

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2021

Report Title	People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2021/22
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Short Term Work Programme for 2021/22

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report invites the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and update its Work Programme for 2021/22 to take account of potential matters for scrutiny identified at the Committee’s work programming event on 21st October 2021.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Effective work programming establishes directed scrutiny of issues of local importance and ensures that Overview and Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) states that an effective work programme is central to effective scrutiny, ensuring that committees focus on priority issues and make best use of both time and resources. The design of a work programme for Overview and Scrutiny can promote public participation, transparency and demonstrate good governance.
- 2.2 The Council’s Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group, at its meeting on 17th June 2021, agreed the process that would be used by each of the Overview and Scrutiny committees to develop their work programmes for 2021/22. This tasked each committee with compiling a short term

work programme for approval by the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group. Committees would then each hold a work programming event in autumn 2021 to develop their work programmes further before reporting back to a later meeting of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group.

- 2.3 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its work programming event on 21st October 2021. This report presents the outcomes of the event to enable the Committee to give further consideration to its work programme in accordance with the process agreed by the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that:

- 3.1.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the topics identified at the Work Programming event on 21st October 2021 and identifies which of these are to be included in its work programme for 2021/22.
- 3.1.2 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes that its updated work programme for 2021/22 will be presented to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group for consideration and approval at its meeting on 30th November 2021.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.2.1 The recommendations reflect the need for Overview and Scrutiny to undertake focussed work programming that enables it to contribute actively to the Council's objectives. The recommendations are intended to support the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to do so within the agreed work programming process.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 CfGS 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.
- 4.2 Work programming should consider the four core functions of Overview and Scrutiny:
- Holding the Executive to account
 - Policy development and review (often carried out in the format of task and finish group work or inquiry days)
 - Performance monitoring and
 - External scrutiny (scrutiny of agencies external to the Council)
- 4.3 It could also consider:
- The corporate priorities of the Council
 - Views of other councillors who are not members of an Overview and Scrutiny committee
 - Best practice in terms of the process for work programming

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programming event on 21st October 2021 was attended by 9 Committee members and non-executive councillors. It received an overview of priorities for 2021/22 from the Leader of the Council; the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure; the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration; and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education. Subsequent discussion by councillors was informed by input from the Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing; the Director of Children's Services; and the Assistant Director Safeguarding and Wellbeing.
- 5.2 The work programming event considered potential scrutiny topics suggested by members of the public within the Committee's remit, the Committee's existing short term work programme for 2021/22 and other ideas put forward by non-executive councillors.
- 5.3 The work programming event ultimately identified various potential matters for inclusion in the Committee's work programme 2021/22, making further suggestions about the timing or approach to be taken in particular cases. The potential matters identified were as follows:

Housing Strategy

Scrutiny input into the development of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)'s interim Housing Strategy, which is due to be adopted in 2022 ahead of the development of a full Strategy informed by data from the 2021 Census. Report to the Committee meeting on 25th January 2022.

Sports and leisure provision

Scrutiny of how West Northamptonshire Council works together with other service providers and community groups to provide the best overall offer to residents from all parts of the community. Proposed as a topic for early 2022/23 to enable new arrangements to be in following local government reorganisation.

This work could be an example of scrutiny on the wider theme of the community impact of WNC services: scrutinising how WNC identifies needs, other support available in the community that help to meet them, and how WNC could therefore focus its resources to have the most impact in future.

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) support

Overview of SEND provision in West Northamptonshire.

Alternative provision

Overview of alternative provision – education outside school arranged by the local authority or schools – in West Northamptonshire

School improvement

Scrutiny of activity by West Northamptonshire Council to support school improvement. Proposed as a topic for late 2021/22 or early 2022/23.

Rough sleeping

Scrutiny of the 'everyone in' approach to rough sleeping applied during the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential to continue to apply the principles it involved in West Northamptonshire.

Scrutiny of severe weather shelter provision in West Northamptonshire.

Healthwatch function

Overview of arrangements to deliver the Healthwatch function in Northamptonshire.

Provision of free broadband for care leavers

Scrutiny input into the development of proposals by West Northamptonshire Council, responding to the motion put to the Council meeting on 23rd September 2021. Report to a future Committee meeting.

Recruitment and retention of Adult Social Care social workers

Scrutiny of the latest position at West Northamptonshire Council, focussing on posts supporting delivery of statutory social care services.

Support for people living with dementia

Scrutiny of how well people living with dementia are supported in West Northamptonshire. This work could potentially take as a starting point the response to the Northampton Borough Council scrutiny review on becoming a dementia-friendly community.

- 5.2 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee should now consider the potential issues set out at paragraph 5.1, alongside the Committee's existing short term work programme set out at Appendix A to this report, to identify an updated work programme 2021/22. This will be presented to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group for consideration and approval in accordance with the Council's constitution.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 Overview and Scrutiny operates within the provisions of 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 crime and disorder since 2006.

6.2.2 As set out in Part 7, paragraph 7.1.3 of the Council’s 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.”

6.2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 7 of the constitution state:

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.

1.4 A Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group, composed of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, shall be responsible for approving the work programmes prepared by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no specific risks connected with the proposals in this report. The Council’s constitution requires that Overview and Scrutiny committee work programmes are presented to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group.

6.3.2 Overview and Scrutiny is essential to the good governance of the Council, enabling the voice and concerns of residents and communities to be heard and providing challenge and accountability.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 The agreed process for developing Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes has included the opportunity for input from non-executive councillors, Cabinet Members, Council officers and members of the public. 50 members of the public put forward suggestions for scrutiny reviews. The Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet Members have attended each work programming event to give an overview of their priorities for the year. Work programming events have also been attended by non-executive councillors who are not Overview and Scrutiny committee members.

6.4.2 Work programmes are reported to each Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting, which provides councillors with a regular opportunity to review and shape them.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 The current agenda item enables the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give further consideration to its work programme for 2021/22. This will also be subject to consideration by the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group.

6.6 Climate Impact

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

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 Overview and scrutiny work will need to assess the implications of any recommendations made, including equalities and community cohesion implications.

7. Background Papers

Potential Work Programming Process for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Report to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group (17th June 2021)

Development of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 – Report to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (20th July 2021)