

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 28 February 2013

Report Author: Scrutiny Coordinator

Title: Scrutiny Work Programme

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 approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate

4. Report details.

4.1 Article 6 of the 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 Denbighshire County Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to 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 In addition, when considering items for inclusion on the future forward work programme members may also find it helpful to have regard to the following questions when determining a subject's suitability for inclusion:
- 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 the Constitution of Denbighshire County Council 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 topics. No such proposal forms have been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting.
- 4.7 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
When deciding on their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of future work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.8 Progress on Committee Resolutions
A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.
- 4.9 Supporting People Strategy Update
A report was scheduled for submission to the current meeting evaluating the impact of the new Supporting People arrangements on the delivery and funding of Supporting People services in Denbighshire. This report was requested in response to Cabinet's request that Scrutiny analysed the effect of the new arrangements on

Denbighshire's residents. It has since transpired that March 2013 is too soon following the establishment of the new arrangements to compile a comprehensive analysis of their impact locally. Consequently officers requested the Chair's permission for the report's presentation to be deferred until the summer. The request was granted and the report has been rescheduled for the Committee's July meeting.

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.

Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan

- 5.2 At its meeting on 24 January the Group considered a request from officers for the Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan to be scrutinised. The Group agreed that it would be appropriate for this topic to be scrutinised to ensure that the Authority is fulfilling its statutory duties in this area. Therefore it recommended that Communities Scrutiny Committee should examine the topic and, in order to comply with the undertaking given to the Welsh Government that scrutiny would consider the draft assessment in April, schedule the item into its forward work programme for its April 2013 meeting. The Committee is asked to confirm these arrangements and also to consider whether it wishes to reschedule any of the other items scheduled for April to a future date in order to alleviate agenda pressures.

Access to the Countryside

- 5.3 The SCVCG also discussed the above item which appears under the 'Future Issues' section of this Committee's forward work programme. This item is a historical one inherited from the pre-2012 local authority elections Committee. Members are asked to consider whether the topic is still pertinent, and if so to scope the information required and the objectives of scrutinising the issue.

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 in monitoring and reviewing policy issues.

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 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.

9. 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.

10. 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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