

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2012

**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 considers the information provided and:

- 3.1 approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate;
- 3.2 appoints Members to serve on each of the Service Performance Challenge Groups;
- 3.3 appoints a representative to serve on the Council's Strategic Investment Group; and
- 3.4 nominates a representative from the Committee to serve on the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

**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 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
  - officers and/or lead Cabinet members who should be invited (having regard to whether their attendance is necessary or would add value)
  - questions to be put to officers/lead Cabinet members
- 4.5 When considering future items for inclusion on the forward work programme members may also find it helpful to have regard to the following questions when determining a subject's suitability for inclusion on the work programme:
- 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 The Committee's draft forward work programme (appendix 1) as it currently stands is one which has been inherited from the former committee. Members are therefore asked to consider whether the programme reflects the new Committee's wishes and priorities.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 One completed proposal form has been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting. The request, which can be seen at Appendix 2, seeks the Committee to consider a report on resource levels and the principles of community engagement with respect to

major infrastructure projects that affect the County. If the Committee determines that this request merits discussion at July's meeting, and having regard to the information in paragraph 4.3 above on the optimum number of agenda items to be transacted at any one meeting, members are asked to consider whether any of the items already scheduled for July's meeting can be deferred until a future meeting without undue adverse effect.

#### 4.9 Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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.

#### 4.10 Progress on Committee Resolutions

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. In performing this role it can seek individual scrutiny committees to take ownership of specific topics.

5.2 At its last meeting in April no specific recommendations were made with respect to Communities Scrutiny Committee. The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 5 July.

### **6. Appointment of Committee Representatives on Council Groups and Boards**

6.1 Periodically the Committee may be asked to appoint representatives from amongst its membership to serve on various Council Boards and Groups.

6.2 Since the formation of the new Council, and subsequently the new committees, requests have been received seeking the Committee to appoint members to serve on the Service Performance Challenge Groups, the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) and the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board. The relevant lead Cabinet members also take part in these Groups and Boards.

#### 6.3 Service Performance Challenge Groups

The Service Performance Challenge process forms part of the Council's mechanism for monitoring how each of its thirteen services are delivering against, amongst other things, their business plans, and performance and efficiency targets. All scrutiny committees have been asked to appoint representatives to these Groups, one for each

service, to act as the Committee's contact for each service and attend the service challenge meetings which are held twice a year. The first round of meetings are taking place during June and July. To assist members to decide whether they would like to put their names forward as prospective Committee contacts for these services an overview of the process is attached at Appendix 5 of this report. The appendix also includes the dates, times and venues for the meetings.

6.4 Strategic Investment Group (SIG)

Similarly all scrutiny committees have been asked to nominate one representative each to serve on the Strategic Investment Group. The Strategic Investment Group, which meets on a monthly basis, considers the Council's future capital requirements and bids for capital funding and external grants. For members' information the Group's terms of reference is attached at Appendix 6.

6.5 Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board

In response to the increased emphasis given by the Welsh Government (WG) to collaborative and partnership working, Denbighshire and Conwy Councils have over a number of years collaborated in the delivery of services in a number of areas. During the term of office of the previous Council a Programme Board was established to oversee and provide proper governance for collaborative projects between both Councils.

6.6 The aim of the Board, the membership of which consists of senior elected members and officers of both authorities, is to drive existing collaborative projects and ensure that they are properly integrated into the work of both councils. The Board also acts as a forum at which proposals for new collaborative projects can be considered prior to them being considered further within each individual authority.

6.7 Denbighshire's representatives on the Board are the Leader, Chief Executive, the Lead Members for Finance, Lead Member for Public Realm, representatives from each of the Scrutiny Committees and the Corporate Director for Economic and Community Ambition. Conwy County Borough Council's representation is similar, albeit that their job titles or portfolio names are different. A copy of the Board's terms of reference (dated February 2011) is attached at Appendix 7 to this report for members' information.

6.8 The Committee is therefore asked to nominate one member to serve as its representative on the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

**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 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 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.

**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**

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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