

Title of report: Scrutiny committee work programmes

Meeting: Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting date: Tuesday 7 November 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 committee with the current work programmes of Herefordshire Council's scrutiny committees.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee:

- a) consider whether the committee work programmes together provide a comprehensive overview of local authority and partnership priorities;**
- b) identify opportunities to co-ordinate work across committees; and**
- c) further identify area where committees may be duplicating or overlapping.**

Alternative options

1. The committee can choose to not use this opportunity to review scrutiny committee work programmes together. This is not recommended. Failing to review programmes risks an uncoordinated work across committees that do not adequately scrutinise local authority and partner priorities.

Key considerations

2. Herefordshire Council operates five scrutiny committees. Together, their remits span all of the council's services and responsibilities, as well as those within the NHS that are subject to scrutiny by the local authority. They are:
 - a. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
 - b. Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - c. Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
 - d. Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
 - e. Scrutiny Management Board
3. Herefordshire Council's constitution states that the remit of the Scrutiny Management Board includes a requirement to "[a]pprove an annual work programme for itself and the other scrutiny committees. Its remit also states that "Where a matter falls within the remit of one or more Scrutiny Committees, decide which committee will consider it and whether a spotlight, task and finish or standing panel review is appropriate".
4. Although the council's scrutiny committees have each agreed a work programme, these have yet to be submitted to Scrutiny Management Board for approval, as required by the council's constitution.
5. The scrutiny committees also review their work programmes after each meeting, amending, removing and adding topics in response to work already undertaken and emerging issues. It is therefore proposed to submit all committee work programmes to each meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board, to ensure that co-ordination reflect changes to the work programme.

Community impact

6. Effective scrutiny strengthens council and partner services. Better public services will have a beneficial impact on people and communities in Herefordshire. This impact will depend on the topic being considered, the recommendations made by the committee, and the extent to which those recommendations are implemented.

Environmental Impact

7. 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.

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

8. 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.
9. 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

10. This report is produced as part of the regular business of the scrutiny function. There are therefore no resource implications in considering this report.
11. 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.
12. 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

16. Paragraph 4.5.28 confirms that it is the scrutiny committees that decide their own work programme and priorities. Management committee co-ordinates this annual programme between the various committees to deliver to the functions and powers set out in paragraph 3.4.2.

Risk management

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

Consultees

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 scrutiny committee work programmes

Background papers

Herefordshire Council constitution

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 27/10/2023
Finance	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 26/10/2023
Communications	Luenne featherstone	Date 27/10/2023
Equality Duty	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.