



BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 MARCH 2022

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 and provides an opportunity to shape and direct the Committee's activities over the year.

1. Budget and Policy Framework
 - 1.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility for setting its own work programme (Chapter 4 – Rules, paragraph 21.1 (xv) General terms of reference).
2. Background
 - 2.1 The Committee's draft work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year is attached at Appendix 1. One of the Committee's functions is to provide guidance and leadership on the development and co-ordination of the scrutiny function for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Appendix 2 sets out the work programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
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 took place on 8 March attended by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson.
 - 3.2 At the meeting, there was a further discussion on future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. Members will recall that at the last meeting of the Committee held on 25 January, the Committee discussed the following measures for reducing the length of overview and scrutiny meetings, and also Task Groups (covered in more detail at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5):

- Fewer agenda reports, with a maximum of four or five being considered at each meeting.
- Reports being taken as read; therefore, officers are not required to give introductions at meetings.
- Reports for Members' information to be circulated on the agenda only for noting without questions or debate.

The Committee:

- agreed that there should be further discussion between Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Opposition Spokespersons on measures for future overview and scrutiny committee meetings;
- noted the Director of Public Health's advice in relation to undertaking a Task Group on GP appointments and access to services at the present time;
- agreed the schedule for the remaining Task Groups as: 1. GP appointments and access to services; 2. physical activity; 3. town centres; and 4. support for carers (as a themed meeting);
- agreed that the Local Plan be considered by each of the overview and scrutiny committees at the appropriate time.

3.3 At the agenda planning meeting, Members gave further thought to the future of Overview and Scrutiny meetings and considered that the report which was presented to the last meeting did not fully reflect the general consensus of Members at the informal meeting held on 6 January. They considered that there needs to be a recognition that:

- Each overview and scrutiny committee has a different ethos.
- There should be flexibility in approach, e.g. varying number of meetings per O&S Committee; for example Business Support might drop a meeting to allow Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee to have an additional meeting.
- All Members would wish to avoid excessively long meetings.
- Committees will want to focus on specific issues at meetings.

3.4 Turning to Task Groups, at the agenda planning meeting it was noted that at the Health and Adult Social Care O&S agenda planning meeting, there had been a further discussion about the decision of Business Support O&S Committee that GP appointments and access to services should be the next Task Group topic. At that meeting, Members concluded that Business Support should be asked to reconsider its decision and re-instate Physical Activity as the next Task Group followed by GP appointments and access to services. This was agreed at the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee held on 10 March, for the following reasons:

a) Timing

The new Integrated Care Board is expected to be in place from 1 July 2022, which will significantly change the local health landscape. The Health and Care Bill, currently going through Parliament, will place Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) on a statutory footing, empowering them to better join up health and care services, improve population health and reduce health inequalities. Each ICS will be led by an NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB), an organisation with responsibility for NHS functions and budgets. When ICBs are legally established, clinical commissioning groups will be abolished. Therefore, if the GP Task Group were to start work now it would be engaging with and making recommendations to a body which would cease to exist from 1 July. While Members felt this scrutiny review was still essential, they also considered it would have more impact if it started in late summer/early autumn.

b) Relevance

Members at the agenda planning meeting felt it was more relevant than ever to start the Physical Activity review now given the impact the pandemic has had on levels of physical activity on the population, especially on children where obesity levels have increased markedly.

c) Resources

As reported to the Business Support O&S Committee, the Director of Public Health has previously advised he could not allocate his clinical staff to support this work at this time as they are directly involved in supporting, the vaccination programme, pandemic response and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. However, it would be possible to support the Physical Activity Task Group now as support would come from staff not involved in the latter. The CCG have also indicated that, while they would otherwise welcome the idea of the new GP Task Group, they would find it very difficult to support it over the next 6-8 weeks due to current pressures in Primary Care.

- 3.5 At the Business Support O&S agenda planning meeting, Members expressed disappointment that discussion on this matter had not concluded following the decision taken by Business Support O&S Committee on 25 January. Consequentially, Members asked Democratic Services to devise a timetable which would enable both the Physical Activity (first) and GPs (second) task groups to be completed before the Cabinet meeting of 7 March 2023. Democratic Services have worked with Public Health colleagues on this matter and a timetable is attached at Appendix 3 which ensures that both Task Groups would be completed by February 2023.
- 3.6 Members were also advised of the discussion which had taken place at the Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee agenda planning meeting, about the suggestion made at the last meeting of Business Support O&S, that a review of Town Centres be conducted as a standing item within

scheduled meetings of RCE O&S Committee. Members were advised that Town Centres would form part of the Medway 2037 strategy refresh and the Local Plan. Updates could be provided through the year via Performance Monitoring reports. If anything came out of the Town Centres Board, that could be supplied via a briefing note. Therefore, Members (at the Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee agenda planning meeting) concluded they were content for the Task Group to come forward in the order previously agreed by the Business Support O&S Committee, i.e. position 3.

- 3.7 The Committee's draft work programme, attached as Appendix 1, has been updated for 2022/23 to include expected papers such as Budget and Council Plan monitoring etc. As last year, it reserves two meetings, June (currently) and October, for holding Portfolio Holders to Account. At the agenda planning meeting, Members were advised that only one of the four Portfolio Holders who attend the committee is available on the proposed June date and they supported a proposal to revise the draft meetings schedule to put back the date of this meeting to 7 July.
- 3.8 Reserving the October meeting for the attendance of two Portfolio Holders has resulted in Quarter 1 monitoring reports slipping to the November meeting, when Quarter 2 reports will also be considered. To enable the more timely consideration of Quarter 1 information, Members at the agenda planning meeting supported a proposal to further revise the draft meetings schedule to put back the date of the Committee's August meeting from 18th to 25 August. Moving the date of the meeting to after Cabinet will enable the Quarter 1 monitoring reports to be included on the August agenda together with the Quarter 4 end of year reports.
- 3.9 Both of these changes in meeting dates are subject to confirmation at Annual Council.

4. Forward Plan

- 4.1 The latest Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions was published on 7 March 2022.

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=426&T=4>

- 4.2 The items that are relevant to the Business Support O&S Committee are set out below so that Members have an opportunity to identify any further items they wish to consider as pre-decision scrutiny (where dates permit) other than those already programmed.

| Title of Decision | Anticipated Decision Date |
|---|---|
| <p>Council Plan Performance Monitoring and Risk Register Review - Quarter 4 and End of Year 2021/2022</p> <p>This report will provide details of end of Quarter 4 and year end performance for 2021/22 against priorities set out in the Council Plan and will bring forward the latest risk management review.</p> | <p>10 May 2022</p> <p>(Provisionally on the draft work programme for 25 August)</p> |
| <p>Medway Development Company Ltd - Six Monthly Report</p> <p>This report will set out details of performance for the latest monitoring period for Medway Development Company Ltd.</p> | <p>10 May 2022</p> |
| <p>Cabinet Advisory Groups</p> <p>This report will seek approval of the establishment of the Cabinet Advisory Groups for 2022/2023.</p> | <p>7 June 2022</p> |
| <p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 Outturn</p> <p>This report will provide details of the final revenue and capital outturn position for the financial year ending 31 March 2022.</p> | <p>7 June 2022</p> <p>(Provisionally on the draft work programme for 25 August)</p> |
| <p>Medway Norse Update</p> <p>This report will provide details of a review of the performance of the Joint Venture from the perspective of the Council client since the last report (January 2022). It will be accompanied by an update on the Joint Venture's achievements and financial performance prepared by the Partnership Director.</p> | <p>5 July 2022</p> <p>(Provisionally on the draft work programme for 25 August)</p> |
| <p>Treasury Management Outturn Annual Report</p> <p>This report will provide an overview of treasury management activity for 2021/22. This report will be considered by the Audit Committee on 26 July 2022.</p> | <p>5 July 2022</p> |

5. The Co-ordinating Role of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 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 (Constitution, Chapter 4 – Rules – paragraph 22.2 (xxiii)).
- 5.2 To assist the Committee in fulfilling this role, it has been 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.
- 5.3 Appendix 2 to this report sets out the current work programmes of the other three overview and scrutiny committees.

6. Financial and legal implications

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

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to:
 - a) agree the Committee's work programme at Appendix 1;
 - b) note the work programmes of the other overview and scrutiny committees at Appendix 2;
 - c) agree to have regard to the measures set out in paragraph 3.2 in considering the Committee's work programme, whilst recognising the need for a flexible approach as reflected in paragraph 3.3, and to keep this matter under review.
 - d) consider the recommendation from the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to re-instate Physical Activity as the next Task Group followed by GP appointments and access to services, together with the timetable attached at Appendix 3 to enable both the Physical Activity (first) and GP appointments and access to services (second) Task Groups to be completed before the Cabinet meeting of 7 March 2023.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Business Support O&S work programme

Appendix 2 - Other O&S Committees' work programmes

Appendix 3 – Indicative timetable for Task Group activity during 2022/23.

Background papers:

None