

## Policy and Scrutiny

<b>Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Director responsible for Democratic Services</b>
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Report to:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board</b>
Date:	<b>29 June 2017</b>
Subject:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme</b>

### Summary:

This item enables the Board to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit. Members are encouraged to highlight items that could be included for consideration in the work programme.

The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the Board to ensure that its contents are still relevant and will add value to the work of the Council and partners.

### Actions Required:

Members of the Board are invited to:

- 1) Review, consider and comment on the work programme as set out in Appendix A to this report.
- 2) Highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

## 1. Background

Overview and Scrutiny should be positive, constructive, independent, fair and open. The scrutiny process should be challenging, as its aim is to identify areas for improvement. Scrutiny activity should be targeted, focused and timely and include issues of corporate and local importance, where scrutiny activity can influence and add value.

Overview and scrutiny committees should not, as a general rule, involve themselves in relatively minor matters or individual cases, particularly where there are other processes, which can handle these issues more effectively.

All members of overview and scrutiny committees are encouraged to bring forward important items of community interest to the Board whilst recognising that not all items will be taken up depending on available resource and assessment against the prioritisation toolkit.

## Purpose of Scrutiny Activity

Set out below are the definitions used to describe the types of scrutiny, relating to the items on the Board's Work Programme:

Policy Development - The Board is involved in the development of policy, usually at an early stage, where a range of options are being considered.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny - The Board is scrutinising a proposal, prior to a decision on the proposal by the Executive, the Executive Councillor or a senior officer.

Policy Review - The Board is reviewing the implementation of policy, to consider the success, impact, outcomes and performance.

Performance Scrutiny - The Board is scrutinising periodic performance, issue specific performance or external inspection reports.

Consultation - The Board is responding to (or making arrangements to) respond to a consultation, either formally or informally. This includes pre-consultation engagement.

Budget Scrutiny - The Board is scrutinising the previous year's budget, or the current year's budget or proposals for the future year's budget.

Requests for specific items for information should be dealt with by other means, for instance briefing papers to members.

## Identifying Topics

Selecting the right topics where scrutiny can add value is essential in order for scrutiny to be a positive influence on the work of the Council. Members may wish to consider the following questions when highlighting potential topics for discussion to the Board:-

- Will Scrutiny input add value?  
*Is there a clear objective for scrutinising the topic, what are the identifiable benefits and what is the likelihood of achieving a desired outcome?*
- Is the topic a concern to local residents?  
*Does the topic have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the local population?*
- Is the topic a Council or partner priority area?  
*Does the topic relate to council corporate priority areas and is there a high level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area?*
- Are there relevant external factors relating to the issue?  
*Is the topic a central government priority area or is it a result of new government guidance or legislation?*

## **Scrutiny Review Activity**

Where a topic requires more in-depth consideration, the Board may commission a Scrutiny Panel to undertake a Scrutiny Review, subject to the availability of resources and approval of the Board. The Board may also establish a maximum of two working groups at any one time, comprising a group of members from the Committee.

Work Programme items on scrutiny review activity can include discussion on possible scrutiny review items; finalising the scoping for the review; consideration and approval of the final report; the response to the report; and monitoring outcomes of previous reviews.

## **Scrutiny and Executive Protocol**

The County Council's Scrutiny and Executive Protocol is attached at Appendix B to the report. The Scrutiny and Executive Protocol sets out practical working arrangements which develops a unity of purpose between the Executive, overview and scrutiny committees as well as the Council's senior managers.

The Protocol provides a framework for positive relationships between the Executive and overview and scrutiny committees, but its effectiveness is dependent on all councillors and officers accepting the principles underlying the Protocol.

The Protocol includes the following expectations:

- The Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will as far as possible attend each meeting of the Executive.
- The Chairmen or Vice Chairmen of overview and scrutiny committees should attend meetings of the Executive, where an item relevant to their committee's remit is being considered.
- Regular briefing meetings are recommended between the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of overview and scrutiny committees and the relevant Executive Councillor(s) and Executive Support Councillor(s). These meetings should include the scrutiny officers, and any relevant officers if required.
- It is accepted that Executive Councillors may not be able to attend all meetings of their relevant overview and scrutiny committees. An overview and scrutiny committee may request the attendance of an Executive Councillor for a particular item on the agenda. In such cases if the Executive Councillor is not available he or she should be represented by the Executive Support Councillor.

## 2. Conclusion

The Board's work programme for the coming year is attached at Appendix A to this report. A list of all upcoming Forward Plan decisions is also attached at Appendix C.

Members of the Board are invited to review, consider and comment on the work programme as set out in Appendix A and highlight for discussion any additional scrutiny activity which could be included for consideration in the work programme.

Consideration should be given to the items included in the work programme as well as any 'items to be programmed' listed.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Not Applicable

### b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme
Appendix B	Scrutiny and Executive Protocol
Appendix C	Forward Plan of Decisions

## 5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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