

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee

21 March 2013

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WORK PROGRAMME 2013

Purpose

1. To enable the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to plan its work programme for 2013.

Options

2. The Committee may wish to approve the draft work programme attached at **Appendix A** to this report, or make any amendments at the meeting.

Considerations

3. The Democratic Services Team Leader and Democratic Services Officer responsible for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met informally with a number of Committee Members on 7 March 2013 to consider the Committee's work programme for 2013. A copy of this document is attached at **Appendix A**.
4. The Committee previously agreed to invite one or two Portfolio Holder(s) per meeting to scrutinise any decisions they had taken, or were due to take, and explore any areas for further scrutiny input. The draft work programme seeks to incorporate this approach and also provides an opportunity for the Committee to receive update reports on any work that has taken place to address the recommendations of previously undertaken scrutiny reviews.
5. Further items to consider at future meetings of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee may be identified from the Council's Forward Plan, which is attached as a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.

Scrutiny Reviews

6. At the informal meeting with Scrutiny and Overview Committee Members on 7 March 2013 the issue of Scrutiny Reviews was discussed in terms of the different ways in which they can be undertaken. A number of options were identified, as outlined in **Appendix B**, which should help the Scrutiny and Overview Committee decide upon an appropriate method of carrying out a Scrutiny Review.

Joint Working

7. Officers from Democratic Services continue to meet with neighbouring authorities as part of the Cambridgeshire Scrutiny Network, in order to share good practice and identify any potential areas for joint working. The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee attended the last meeting of the Network, held on 4 March 2013.

8. Members of this Scrutiny and Overview Committee are invited to attend the County Council's Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on 27 March 2013. An item on Cambridgeshire Future Transport will be considered at this meeting.

Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder issues

9. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire is scheduled to attend the meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 23 April to provide Members with a presentation on his priorities for 2013/14. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee will therefore meet in its official capacity as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee at this meeting, to coincide with the presentation by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Progress on past recommendations

10. The Scrutiny and Overview made the following recommendation to Cabinet at its previous meeting with regard to the Corporate Plan: -

That Action A6 in the Corporate Plan be amended to read: -

'Increase the supply of council-owned temporary accommodation as a priority without restricting the Council's options'

The Corporate Plan was adopted at the meeting of Council on 28 February 2013, with the wording in relation to Action A6 being amended to read: -

'Increase the supply of temporary accommodation, prioritising council-owned properties whilst not restricting options in other sectors'.

Implications

11. Financial	The Committee has a discretionary budget of £5,000. Up to £3,000 may be needed for Member training. External witnesses and co-optees may claim expenses.
Legal	The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to have at least one scrutiny committee. The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires the Council to place crime and disorder matters on at least one scrutiny agenda each year. The Constitution states that the Committee will set its own work programme.
Staffing/capacity	The Democratic Services team continues to support the Council's scrutiny function, with additional support for specific scrutiny reviews from the Policy and Performance Team as required. Each item selected for a scrutiny review may require the additional support of at least one lead officer in the relevant service area. Capacity for in-depth scrutiny work, such as the establishment of a Task and Finish Group, will be dependent on the number of elected members available and willing to participate.
Risk Management	The potential burden on the organisation of supporting scrutiny work must be balanced against the potential value it can add. External scrutiny carries the risk of affecting the Council's relationship or credibility with partners.
Equality opportunities	All proposed changes to policy or services require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Involvement of Children and Young People

12. Consultation with children and young people is mainly directed through the South Cambridgeshire Youth Council. Members of the Youth Council have been invited to attend meetings of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and a regular update item on the work of the Youth Council will feature on agendas for future meetings.

Consultation

13. Cabinet, elected members, senior officers, parish councils and residents, including the Council's nascent consultation panel, are invited to suggest potential topics for inclusion on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's work programme.
14. Focussed consultation exercises could be undertaken on specific issues should they be the subject of a scrutiny review.
15. On-going consultation with nearby councils, including the County Council, explores the potential for joint scrutiny activities.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

16. Scrutiny itself helps the Council to "listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure it delivers first class services and value for money".

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