

Report to:	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 September 2019
Lead Officer:	Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Report Author:	Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title:	Scrutiny Work Programme

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:

- 3.1 approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate;
- 3.2 nominates a representative to serve on the 'Infrastructure to make it easier to stage events Project Board'; and
- 3.3 appoints two representatives to serve on the Schools Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG).

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. From now on 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. 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) 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 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). No items should 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 To enable the current meeting to be set-aside for the discussion of the Committee's report on the Llantysilio Mountain fire members at the last meeting decided to

reschedule the discussion on the following items to the Committee's meeting on 24 October:

- Flood Management Responsibilities in Denbighshire
- Proposed New Waste and Recycling Service Design
- Tourism Signage Strategy for Denbighshire

Following enquiries with officers it now transpires that it would be premature to discuss two of the above items in October. They are:

- (i) Flood Management Responsibilities in Denbighshire: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has decided that the work it carried out in relation to Rhyl Cut and Prestatyn Gutter will move into a 3rd phase. This will look to develop location specific actions that will bring real flood risk benefits to Rhyl and Prestatyn. Until this 3rd phase is complete, in approximately 12 months' time, officers are of the view that there would be limited benefits in inviting NRW and Welsh Water Dŵr Cymru to attend Scrutiny until the completion of Phase 3 as they would not be able to provide a definitive analysis of the situation. The report's presentation to the Committee has therefore been rescheduled for October 2020. In the meantime, if local members wish, Council officers are prepared to attend the Member Area Groups (MAGs) to update local representatives on the progress made to date with the study.
- (ii) Tourism Signage Strategy for Denbighshire: due to staffing pressures the Service has unfortunately not been able to progress the work to develop the tourism signage strategy as originally anticipated. However, the Council has recently recruited a Traffic Engineer to fill a post that has been vacant for some time, so the Service is now confident that it can progress this project over the next few months. Consequently, the report's presentation has been rescheduled for the Committee's meeting on 12 March 2020.

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 31 July 2019. At that meeting it request this Committee to consider the Wales Audit Office's report on the 'Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act in Relation to Flooding'. The report's presentation has been provisionally scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 24 October (see Appendix 1). The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 11 September 2019.

6. Request for Committee representatives

Infrastructure to make it easier to stage events project

- 6.1 This is a county wide project and one of the larger spend areas on the Corporate Plan project list. A Project Board has been established to deliver this scheme and the Board is of the view that it would be beneficial to have Scrutiny involved as a standing member on the Project Board to aid engagement and a cross county approach to decision making. The SCVCG considered this request and determined that Communities Scrutiny Committee should appoint this representative, as the Board's work will focus on developing an infrastructure to help communities to stage events. In terms of time commitment - it is proposed there will be a 2 hour meeting every month starting in October and running until May. After which point most key decisions for the project will have been made and the Board will only need to meet periodically to consider progress updates and resolve any issues that may occur. The Project is scheduled to run until 31 March 2021. The Committee is asked to nominate a member to serve on the Group.

School Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG)

- 6.2 The Committee is also asked to appoint two representatives to serve on the School Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG). A copy of the Group's terms of reference is attached at Appendix 5 for members' information.

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 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 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.

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

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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