

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 20 JULY 2016

2016/17 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC & SCRUTINY SERVICES TEAM LEADER

1.0 PURPOSE

To enable the Scrutiny Management Board to consider and agree the priorities for the 2016/17 Scrutiny Work Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Management Board consider the suggestions set out in Appendix 2 and agree the issues which should be prioritised for the work programme and recommended to the Scrutiny Committees.**
- 2.2 That the Scrutiny Management Board agree the allocation of resources to the Scrutiny Committees as set out in section 6.5.**
- 2.3 That the Scrutiny Management Board agree the proposal in section 5 relating to the process for setting future work programmes.**
- 2.4 That the Scrutiny Management Board agree the dates of future Board meetings.**

3.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1 None.

4.0 SETTING THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Work Programme is agreed annually by the Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.2 The process and timetable for agreeing the 2016/17 work programme is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 A table listing suggestions for the work programme is at Appendix 2, which shows:
 - all suggestions received to date
 - suggestions from the scrutiny work programme 2015-16 that were not the subject of scrutiny review in 2015/16
 - commentary from Senior Managers
 - recommendations and commentary from Scrutiny Chairs

- on-going issues spanning a number of municipal years

4.4 In determining the priorities for scrutiny in 2016/17, Scrutiny Management Board should consider:

- The extent to which the item meets the criteria for scrutiny, including
 - How far scrutiny can realistically change or influence things
 - The extent to which residents or businesses are affected by the issue
 - How well the Council and Partners are performing in the area
 - What else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort
- Scrutiny's statutory duties and responsibilities
- Any comments provided by Senior Managers or partners
- The concerns of scrutiny members expressed as new suggestions or views at previous meetings
- Awareness of elected members about what matters to local people
- How long ago the suggestion was made (where this is available) and whether it is still of relevance
- Capacity and resources (see Section 6).

5. **PROPOSAL FOR SETTING FUTURE WORK PROGRAMMES**

It is proposed that the process for setting the work programme is amended to take account of the following:

- any items on the scrutiny work programme that are not scrutinised by the end of the work programme period are automatically removed so that attention remains focused on up-to-date issues and concerns. However, if an issue remains of concern it may be re-submitted for consideration in the next work programme.

6.0 **ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES**

- 6.1 Effective delivery of the work programme requires the efficient use of Member time and officer resources, both in Democratic & Scrutiny Services and in service areas subject to scrutiny where capacity to support scrutiny reviews may be limited.
- 6.2 The allocation of scrutiny resources to support Scrutiny Committee meetings is determined and managed by the Scrutiny Management Board. Adjustments may be made throughout the year as deemed necessary to deliver the work programme depending on peak workloads.
- 6.3 The average number of Scrutiny Meetings over the last four years has been approximately 50 per year (including formal Committee meetings and informal working groups).
- 6.4 During 2015/16, the conduct of a review of Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee significantly reduced resources available to the remaining Committees to complete the work programme and it was tacitly agreed that the 2016/17 work programme would, therefore, focus mainly on the priority areas of the other Scrutiny Committees. However, the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee has a key role in

monitoring the planning and performance of the Council's services to children and young people and the Council's Corporate Parenting role and it is recommended that the Committee should continue to meet at regular intervals.

- 6.5 For the 2016/17 municipal year, it is recommended that the Scrutiny Management Board revert to the practice of setting a baseline number of 6 formal meetings per year per Committee and that any remaining capacity be allocated flexibly according to the requirements of the work programme and the availability of resources. This approach will ensure the workload is manageable and allows flexibility to target resources where required.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are no specific equal opportunity impacts arising from this report. Equal Opportunity issues will be considered as relevant to scrutiny work carried out as part of the work programme.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report. Environmental impacts will be considered as relevant to scrutiny work carried out as part of the work programme.

8.0 LEGAL COMMENT

- 8.1 The Council is under a legal requirement to provide an overview and scrutiny function in accordance with provisions at section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) and associated legislation. Government guidance states that Overview and Scrutiny Committees should have flexibility to determine most of their workplan and that the Council adopts mechanisms for coordinating that work.

- 8.2 The proposals for discussion by the Board in this report contribute towards complying with both the statutory requirements and government guidance.

9.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Scrutiny members are asked to agree the work programme in the context of the Council's priorities.

10.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

There is an opportunity to focus the work programme on fewer topics and in more depth in areas of policy development where scrutiny can have a greater impact. There is a risk that too many topics are kept in the work programme so that it loses focus and impact.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Scrutiny has a role in ensuring that local government is effective and accountable. This includes undertaking reviews and challenging and monitoring performance. There is provision for the cost of supporting the Scrutiny function in the 2016/17

budget and any variance that arises will be reported, as appropriate, as part of financial monitoring. The financial implications of any recommendations made by Scrutiny should be considered as part of reports as relevant.

11.2 Scrutiny also plays an important part in the budget consultation process which is reflected in the work programme and is a key piece of work which feeds into the Council's overall budget strategy.

12.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Handbook

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