

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	15 April 2021
Lead Officer	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

The report seeks Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to review its draft forward work programme. In doing so the Committee is asked to reflect on the implications of the focus on business critical operations during the emergency phase of the COVID -19 pandemic and the programmes of work underway or being planned under the recovery phase, whilst also having regard to items of business already on its forward work programme prior to the pandemic.

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 identifies key messages and themes from the current meeting which it wishes to publicise via the press and/or social media.

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 Audit Wales (AW) 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. AW 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 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);
 - Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues; and

- Supporting the Council's recovery work in relation to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on Council services, the local economy and the county's communities

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.

Heart Failure Services in Denbighshire and its impact on Council Social Care Services

- 4.8 The above item has been scheduled on the Committee's forward work programme under 'Future Issue' for some time, without a definite date for its presentation. The Health Board has now confirmed that representatives should be in a position to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss its plans in this area on 8 July 2021 (see Appendix 1)

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

- 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 met on 11 March 2021. At that meeting the Group asked this Committee to consider the report on 'Community Support Services' Market Position Statement', which appears on the current meeting's business agenda.

The Group's next meeting is scheduled for the 29 April 2021.

Scrutiny of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board

- 5.2 Committee members will recall that Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has been designated as the Council's scrutiny committee for examining the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB). At its meeting in November 2020 the Committee considered key documents associated with final deal agreement for the North Wales Growth Deal between the Board, the UK Government and the Welsh Government. These documents included the Governance Agreement for the

Board's work. As part of the governance agreement a Scrutiny Protocol was agreed that stipulated that a representative of the Board would attend Scrutiny up to twice a year to update it on the NWEAB's progress in achieving its objectives. A timetable has now been received from NWEAB's Programme Office on when its quarterly reports will be available for circulation to Scrutiny. Please see below:

Performance Report	NWEAB meeting	Scrutiny
Quarter 4: 2020-21 / Annual Report 2020-21	14 /05/ 2021	End of May/early June 2021
Quarter 1: 2021-22	30 /07/ 2021	August/beginning of September
Quarter 2: 2021-22	22 /10/ 2021	November 2021
Quarter 3: 2021-22	28 /01/ 2022 (to be confirmed)	February 2022
Quarter 4: 2021-22 / Annual Report 2021-22	20 / 05/ 2022 (to be confirmed)	Late May/early June 2022

- 5.3 This timetable was discussed by the SCVCG at its meeting on 11 March 2021 and it was decided that it would be prudent for the Board's Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 reports to be circulated to Committee members as 'Information Reports' and for representatives from the NWEAB to be invited to attend Committee meetings to present Quarter 2 and Quarter 4/Annual Reports and answer members' questions. Based on this the reports have now been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme (see Appendix 1 attached).
- 5.4 With a view to raising Scrutiny's profile and encouraging public engagement the Group recently decided that all three scrutiny committees should, for a trial period, identify key themes or messages arising from their meetings for publication via the Authority's social media pages and the local press. The Committee is therefore

asked to identify which themes or messages it wishes to highlight from the current meeting.

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?

A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to the purpose or contents of this report. However, Scrutiny's through it 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

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 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.

Contact Officer:

Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Coordinator

Tel No: (01824) 712554

e-mail: rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk