

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 AUGUST 2016

WORK PROGRAMME

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Summary

This report 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 21.1 (xv) 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 28 July. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillors Freshwater and Maple (Opposition Spokespersons) were in attendance and were updated on the Committee's current work programme and advised of the reports to be submitted to this meeting. The following issues were discussed:

Updates on Medway Norse

- 3.2 At the last meeting of the Committee, Members agreed that an update on Medway Norse be considered for each meeting of the Committee, subject to discussion at the Agenda planning meeting as to the content of each report.
- 3.3 At the agenda planning meeting the timing of when Medway Norse should report to the Committee was discussed further and it was agreed that it would preferable for updates to be given at the April and October meetings and not at each meeting. This will allow pre-decision scrutiny of Medway Norse budget proposals. In addition, it was suggested that Medway Norse should look at organising surgeries to provide regular opportunities for Members to raise more operational matters directly with Medway Norse, thereby allowing greater time for discussions at committee meetings about more strategic issues. In the meantime, the contact details for the Medway Norse service desk will be sent to Members.

Medway Commercial Group

- 3.4 In November 2015 Cabinet agreed to create a new Local Authority Parent Trading Company named as Medway Commercial Group Limited with Medway Council being the Majority Shareholder. The following services were transferred to the new company:
- the entire Medway Control Centre Service, including CCTV Partnership,
 - out-of-hours and associated personal safety services such as Telehealthcare and lone-working
- 3.5 At the last meeting Members added Medway Commercial Group (MCG) to the work programme for the August meeting, noting there would be clarification at the agenda planning meeting about the focus of this paper.
- 3.6 It is now suggested that instead of a stand alone report, a section about MCG is included in the report from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services when he is held to account at the December 2016 meeting.

Financial Impact on the Council of the EU Referendum Decision

- 3.7 This item was added to the work programme for the August meeting at the last meeting of the Committee. After further discussion at the agenda planning meeting it is recommended that it be removed from the work programme given that the issue was recently discussed extensively at the July Council meeting following a Member's question about what contingency plan the Council made in advance of 23 June, for the event that Britain voted to leave the European Union.

Business rate relief

- 3.8 This item was added to the work programme at the July meeting of the Committee. At the agenda planning meeting it was agreed that the outcome of the consultation exercise should be reported to this Committee prior to Cabinet agreeing a revised set of guidelines. The approach to the consultation exercise was discussed at the planning meeting and it was agreed that further discussions should take place about this between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons. As a result of these discussions, it has been suggested that the Committee should receive a paper on the outcome of the consultation exercise prior to consideration by Cabinet. As the consultation does not end until the first week in December it is possible that a special meeting of the Committee would need to be arranged in early January to consider this issue.

Member training/briefing on budget

- 3.9 Following a suggestion made at the agenda planning meeting, the Chief Finance Officer has agreed to hold a training event for Members on local government finance and the budget.

4.0 Future work programme

Forward Plan

- 4.1 The Forward Plan of forthcoming Cabinet decisions is published on the Council's website.

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=250&RP=115>

- 4.2 Set out below is a list of items featuring on the current Forward Plan that fall within the terms of reference of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee is asked to identify any items it wishes to consider before the Cabinet decision is taken (where dates permit) other than those already programmed in Appendix A.

Title of Decision	Anticipated Decision Date
Business Rate Relief This report will set out proposals for a revised set of guidelines for business rate relief to be implemented from 1 April 2017 following Cabinet's decisions on 8 March 2016 to rescind the current guidelines on 31 March 2017 and bring forward proposals for a revised set of guidelines.	6 September 2016 <i>(See para 3.8 of this report)</i>

<p>Business Rates Retention - Consultation</p> <p>This report will set out the proposed response for Cabinet's consideration and approval in respect of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on the retention of business rates.</p>	<p>6 September 2016</p> <p><i>(On agenda for this meeting)</i></p>
<p>Recruitment Freeze</p> <p>This report will bring forward vacant posts for Members' approval in accordance with the process approved by the Cabinet on 7 January 2003.</p>	<p>6 & 27 September, 25 October, 22 November & 20 December 2016</p>
<p>Council Plan Monitoring 2016/2017 - Quarter 1</p> <p>This report will set out performance monitoring for the first quarter of 2016/2017.</p>	<p>27 September 2016</p> <p><i>(On work programme for October meeting)</i></p>
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>This report will review the major financial issues facing the Council during this and the next four years. It also provides a framework for the more detailed preparation of the draft Revenue Budget for 2017/2018.</p>	<p>27 September 2016</p>
<p>Shared Legal Services with Gravesham</p> <p>This report will set out proposals for the establishment of shared legal services with Gravesham Borough Council.</p>	<p>27 September 2016</p>
<p>Annual Review of the Risk Management Strategy and Six Monthly Review of the Council's Corporate Risk Register</p> <p>This report will bring forward the latest risk management review.</p>	<p>22 November 2016</p> <p><i>(On work programme for October meeting)</i></p>
<p>Capital Budget Monitoring 2016/2017 - Quarter 2</p> <p>To report on the latest monitoring position.</p>	<p>22 November 2016</p> <p><i>(On work programme for December meeting)</i></p>
<p>Council Plan Monitoring 2016/2017 - Quarter 2</p> <p>This report will set out performance monitoring for the second quarter of 2016/2017.</p>	<p>22 November 2016</p> <p><i>(On work programme for December meeting)</i></p>

<p>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/2017 - Quarter 2</p> <p>To report on the latest monitoring position.</p>	<p>22 November 2016 <i>(On work programme for December meeting)</i></p>
<p>Business Rate Relief - Outcome of Consultation</p> <p>This report will set out the outcome of consultation in respect of proposals for a revised set of guidelines for business rate relief to be implemented from 1 April 2017 following Cabinet’s decisions on 8 March 2016 to rescind the current guidelines on 31 March 2017 and bring forward proposals for a revised set of guidelines.</p>	<p>20 December 2016 <i>(See para 3.8 of this report)</i></p>
<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme</p> <p>This report will seek Cabinet’s consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 prior to final consideration and approval at Full Council in January 2017.</p>	<p>20 December 2016</p>
<p>Medway Norse Six Monthly Report</p> <p>This report will present the latest monitoring information regarding the performance of Medway Norse.</p>	<p>20 December 2016 <i>(currently on work programme for December meeting but see also para 3.3 of this report)</i></p>

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. Outstanding Actions from Previous Committee Meetings

6.1 There are no outstanding from previous meetings.

7. Financial and legal implications

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

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) note and identify items for inclusion in the work programme (Appendix 1);
- (b) agree the changes to the current work programme as set out in paragraph 3;
- (c) note the work programmes of all overview and scrutiny committees (set out in Appendix 2 to this report).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Business Support O&S work programme
 Appendix 2 – Other O&S Committee work programmes

Background papers: None.

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