particular the constraints on member and officer time, it is unrealistic to select more than a few items for intensive review. Realistically, a single committee cannot undertake more than two in-depth reviews per year.

In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

Public interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen. Things to think about include:
o   Any issues raised with you when canvassing;
o   Have any surveys or research undertaken by the Council identified any concerns
o   is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners

Ability to change - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence. Think about what difference Scrutiny could make and what would happen if you did not look at this issue.

Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well. You should consider, the scale of the underperformance, whether it is a one off or whether there is an ongoing issue. Has the service been flagged up in an external inspection report for poor performance?

Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the District

Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort

Work programmes should be determined at the start of each municipal year and reviewed and revised regularly. Any reviews not started or completed by the year end can be referred for consideration as part of the following year's work programme. The best advice is to start small, learn what works well and what does not and then be more ambitious. It is far easier to add items to the workload than to remove them.

Stage 1: Agree the Issue

The first step is for scrutiny members to be sure that the subject to be reviewed is significant. Undertaking in-depth reviews is resource-intensive – of member and officer resources. Investing such a high level of resources should only be undertaken for **high priority issues**. The following are criteria which could be used to 'check' a topic against, to ensure that it would make a worthwhile review:

- Issue identified by members as key issue (through members' surgeries and other constituency activities);
- Performance issues within a service (e.g. significant under or overachievement of targets;
- Service considered to be important by the community (through market research, citizens' panels and so on);
- High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service;
- Public interest issue highlighted in local media;
- High level of budgetary commitment to policy/service area;
- Persistent financial issues e.g. significant under or overspends.
- Council corporate priority area;
- Central government priority area;
- Issue raised in Inspection Reports
- Issue referred by the Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee
- New government guidance or legislation.

Stage 2: Determine the nature of member involvement

The committee will need to decide how members will drive the review. There are three possible approaches to member involvement:

- The whole committee investigates the issue;
- A task and finish working group is established to drive the investigation;
- Individual or paired members drive the review.

Vital to the whole review activity is that members take full control of which policy problems and solutions are explored and how that exploration takes place. Members need to take responsibility for, and ownership of, the outputs and outcomes of reviews.

Stage 3: Scoping Exercise

There are 4 key issues to consider when scoping the review:

- What are the core questions the review is seeking to answer? (no more than 3)
- What is the purpose of the Review? (in one sentence)
- What will not be included?
- What is the timescale?

Extract from LGA Guidance on Scrutiny Work Programming

Work programming

The role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures. However, it is not possible to examine every service in detail, so it is important for the scrutiny committee to prioritise and plan its workload. Some councils do this at the beginning of each year and some do it on an ongoing basis.

Planned scrutiny

Work programming is the process for determining which topics scrutiny will look at over the coming year, either at committee meetings or in task and finish groups. This involves evaluating a number of factors to decide which topics are to be investigated and when. The process will typically involve long-listing and then short-listing topics before making a final decision.

Responsive scrutiny

Whether planned scrutiny takes place at the beginning of the year or on an ongoing basis, the priorities for scrutiny need to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. This makes sure scrutiny can be flexible and responsive to high-priority issues or policy changes that occur throughout the year.

The scrutiny topic selection process

Each council has its own method for selecting topics for scrutiny; in some councils there may be a very structured selection process, whilst in others it may be more informal. Whatever level of detail is involved, the general process should include the following activities.

1. Identify issues
You can identify potential issues by:

- consulting with all members of scrutiny committees, senior officers, cabinet members and council officers

- looking at corporate priorities, business plans and the Forward Plan of the council (and the council's neighbours)

- considering events and decisions in the council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets

- evaluating previous council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work

- carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.

2. Prioritise topics
Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.

3. Plan scrutiny work
Decide which scrutiny topics to review and include them in the work programme.

4. Review and evaluate
Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added by scrutiny.

Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics

The following criteria provide a useful guide for prioritising and selecting which topics are suitable for scrutiny to review.

Topics **are** suitable for scrutiny when:

- scrutiny could have an impact and add value

- the topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people

- the resources are available that would be required to conduct the review, in terms of manpower and budget

- it avoids work duplication elsewhere

- the issue is one that the committee can realistically influence

- the issue is related to an area where the council, or one of its partners, is not performing well

- the issue is relevant to all or large parts of the local area

- the review would be in the council's interests.

Topics **are not** suitable for scrutiny when:

- the issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent

- the topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there)

- scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact upon outcomes

- the topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial to the council's interest

- the topic is too broad to make a review realistic

- new legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year

- the topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

Defining scrutiny topics

For every item on the work programme/new referral, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?

- What is scrutiny being asked to do?

- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of involving scrutiny in the matter?

- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

Services Falling within the Corporate Scrutiny Committee's Remit

Service Area	Sub-Areas	Notes
Corporate Issues	• Budget Consultation (as appropriate)	
	• Complaints (includes Ombudsman and MP enquiries)	Report on complaints to Cabinet and Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Civic Support	• Civic Events	
Governance and Corporate Services	• Internal Audit	Reports on performance and audit matters to the Audit & Governance Committee
	• Risk Management	Reports on risks to Cabinet and the Audit & Governance Committee
	• Insurance	
	• Health & Safety	
	• Procurement	
	• Democratic Services	
	• Electoral Services	Reviewed in 2017/18
	• Emergency Planning	
	• Business Continuity	
	• Policy	
	• Performance	Performance information is reported to Cabinet and each of the Scrutiny Committees
	• Equality & Diversity	Revised Policy approved April 2019
	• Consultation & Engagement	Scrutiny review in 2015/16
	• Communications	
	• Website	
	• Data Protection	
	• Freedom of Information	
	• Customer Services	Customer Access Strategy to be developed in 2019/20
	• Support Services	
	• Caretaking & Cleaning	
	• Land Charges	Part of the service is to be transferred to the Land Registry

Service Area	Sub-Areas	Notes
Finance	• Financial Management	Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Cabinet and Council
	• Treasury Management	Reports to Council and Audit & Governance Committee
	• Creditors and Debtors	
Stafford Led Shared Services	• Technology (including Reprographics)	Performance is generally reported via SBC's Scrutiny Committee, though specific reviews can be requested by CCDC's Corporate Scrutiny Committee
	• Legal	
	• Human Resources	

SCRUTINY REVIEW TEMPLATE

REVIEW TITLE

SCOPE OF THE REVIEW / TERMS OF REFERENCE

REASON FOR SCRUTINY

MEMBERSHIP OF THE REVIEW GROUP

KEY TASKS / REVIEW PLAN

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

TIMESCALE