

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	30 SEPTEMBER 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the Committee's work programme.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the work programme as appended be approved.

Key Points Summary

- The Committee is asked to agree its work programme and to note progress on the scrutiny reviews approved by the Committee in July.

Alternative Options

- 1 It is for the Committee to determine its work programme as it sees fit to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. Any number of subjects could be included in the work programme. However, the Committee does need to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused on the key issues, realistic and deliverable within the existing resources available.

Reasons for Recommendations

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

Introduction and Background

- 3 On 27 July the Committee agreed to hold a workshop for the Members of the Committee to consider the Committee's work programme with the intention that a proposed programme would then be reported to the Committee for approval.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on (01432) 260239

- 4 A workshop was held on 19 September. Members were presented with suggestions for scrutiny submitted by Members of the Council; a list of issues retained on the work programmes of the former scrutiny committees; and suggestions for scrutiny that had been received from Members of the public.
- 5 A draft work programme based on discussions at that workshop is appended. The appendix also contains a chart showing progress to date on the six scrutiny reviews commissioned by the Committee in July.
- 6 A project plan for each piece of task and finish work (scoping statement) will be reported to the Committee for consideration. The plan will identify a clear focus for each proposed scrutiny activity and set out clear outcomes to demonstrate that scrutiny involvement will be beneficial. Members of the Committee will be invited to comment on the scoping statements as they are developed.
- 7 As recognised in the discussion paper on the new scrutiny model the work programme needs to retain flexibility to respond to events as the Committee sees fit. A report on the work programme will be made to each scheduled meeting of the Committee.
- 8 At the workshop the Vice-Chairman (Health and Wellbeing) highlighted the extent and significance of the Committee's statutory responsibilities for health scrutiny. It was agreed that, as an informal arrangement, the Vice Chairman for Health and Well Being and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee should receive regular updates on health matters. This informal group would have no powers but would refer any issues requiring the formal expression of a view to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.
- 9 It was noted that the Committee also has a statutory responsibility to scrutinise Crime and Disorder Matters. There is a minimum requirement of one meeting a year. Guidance states that the scrutiny function should consider community safety issues more consistently throughout the year just as it would with any other subject matter. The work programme provides for the Committee's meeting in March to consider Crime and Disorder matters. The Committee can determine to scrutinise additional matters as it sees fit.

Community Impact

- 10 The topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to the County's residents.

Financial Implications

- 11 The costs of the work of the Scrutiny 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

- 12 The Council is required to deliver an Overview and Scrutiny function.

Risk Management

- 13 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 to mitigate this risk.

Consultees

- 14 Following initial consultation on topics for scrutiny with Directors and Members of the Cabinet, all Members of the Council were invited to suggest items for scrutiny.

Appendices

- 15 Draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Background Papers

- None identified.