

**Report to:** Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14 April 2016

**Lead Officer:** Scrutiny Co-ordinator

**Report Author:** Scrutiny Co-ordinator

**Title:** Scrutiny Work Programme

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

The report presents Partnerships 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 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate.

**4. Report details**

- 4.1 Article 6 of Denbighshire County 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 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must 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 aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-users. Going forward scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. In future the WAO will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.

- 4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) has recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:
- budget savings;
  - achievement of the Corporate Plan objectives (with particular emphasis on the their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
  - any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2) and;
  - Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues

#### 4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above the Council's Constitution 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 subjects. No officer proposal forms have been received for consideration at the current meeting.

- 4.7 With a view to making better use of scrutiny's time by focussing committees' resources on detailed examination of subjects, adding value through the decision-making process and securing better outcomes for residents, the SCVCG has decided that members, as well as officers, should complete 'scrutiny proposal forms' outlining the reasons why they think a particular subject would benefit from scrutiny's input. A copy of the 'member's proposal form' can be seen at Appendix 2. The reverse side of this form contains a flowchart listing questions which members should consider when proposing an item for scrutiny, and which committees should ask when determining a topic's suitability for inclusion on a scrutiny forward work programme. If, having followed this process, a topic is not deemed suitable for formal examination by a scrutiny committee, alternative channels for sharing the information or examining the matter can be considered e.g. the provision of an 'information report', or if the matter is of a very local nature examination by the relevant Member Area Group (MAG). In future no items will be included on a forward work programme without a 'scrutiny proposal form' being completed and accepted for inclusion by the Committee or the SCVCG. Assistance with their completion is available from the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

#### 4.8 West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project

The above project forms part of the Rhyl Going Forward programme of regeneration work. There has been some concern on the perceived lack of progress in delivering the above project. With a view to supporting the project's delivery and securing the availability of good quality housing in this area of Rhyl, Clwyd Alyn/Pennaf Housing and Welsh Government representatives have been invited to attend the Committee's meeting on 26 May to discuss with members the project's progress. Ahead of that meeting members may want to read the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 29 March 2016 (Item 7) on the review and next steps with the Rhyl Going Forward Programme. The link below should take you to the report on the Council's website:

<https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=5152&LLL=0>

#### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.9 When determining their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 3.

#### Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.10 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

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

Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group met on 3 March 2016. At that meeting they requested that the Committee invite Clwyd Alyn/Pennaf Housing and Welsh Government representatives to a meeting to discuss the delivery of the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project (see paragraph 4.8 above). The Group is scheduled to meet again on 21 April 2016.

### **6. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Article 4.5.1 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny committees shall appoint a vice-chair on an annual basis, whilst Article 4.5.2 of the Constitution states that candidates for the role of Vice Chair shall provide a written statement of how they meet the requirements in the role description (Appendix 5) and how they see the committee operating. These statements will be made available to committee members prior to electing a Vice Chair. As the Committee's next meeting is scheduled for 26 May 2016, which is after Annual Council, the Committee will be asked to appoint a Vice-Chair for the remainder of the Council term at that meeting. Committee members who wish to be considered for this role are asked to forward their statements/CVs to the Scrutiny Co-ordinator by 19 May 2016.

### **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 to deliver its corporate priorities, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget cuts.

### **8. 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.

**9. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

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.

**10. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

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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