

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 APRIL 2013

WORK PROGRAMME

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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Summary

This item advises Members of the current work programme and allows them to adjust it in the light of latest priorities, issues and circumstances. It gives Members the opportunity to shape and direct the Committee's activities over the year.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Under Chapter 4 – Rules, paragraph 22.1 (v) General terms of reference, each overview and scrutiny committee has the responsibility for setting its own work programme.

2. Background

2.1. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the existing work programme for this committee.

3. Agenda planning meeting

3.1 Members will be aware that Overview and Scrutiny Committees hold agenda planning meetings on a regular basis. These give officers guidance on information Members wish them to provide when scrutinising an issue. An agenda planning meeting was held on 13 March 2013.

3.2 The Chairman and spokes persons were updated on the committee's current work programme and advised on the reports to be submitted to this meeting.

4. Future work programme

4.1 Forward Plan

The current Cabinet Forward Plan was published on 18 March 2013 and is attached at Appendix 3. It indicates by asterisk the items identified by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for pre-decision scrutiny.

- 4.2 The new items within the remit of this committee are:

End of Year Performance Report 2012/2013 – 9 July 2013

This report will bring forward the final Council Plan monitoring information for 2012/2013.

Statement of Accounts 2012/2013 – 9 July 2013

This report provided details of the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2012/2013. The Council was required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended) to produce an annual statement of accounts that is subject to scrutiny by the external auditors.

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2012/2013 – 9 July 2013

This report provided an overview of treasury management activity during 2012/2013. The report covered a number of issues including the Council's treasury position as at 31 March 2013, performance measurement, the strategy for 2012/2013, borrowing and investment rates, the borrowing outturn, compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators, investment outturn and debt rescheduling.

- 4.3 Item referred from Rural Liaison Committee – 19 March 2013 on the implementation of charges for the production of paper copies of planning applications to Parish Councils.

At its meeting on 19 March 2013, at the request of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, the Rural Liaison Committee considered a report on the implementation of charges to Parish Councils for the provision of paper copies of planning applications. The Committee agreed to ask that this matter be referred to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes this item to be added to its Work Programme.

5. The co-ordinating role of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 Under Medway's constitution, Chapter 4 – Rules – paragraph 22.2 (xxiii) this committee has the overall responsibility 'to provide guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, including guidance on priorities for scrutiny activities'.
- 5.2 To assist the committee in fulfilling this role, the Chairman has agreed that a regular overview of business discussed by the other overview and scrutiny committees should be presented at these meetings. Whilst each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to determine its own work programme, this committee may wish to comment on common themes and

the balance of business being covered by each committee. The work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees can include:

- items raised by members
- work on matters referred for review by the Council
- pre-decision scrutiny of items on the Cabinet's Forward Plan selected by the committee for discussion
- policy review and development
- pre-budget scrutiny
- consideration of petitions
- consideration of called-in Cabinet decisions.

5.3 Appendix 2 to this report sets out the current work programmes of the other three overview and scrutiny committees.

6. In-depth scrutiny review – update

6.1 The current programme of in-depth scrutiny reviews is as set out below. The Task Group on De-cluttering expects to conclude its work in early May.

Lead Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Topic	Indicative timetable
Children and Young People	Effective challenge to address under performance in schools	November 2011 - March 2012. (Reported March 2012).
Business Support	Fair Access to Credit Task Group – added to programme by Full Council in January 2012	March - June 2012 (Reported September 2012)
Regeneration, Community and Culture	Supported Accommodation	Late September to December 2012 (Reported December 2012)
Regeneration, Community and Culture	De-cluttering of town centres and main roads in Medway	January - May 2013
Health and Adult Social Care	Mental Health	May to July 2013

7. Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in Medway - Improvement and Development

7.1 On 6 December 2012 the Committee considered the outcome of a review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in Medway which demonstrated that, overall, Medway is operating in line with established best practice.

7.2 The Committee agreed an action plan to build on the strengths and further improve the arrangements in Medway. The Chairman and Opposition

Spokepersons met in February 2013 to prioritise the action plan. This was discussed by the Chairmen and Opposition Spokepersons of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees when they met on 11 March to bring forward recommendations for future scrutiny in-depth reviews.

7.3 The following action has been prioritised for 2013:

- Member Development on scrutiny of partners generally and the scrutiny of health services particularly (noting that the review of our NHS scrutiny protocols and further member development activity in relation to health scrutiny should be timed to coincide with any new guidance issued under the 2013 regulations on health scrutiny and as a consequence of the Francis Inquiry into care provided at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. This will enable emerging new requirements and best practice to be reflected in our local arrangements. (The Francis Inquiry made several recommendations relating to Overview and Scrutiny including the provision of guidance to promote the coordination and cooperation between Local Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Overview and Scrutiny Committees).
- Review of how Overview and Scrutiny Committees handle Council Plan Monitoring reports with a view to enhancing the role played by this Committee and relieving pressure of business for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Further discussion with leading officers is being planned to firm up options and recommendations. Members also asked for information on how Cabinet Members are held to account in other local authorities.
- Consideration of scope to engage with the Universities in Medway with a view to adding capacity for scrutiny research.
- Consideration of measures to increase capacity in Democratic Services to enable a more dynamic Overview and Scrutiny Committee timetable which will allow for extra Committee meetings as required to cope with high volumes of business

8. Financial and legal implications

8.1 There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) note the current work programme and identify items for inclusion in the work programme, including the request from the Rural Liaison Committee for an item to be included on the implementation of charges for provision of paper copies of planning applications to Parish Councils and including possible items from the Cabinet Forward Plan;
- (b) note the work undertaken by all overview and scrutiny committees (set out in appendices 2 and 3 to this report).

Background papers

None.

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