

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 NOVEMBER 2021

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| Report Title | Work Programmes 2021/2022 for Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Short Term Work Programme 2021/2022 – Place Scrutiny Committee

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its work programming event on 7 October 2021 and has proposed items for the Committee to consider for inclusion within its work programme 2021/2022 as set out at paragraph 5.1 of this report.
- 1.2 This report therefore sets out both the short-term work programme 2021/2022, as detailed at Appendix A, which was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group at its meeting on 21 July 2021, together with proposals for further scrutiny review as set out at paragraph 5.2 of this report.

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, ensuring that the Committees focus on priority issues and make best use of both time and resources. The designing of a Work Programme for Scrutiny promotes 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 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its work programming event on 7 October 2021 and considered presentations from Cabinet detailing their priorities for the year, the short-term work programme, over sixty suggestions from members of the public for future scrutiny review, together with suggestions proposed by the Committee itself.

3 Recommendations

- 3.3 It is recommended that:
 - 3.3.1 The Place Overview and Scrutiny Group considers the issues suggested at the Work Programming event on 7 October 2021 and proposes which of these are included within the short-term work programme 2021/2022.
 - 3.3.2 The updated Work Programme for Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is presented to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group for consideration and approval at its meeting on 30 November 2021.

3.4 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.4.1 One of Overview and Scrutiny's key roles is to undertake focussed work programming in order to ensure that Scrutiny contributes actively to the Council's objectives.
- 3.4.2 Each of the three Scrutiny Committees should have an annual Work Programme. 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.
- 3.4.3 The Scrutiny Committees each agreed to hold an event to further develop the Work Programme for 2021/2022 and report back to a later meeting of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group with further suggested items for inclusion within the Scrutiny Work Programmes.

3.3 Work Programming Event

- 3.3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group agreed that each Scrutiny Committee should hold individual work programming events, rather than one single event. Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its event on 7 October 2021.
- 3.3.2 The Work Programming event was well attended, and a comprehensive debate took place, considering Cabinet's priorities for the year, that are within the remit of Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the sixty plus suggestions from members of the public, the short-term work programme 2021/2022 and general ideas put forward by non- Executive Members.

4 Report Background

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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 Each Scrutiny Committee – Corporate, Place and People has proposed a short-term work programme for 2021/22 and has each held a work programming event to further develop the short-term work programmes.

5 Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee proposed additional items to include within its work programme and suggested how Scrutiny activity will take place, for example, a Task and Finish Group undertaking a review, the Committee to undertake a review or pre-decision scrutiny. The issues that were suggested for the Committee's consideration for inclusion within its Work Programme 2021/2022 are detailed below:
- **Highways Contract to include economies of scale.** The Short-Term work programme currently includes a review of the Highways Contract - to have an overview, within the constraints of the contract.
 - **West Northamptonshire Travel/infrastructure Strategy** – to provide Scrutiny input into the strategy, including footpath & cycleways, timescales, and funding
 - **Cabinet Member for Regeneration to be invited to a future meeting of the Committee** to provide details regarding and how Towcester and other main towns are being has been considered.
 - **Strategic Housing land for West Northants and the provision for sustainable homes** – A briefing to be provided to the Committee on how scrutiny can provide input
 - **Road Safety** – A Task and Finish Group to be set up to investigate road safety including traffic speed and various enforcement cameras

- **Cabinet Member for Highways to provide a briefing to the Committee** on the new highways contract with particular emphasis on potholes maintenance.
 - **Libraries** – The Cabinet Member to provide a briefing to the Committee on the Council’s policy regarding libraries
 - **Fly Tipping**. The Short-Term work programme currently includes a review of fly tipping. Initially the Committee could receive a presentation on ‘what we can do’ and what is being worked on. A Task and Finish Group could then be convened to undertake a review and provide Scrutiny input into the reporting mechanisms, clearance, and enforcement.
 - **Market Square development** - The short-term work programme currently contains details of the Market Square development
- 5.2 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the list as set out at paragraph 5.1 for inclusion within its Work Programme 2021/2022.
- 5.3 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 specific powers relating to health services since 2001 and the crime and disorder since 2006.
- 6.3.2 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 consider any views expressed following consultation under Rule 1.2 above in drawing up any work programme. They should consider the resources, both Officer and financial, available to support its proposals.

6.3.4 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 Risk

6.4.1 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 The agreed work programming process includes the opportunity for non-Executive Members, Cabinet, the public and officers to be involved in the Work Programme process. 50 members of the public put forward suggestions for future Scrutiny reviews. Two non-Executive Members, (not members of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee) attended, and partook, in the work programme event held on 7 October 2021.

6.5.2 Cabinet Members were involved in the work programming process for Overview and Scrutiny by being invited and attended the work programming event and informed non-Executives of their priorities for the year. This was then used to inform any pre-decision scrutiny items and future scrutiny reviews.

6.5.3 Each meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes the work programme as an agenda item, providing Members with the opportunity to comment on and input to the Committees work programme.

6.6 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.6.1 The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee has further developed its Work Programme 2021/2022 which will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group for approval.

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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 22 June 2021

Agenda and Minutes of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 31 August 2021

Notes of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 October 2021