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| Meeting: | General overview and scrutiny committee |
| Meeting date: | 26 July 2016 |
| Title of report: | Draft work programme and task and finish groups |
| Report by: | Governance services |

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To consider the committee's work programme and related scrutiny activities.

Recommendation

That: the draft work programme (Appendix 2) be approved, subject to any amendments the committee wishes to make.

Alternative options

- 1 It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 The committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is focused, effective and produces clear outcomes.

Key considerations

Draft work programme

- 3 The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in.

- 4 Following discussion at both Overview and Scrutiny Committees about the development of their work programmes a workshop was held on 25 May. This was to provide an opportunity for all members of the scrutiny committees to contribute to the development of an annual work programme. Members of the Executive and Directors attended to support this process.
- 5 The principal purpose of this exercise was for members to identify a shortlist of items for scrutiny for their respective committees.
- 6 Supporting documentation included the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Understanding Herefordshire), the Corporate Plan, the Forward Plan, draft performance outturn information for 2015/16; priorities for scrutiny suggested by Executive members and Directorates. Suggestions had also been invited from all Members of the Council and from the public.
- 7 Each Committee was divided into two groups and as the first part of the exercise each group was invited to identify topics they would like to scrutinise allocating them high, medium and low priority. A consolidating exercise was then undertaken with the intention of selecting the top five priorities for scrutiny.
- 8 The outcome of this exercise is attached at appendix 1.
- 9 In undertaking the exercise it was recognised that further work would need to be given to the selected topics to assess the feasibility and practicality of scrutinising them, the type of scrutiny method that would be most suitable and the timing. A report would be made to each scrutiny Committee seeking approval of an agreed work programme. This would also take into account budget and policy framework and other items that necessarily needed to be considered by each Committee.
- 10 Following discussion with the Chairman and officers, a revised work programme is appended (Appendix 2) for consideration. As before, the work programme will remain under continuous review during the year to allow the Committee to react to particular circumstances.
- 11 In considering the draft work programme, consideration should be given to the most appropriate approach for scrutiny of items, in particular, those with broad themes. For example, it may be appropriate to focus on one aspect of an item by way of a task and finish group, for which a detailed scoping statement would be required. Alternatively, certain items may benefit from a spotlight review.
- 12 Should committee members become aware of issues they are invited to discuss the matter with the Chairman and the statutory scrutiny officer.
- 13 Since the workshop the following proposed additions to the work programme have been put forward for consideration:

| Subject | Proposer | Type of Scrutiny | Timing |
|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| Highways Maintenance Plan | Assistant Director- Environment and Place | Pre-decision | September 2016 |
| Phosphates issues e.g. levels in water courses and impact on countryside and | Chairman of GOSC | Spotlight Review | tbc |

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| tourism. | | | |
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Task and finish groups

- 14 Appendix 2 refers to some topics that may be subjects for scrutiny by Task and Finish groups. Draft scoping statements will be brought forward in due course.

Executive responses

- 15 An executive response is awaited to the report on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Additional issues Raised at the Workshop

Tracking of Recommendations Made by the Committee

- 16 Whilst there is a clear and established process for tracking the response to recommendations made by Task and Finish Groups, monitoring other recommendations made at meetings has proved more difficult.
- 17 The workshop did touch on the importance of recommendations being realistic and possibly fewer in number and more focused. The need for monitoring, which would be assisted by clear recommendations, has been acknowledged. It is proposed that an update on progress made in response to all recommendations will be reported quarterly as part of the work programme report.
- 18 A Schedule of Recommendations made and action in response to date is attached at appendix 3.

Forward plan

- 18 On a number of occasions in discussing the work programme Members have referred to the desirability of having the Forward Plan available to inform that discussion. The current Forward plan is available to Members through the Councillors' handbook intranet site. Forthcoming key decisions are also available to the public under the Forward plan link on the council's website:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?&RP=0&K=0&DM=0&HD=0&DS=1&Next=true&H=1&META=mgforthcomingdecisions&V=1>

Annual Work Programme Workshop

- 19 There was support for a work programme workshop to be scheduled annually and this is included in the draft work programme attached at appendix 2.

Community impact

- 20 The topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Equality duty

- 21 The topics selected need to have regard for equality and human rights issues.

Financial implications

- 22 The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny will be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

Legal implications

- 23 The council is required to deliver an overview and scrutiny function.

Risk management

- 24 There is a reputational risk to the council if the overview and scrutiny function does not operate effectively. The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

- 25 The Chairman and Statutory scrutiny officer meet on a regular basis to review the work programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Outcomes from scrutiny workshop on 25 May

Appendix 2 Draft Work Programme

Appendix 3 – Schedule of General Overview and Scrutiny recommendations made and action in response

Background papers

None identified.