

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 23 March 2017

**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 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 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate.

**4. Report details**

- 4.1 Section 7 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, as well as the rules of procedure and debate.
- 4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must set, and regularly 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.

#### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.8 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

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

#### 4.10 Water Management – Glasdir area, Ruthin

A report on the above item was scheduled for presentation to the current meeting. However, as matters relating to the site continue to be the subject of an on-going legal process, the Chair has agreed to a request from officers that the report's presentation be deferred until that process has concluded. He has also agreed that as the matter is one of a local nature, once the process reaches its conclusion, the report should be submitted to the Ruthin Member Area Group (MAG) rather than to this Committee.

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

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group last met on 28 February 2017. At that meeting a number of requests for items to be scrutinised were considered. Of the requests received the following were scheduled into this Committee's forward work programme:

*'Regulation of Unmanned Aircraft'*: this item was originally scheduled to be presented to the Council Briefing session on 6 March, but due to agenda pressures the SCVCG requested that Communities Scrutiny Committee consider the report at its meeting on 23 March. This request could be accommodated as the SCVCG permitted a request from officers that the presentation of the scheduled report on the *'Review of Primary School Provision in the Ruthin Area'* be deferred until a future date as the review work was yet to be concluded and the Council was still awaiting the Ministerial decision in respect of Ysgol Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd.

*'Free Car Parking for Disabled Badge Holders'*: County Council on 31 January 2017 during a discussion on a notice of motion on the above referred the matter to the SCVCG for it to allocate it to a scrutiny committee for detailed examination. The SCVCG has asked this Committee to consider a report on the feasibility of introducing free car parking for all disabled badge holders across the county at its meeting in June 2017.

At its meeting on 2 February 2017 the Committee met with representatives of the *'Welsh Ambulance Services' Trust (WAST)*. At the conclusion of that discussion it agreed to invite WAST representatives back to a meeting later on in the year to discuss the findings of pilot schemes currently underway in Denbighshire and its progress in meeting performance targets. Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2017 met with a representative from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to discuss the GP Out of Hours Service locally. During that discussion it became apparent that the GP Out of Hours Service worked closely with the Ambulance Service in a bid to alleviate any unnecessary pressures on the Ambulance Service. Consequently, Partnerships Scrutiny Committee concluded that it would be useful for members if representatives from both the WAST and the GP Out of Hours Service attend the same meeting next time with a view to providing a holistic presentation on the services they provide, and how they work together to improve outcomes for patients. Therefore a joint report from both organisations has provisionally been scheduled into this Committee's forward work programme for November 2017.

All the above amendments and inclusions are reflected in Appendix 1 attached and the Committee is asked to endorse them.

Also during February's meeting of Communities Scrutiny Committee members decided that an invitation should be extended to the Chief Constable of North Wales Police to attend a future meeting to discuss his vision and priorities with councillors. The SCVCG considered this proposal and concluded that an invitation should be extended to him to address all councillors at a Council Briefing session post the local authority elections in May.

**6. 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.

**7. 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.

**8. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment? The completed Well-being Impact Assessment report can be downloaded from the [website](#) and should be attached as an appendix to the report**

A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to the purpose or contents of this report. However, Scrutiny's through its work in examining service delivery, policies, procedures and proposals will consider their impact or potential impact on the sustainable development principle and the well-being goals stipulated in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

**9. 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.

**10. 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.

**11. Power to make the decision**

Section 7.11 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny committees and/or the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group will be responsible for setting their own work programmes, taking into account the wishes of Members of the Committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.

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