

Meeting:	General scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	11 July 2017
Title of report:	Work programme
Report by:	Governance services

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To review the committee's work programme.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the draft work programme as set out at appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to any amendments the committee wishes to make;**
- (b) the committee considers whether it wishes to contribute to the response to the consultation on West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance as requested. *(If it does wish to do so it is proposed that a spotlight review be undertaken and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer be authorised to finalise arrangements.);***
- (c) the committee considers whether it wishes to appoint a standing panel of members to maintain a watching brief as proposals for the Minerals and Waste local plan develop, and, if so, it determines the size of this panel and which members of the Committee wish to serve on it;**
- (d) the committee determines any other matter in relation to the appointment of task and finish groups their chairmanship and any special responsibility allowance or the undertaking of a spotlight review; and**
- (e) the committee decides whether there is any matter for which it wishes to exercise its powers of co-option.**

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 Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the Committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the Chairman and the statutory scrutiny officer.
- 5 The current draft work programme prepared following the work programme events in June to which all members of council were invited to contribute is attached at appendix 1. Attention is drawn to proposed changes to meeting dates to avoid a clash with Planning Committee site inspections.

Police and Crime Commissioner's consultation on West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance.

- 6 A request has been received from the leader of the council that the Committee consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's consultation on West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance. The Council is a statutory consultee and the Committee has been invited to make recommendations to inform Cabinet's response. The closing date for the consultation is 11 September 2017. The Committee needs to consider whether it wishes to conduct this review as requested. If it does wish to do so it is proposed that a spotlight review be undertaken and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer be authorised to finalise arrangements.

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/working-together/west-mercia-fire-governance-consultation/>

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 7 The Committee will be consulted on the Plan as it forms part of the budget and policy framework. However, it has been suggested that a standing panel of members should be appointed to maintain a watching brief as proposals develop. The Committee needs to consider whether it supports this approach and if so determine the size of this panel and which members of the Committee wish to serve on it.

Constitutional Matters

Task and Finish Groups

- 8 A scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances.
- 9 The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairman, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors (nominees to be sought from group leaders) and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. In appointing a chairman of a task and finish group the committee will also determine, having regard to the advice of the council's monitoring officer and statutory scrutiny officer, whether the scope of the activity is such as to attract a special responsibility allowance.
- 10 The Committee is asked to determine any matters relating to the appointment of a task and finish group and the chairmanship and any special responsibility allowance or undertaking a spotlight review including co-option (see below).

Co-option

- 11 A scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed workplan and/or task and finish group membership.
- 12 The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

- 13 A schedule of recommendations made and action in response to date is attached at appendix 2.

Forward plan

- 14 The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. 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 forthcoming decisions link on the council's website:

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

Community impact

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

Equality duty

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

Financial implications

17 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

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

Risk management

19 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

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft work programme

Appendix 2 – schedule of general overview and scrutiny recommendations made and action in response.

Background papers

- None identified.