

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 26 July 2012

Report Author: Scrutiny Coordinator

Title: Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

The report presents the Performance 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; and
- 3.2 nominates a representative from the Committee to serve on the School Standards Monitoring Group.

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 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 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. One completed proposal form (appendix 2) has been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting. The request relates to the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-17.

Monitoring Performance in Delivering the Corporate Plan

4.7 As the Council is not scheduled to adopt its 2012-17 Corporate Plan until the autumn officers will not be in a position to provide a quarterly performance report for Quarter 1 of the 2012/13 year in the autumn. The first of the monitoring reports will therefore be presented to members in January 2013 and cover the second quarter of the reporting year, with subsequent reports being presented in April and early summer 2013. The Performance Monitoring Working Group which the Committee established at its last meeting will meet with Corporate Improvement Team officers and the Head of Internal Audit ahead of scheduled Cabinet meetings to scrutinise the Council's performance in delivering its Corporate Plan and Outcome Agreements and highlight any issues of concern to Cabinet.

'Your Voice' Complaints Policy and Quarterly Monitoring Reports

- 4.8 At the last meeting the Committee received a monitoring report on the 'Your Voice' Complaints policy and was informed of an imminent review of the policy. Four members of the Committee have been appointed to serve on a working group to work on that review. In view of the review, and in order to ensure that the new policy improves the way in which the Council deals with complaints, officers have requested that, for the foreseeable future, the monitoring reports on compliance with the policy are presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis. If the Committee agrees to this request the report will be presented to members at the October 2012, February and May 2013 meetings. The Committee is asked to consider this request.

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.

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 Performance Scrutiny Committee has historically considered, on a quarterly basis, the monitoring reports on the Council's revenue budget and capital programme. One of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 was that each local authority established an audit committee for the purpose of, amongst other duties, reviewing, scrutinising and issuing reports and recommendations in relation to the Council's financial affairs. Denbighshire has designated its Corporate Governance Committee as its audit committee. Consequently it will be expected to scrutinise and monitor the Council's financial affairs. In view of this new obligation the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, at its meeting on 5 July, discussed the possible duplication of roles between the Corporate Governance Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee with respect to financial scrutiny and it was decided that from September 2012 onwards the Corporate Governance Committee will in future consider revenue and capital budget reports. Adopting this approach will assist to free up room on Performance Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme to accommodate other important subjects.

6. Appointment of Committee Representatives on Council Groups and Boards

6.1 Periodically all scrutiny committees are asked to appoint representatives from amongst their membership to serve on various Council Boards and Groups. At its last meeting the Committee appointed representatives to serve on the various Service Challenge Groups, the Strategic Investment Group and the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

6.2 Since the Committee's last meeting another request has been received for a representative to be appointed. This time the Committee is asked to appoint a member to serve on the Schools Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG). For members' information a copy of the Group's terms of reference is attached at appendix 5 to this report.

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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