

# Title of report: Work Programme

**Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: Monday 23 October 2023**

**Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

This report provides the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee with its draft work programme until May 2024.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That the committee:**

- a) agree its draft work programme;**
- b) agrees any additions to or deletions from the work programme; and**
- c) identifies the people and organisations it wishes to include in its work programme activity, and the data and other evidence required to carry out effective scrutiny.**

## **Alternative options**

1. The committee could decline to agree a work programme. This would mean that the committee was reliant on opportunistic items being considered in meetings and would reduce the ability of the committee to add value to council priorities. It is therefore not a recommended option.

## **Key considerations**

2. Work programming is a crucial element of effective scrutiny. Planning a scrutiny's work programme ensures that the committee:
  - a. considers topics that are a priority for the council and where scrutiny can add value to the decision-making process
  - b. schedules topics so that the committee considers them at the right time
  - c. determines who to speak to in the course of its works
  - d. identifies the evidence required to carry out its work and
  - e. provides officers and organisations with sufficient notice and detail to support scrutiny well.

## **Community impact**

3. 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**

4. 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.
5. While this is a decision on the future work of the committee, and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy. For example, the committee meets online wherever possible in order to minimise car travel to Herefordshire Council offices.

## **Equality duty**

6. 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.
6. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute 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. The impact on council equality duties will therefore arise when the committee undertake this work programme.

### **Resource implications**

7. This report is produced as part of the regular business of the scrutiny function. There are therefore no resource implications in considering this report.
8. The topics that the committee includes in its work programme may result in resource implications for the committee and the wider scrutiny function. Any decision to carry out additional meetings, briefings or task and finish groups on specific topics are likely to increase the burden of resource onto Governance Services.
9. In considering a topic as part of its work, the committee may make recommendations to the council or NHS. Both of these organisations are required to respond to scrutiny recommendations and may accordingly choose to accept and implement these recommendations. Although the impact on resources of any recommendation may be discussed in the course of a scrutiny committee meeting, it is up to the officer or services proposing to implement a recommendation to identify and report resource implications to any decision maker.

### **Legal implications**

10. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides the framework of review of both executive and council decisions but also enables overview and scrutiny to make recommendations and reports on matters that affect the Council's area or its residents.

### **Risk management**

11. There are no specific risks inherent in considering this report.

## **Consultees**

12. The author of this report has involved the relevant scrutiny committee in producing this work programme, who have done so in partnership with officers of the council and members of the public.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Committee work programme

## **Background papers**

None identified