

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 23 January 2014

**Report Author:** Scrutiny Coordinator

**Title:** Scrutiny Work Programme

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report presents the Communities Scrutiny Committee with its draft forward work programme for members' consideration.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To seek the Committee to review and agree on its programme of future work, and to update members on relevant issues.

**3. What are the recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 nominates a representative to serve on the Economic and Community Ambition Board.

**4. Report details.**

- 4.1 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, whilst the rules of procedure for scrutiny committees are laid out in Part 4 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 Denbighshire County Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The objective of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 The Committee is requested to consider its draft work programme for future meetings as detailed in appendix 1 and approve, revise or amend it as it deems appropriate taking into consideration:

- issues raised by members of the Committee
- matters referred to it by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group
- relevance to the Committee's/Council's/community priorities
- the Council's Corporate Plan and the Director of Social Services' Annual Report
- meeting workload
- timeliness
- outcomes
- key issues and information to be included in reports
- whether the relevant lead Cabinet member will be invited to attend (having regard to whether their attendance is necessary or would add value). (In all instances this decision will be communicated to the lead member concerned)
- questions to be put to officers/lead Cabinet members

4.5 In addition, when considering items for inclusion on the future forward work programme members may also find it helpful to have regard to the following questions when determining a subject's suitability for inclusion:

- what is the issue?
- who are the stakeholders?
- what is being looked at elsewhere
- what does scrutiny need to know? and
- who may be able to assist?

4.6 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 the Constitution of Denbighshire County Council requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on the Committee's business agenda they have to formally request the Committee to consider receiving a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of suggested topics. No such proposal forms have been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting.

#### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

4.7 When deciding on their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of future work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 2.

#### Progress on Committee Resolutions

4.8 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

## **5. Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board**

The Council's scrutiny committees have each been asked to appoint a representative to serve on the above Board. A copy of the Board's terms of reference including members' roles and responsibilities is attached at Appendix 4. Training and support will be provided to the appointed member by the Corporate Programme Office. It is expected that the person appointed will act as the Committee's lead for Economic Development. The Board's next meeting is scheduled for 11 February 2014.

## **6. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

6.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The SCVCG met on 5 December and at that meeting the scrutiny of the Safer Routes Scheme was referred to this Committee for consideration. As the original request emanated from problems which arose at Bodelwyddan, the Group has invited Councillor Alice Jones to give evidence to the Committee of her experiences of the Scheme there. The item has been included in the Committee's work programme for its meeting on 6 March 2014.

6.2 At its meeting on 9 January the Group considered a request from officers that the report on the 'Concept Design of Green Space' item, which forms part of the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project of the Rhyl Going Forward Programme, be deferred until the spring of 2014 as a few matters need to be clarified. The Group agreed to this request but stipulated that the report be presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 April 2014. Consequently the item has been rescheduled on the Committee's forward work programme.

## **7. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priorities in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council in monitoring and reviewing policy issues.

## **8. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?**

No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the purpose of this report as consideration of the Committee's forward work programme is not deemed to have an adverse or unfair impact on people who share protected characteristics.

**9. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

Services may need to allocate officer time to assist the Committee with the activities identified in the forward work programme, and with any actions that may result following consideration of those items.

**10. What consultations have been carried out?**

None required for this report. However, the report itself and the consideration of the forward work programme represent a consultation process with the Committee with respect to its programme of future work.

**11. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

No risks have been identified with respect to the consideration of the Committee's forward work programme. However, by regularly reviewing its forward work programme the Committee can ensure that areas of risk are considered and examined as and when they are identified, and recommendations are made with a view to addressing those risks.

**12. Power to make the decision**

Article 6.3.7 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work.

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