

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

COORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY GROUP

21 JULY 2021

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Report Title | Work Programmes 2021/2022 for the three Scrutiny Committees: Corporate, Place and People |
| Report Author | Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager, tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk 01604 837408 |

| Contributors/Checkers/Approvers | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| MO | Catherine Whitehead | 8 July 2021 |
| Deputy MO | Geoff Wild | |
| S151 | Martin Henry | |

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Work Programme 2021/2022 – Corporate Scrutiny Committee (copy to follow)

Appendix B - Draft Work Programme 2021/2022 – Place Scrutiny Committee

Appendix C - Draft Work Programme 2021/2022 – People Scrutiny Committee (copy to follow)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The remit of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group (the Group) includes the responsibility for approving the Work Programmes for the three Scrutiny Committees – Corporate, Place and People.
- 1.2 The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider any matter referred to it by the Leader/Cabinet in accordance with those procedures and, having considered the matter, shall report to the Leader/Cabinet with comments and/or proposals. In the case of cross-cutting matters, the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group may recommend a particular Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers such matters.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Effective work programming establishes directed scrutiny of issues of local importance and ensures that Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference.
- 2.2 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) states that an effective work programme is central to effective scrutiny. Therefore, a good Scrutiny Work Programme ensures that the Committees are focussing on priority issues, making best use of both time and resources. The designing of a Work Programme for Scrutiny can promote public participation, transparency and demonstrate good governance.
- 2.3 Work Programming is the planning stage. Potential topics for scrutiny are identified for the year. These will be investigated either at a Committee meeting or through time limited Task and Finish Groups. It is typical for a long list to be drawn up initially that is reduced to a short list before a final work programme is approved.
- 2.4 The three Scrutiny Committees have held their inaugural meetings, and each has proposed a short-term work programme for 2021/2022 for consideration by the Group. These are attached at Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C and should be considered by the Group and commented on and agreed or amended so that they can be further developed if required. Should any proposed reviews be felt to be cross-cutting issues, the Group will decide which Scrutiny Committees would be responsible for these reviews.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
 - 3.1.1 The Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considers, for approval, the three Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes for 2021/2022 as set out in Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C.
 - 3.1.2 The Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group considers any potential cross-cutting review themes as detailed on the three Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/2022 as set out in Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C; and recommends a particular Scrutiny Committee(s) to consider the issue.
- 3.2 ***Reason for Recommendations***
 - 3.2.1 One of Overview and Scrutiny's key roles is to undertake focussed work programming in order that it is ensured that Scrutiny contributes actively to the Council's objectives.
 - 3.2.2 Each of the three Scrutiny Committees should have a Work Programme for the year, every year. The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, at its meeting on 17 June 2021, agreed

that each Scrutiny Committee would compile a short-term Work Programme, for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group.

- 3.2.3 The Scrutiny Committees each agreed to hold a Work Programming event to further develop the Work Programme for 2021/2022 and report back to a later meeting of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group of further suggested items for inclusion within the Scrutiny Work Programmes.

3.3 Work Programming Event

- 3.3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, at its meeting on 17 June 2021 considered various options for potential work programming for Overview and Scrutiny.
- 3.3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group agreed that each Scrutiny Committee should hold individual work programming events, rather than one single work programming event.
- 3.3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group agreed that the Scrutiny Committees would develop short term Work Programmes for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group for approval.
- 3.3.3 The Scrutiny Committees will each now consider, at a later meeting, how to run their work Programming events and will provide details to the Group.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Centre for Public Scrutiny and Governance advocates that scrutiny committees should agree a work programme at the start of each Municipal year; in order that issues can be scheduled for consideration and reports produced in a timely manner.
- 4.5.1 The Council's constitution states that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consult with other parts of the Council as appropriate, including the Cabinet, on the preparation of any work programme.
- 4.5.2 Each Scrutiny Committee – Corporate, Place and People has proposed a short-term work programme for 2021/22 for consideration of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group.

5 Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group, at its meeting on 17 June 2021, agreed the Work Programming process for each Scrutiny Committee to follow, as detailed in section 4 of this report.
- 5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Scrutiny Group is responsible for approving the work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.2 Resources and Financial

6.2.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Legal

6.3.1 Overview and Scrutiny operates within the provisions as set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It has had specific powers relating to health services since 2001 and the crime and disorder since 2006.

6.3.2 As set out in Part 7, paragraph 7.1.3 of the constitution “The Overview and Scrutiny function will develop a work plan as well as supporting policy development, providing pre-decision scrutiny where appropriate, holding decision-makers to account and exercising the formal call-in of executive decisions to review any concerns about the making of the decision.”

6.3.3 Part 7.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules states:

1.2 the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consult with other parts of the Council as appropriate, including the Cabinet, on the preparation of any work programme.

1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will take into account any views expressed following consultation under Rule 1.2 above in drawing up any work programme. They should take into account the resources, both Officer and financial, available to support its proposals.

6.4 Risk

6.4.1 To comply with the requirements of the Council’s Constitution, the work programmes of the three Scrutiny Committees must be formally approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Scrutiny Group.

6.4.2 Scrutiny is essential to good governance and enables the voice and concerns of residents and communities to be heard and provides challenge and accountability.

6.5 Consultation

6.5.1 Various options for work programming were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group and each Scrutiny Committee was informed of the preferred option.

6.5.2 The agreed work programming process includes the opportunity for non-Executives, Cabinet, the public and officers to be involved in the Work Programme process.

6.5.3 At the inaugural meetings of each Scrutiny Committees, a short-term work programme was considered and drafted for consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group. Each Scrutiny Committee has a lead Executive Director assigned to it and they provided information and assistance to inform the short-term work programme. The Executive Director consulted the relevant Assistant Directors on the proposed Scrutiny topics in terms of timings and the proposed focus of the reviews. All comments received have been included within the work programmes. When the short-term work programmes are approved, Cabinet Members will receive a copy. Cabinet Members will be further involved in the work programming process for Overview and Scrutiny by being invited to attend the work programming events and inform non-Executives of their priorities for the year. This could then inform any pre-decision scrutiny items and future scrutiny reviews.

6.5.4 Each meeting of the Scrutiny Committees included the work programme as an agenda item, providing Members to comment on and input to the Committees work programme further.

6.6 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.6.1 The Scrutiny Committees developed short-term Work Programme 2021/2022 which have been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group for approval. (Appendix A, B and C refers.)

6.7 Climate Impact

6.7.1 There are no immediate climate impact implications arising from the proposals.

6.8 Community Impact

6.8.1 Scrutiny work will need to assess the implications of any recommendations made, including equalities and community cohesion implications.

7 Background Papers

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group – 17 June 2021

Report to the Place Scrutiny Committee - 22 June 2021

Report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 6 July 2021

Report to the People Scrutiny Committee - 20 July 2021