

Title of report: Committee work programme

Meeting: General scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Monday 19 July 2021

Report by: Democratic services officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

(All wards)

Purpose

To review the committee's work programme.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the draft work programme be approved subject to any amendments the committee wishes to make; and**
- (b) the committee establishes a litter review task and finish group to undertake the work outlined in the draft scoping statement (appendix 2 to the report) and confirms the membership and chairperson.**

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.

Key considerations

2. The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of local concern and be manageable. It must also be ready to accommodate urgent items or matters that have been called-in.
3. 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 chairperson, vice-chairperson and the statutory scrutiny officer.
4. On 23 July 2019, the committee authorised the statutory scrutiny officer, following consultation with the chairperson and vice-chairperson, to add items to the work programme where it is necessary to ensure their timely consideration where there is no scheduled meeting to approve their inclusion.
5. The draft work programme is attached at appendix 1. This is due to be reviewed at an informal work programming session on Monday 12 July 2021. The outcomes of this session and the updated work programme will be reported at the committee meeting.

Constitutional matters

Task and finish groups

6. 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.
7. The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairperson, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least two members of the committee, other councillors, and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. The committee will appoint the chairperson of a task and finish group.

Request to establish a task and finish group – litter review

8. The committee agreed on 26 April 2021 to establish a task and finish group to consider matters relating to litter. A draft scoping statement is attached for consideration at appendix 2.
9. Three members of the committee have indicated that they wish to serve on this task and finish group: Councillors Bowen (True Independents), Bowes and Summers (Independents for Herefordshire). In line with the usual approach, group leaders have been invited to nominate other members to serve on the task and finish group. To date, Councillor Ann-Marie Probert (Conservatives) has been nominated and any nominations from the Liberal Democrats and The Green Party groups will be reported at the committee meeting.
10. The committee is invited to consider the draft scoping statement, the membership, and the chairperson of the group. To date, Councillor Bowen has indicated that he would be willing to chair.

Suggestions for scrutiny

11. Suggestions for scrutiny are invited from members of the public through the council's website, accessible through the link below.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved/4

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

12. A schedule of recommendations made and actions in response is attached at appendix 3.

Forward plan

13. The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming decisions can be viewed under the forthcoming decisions link on the council's website:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgdelegateddecisions.aspx?XXR=0&DAYS=28&RP=0&K=0&DM=0&HD=0&DS=1&META=mgdelegateddecisions&V=0>

14. Extracts from the plan for cabinet and for other executive decision makers, containing items within the remit of this committee, are attached at appendix 4 and appendix 5, respectively.

Community impact

15. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts and encourages constructive challenge and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Environmental impact

16. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
17. The topics selected for scrutiny will take environmental impact into account.

Equality duty

18. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

19. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can contribute positively to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report concerns the administrative function of the committee, it is not considered that it will have an impact on the equality duty.
20. The topics selected for scrutiny need to have regard to equality and human rights issues.

Resource implications

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

Legal implications

22. The council is required to deliver an overview and scrutiny function. The development of a work programme that is focused and reflects priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the committee and the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

Risk management

23. 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

24. The work programme is reviewed at every committee meeting. The chairperson, vice-chairperson and statutory scrutiny officer also review the work programme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Draft work programme
- Appendix 2 Scoping statement for the litter review task and finish group
- Appendix 3 Schedule of recommendations made and actions in response
- Appendix 4 Forward plan of forthcoming decisions at 22 June 2021 - Cabinet extract
- Appendix 5 Forward plan of forthcoming decisions at 22 June 2021 - other executive decision makers extract

Background papers

None identified.