

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee

4 July 2013

AUTHOR: Executive Director (Corporate Services)

WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

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 latest version of the Committee's work programme is attached to this report at **Appendix A**, which has been developed in consultation with the Chairman.
4. 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

5. 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

6. 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. A date for the next meeting has not yet been set, but it is likely that this will be held in August/September 2013.

Training and Development

7. The Council's Member Development Programme includes a training and development session on 'basic skills for scrutiny'. It was originally anticipated, via the Member Development Network, that a joint training and development session would be held with all authorities represented on the Network and that this would be led by the County Council. Unfortunately this joint session was not held. The committee is therefore requested to consider its training and development needs for 2013/14.

Implications

8. 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 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 service areas 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

9. 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

10. 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.
11. Focussed consultation exercises could be undertaken on specific issues should they be the subject of a scrutiny review.
12. On-going consultation with nearby councils, including the County Council, explores the potential for joint scrutiny activities.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

13. 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".

Contact Officer: Graham Aisthorpe-Watts, Democratic Services Team Leader
Tel: (01954) 713030