

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 18 April 2013

**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 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.

#### Draft Local Housing Strategy

4.7 This draft Strategy was scheduled for presentation to Members at the current meeting. However, although the background research for the Strategy has been completed and a consultation plan to feed into the Strategy has been developed, as these aspects are currently subject to consultation the presentation of the draft Strategy to the Committee has been deferred until May. Consequently, the revised version of the Local Housing Strategy, following the consultation on the draft version, will not now be submitted to the Committee in June as originally planned. It will instead be considered at the Committee's July meeting.

#### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

4.8 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.

#### Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.9 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 3 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 Members will recall that a request was made by the Head of Communication, Marketing and Leisure at the Committee's last meeting for the findings of the Review of the Council's Publications to be presented to the Committee in May 2013. The Committee agreed in principle to this request. However, this did create a pressure on the Committee's business agenda for that particular meeting. When discussing committee work programmes at its meeting on 7 March the SCVCG formed the view that the item was more aligned to the remit of Performance Scrutiny Committee and therefore recommended that the findings be considered by that Committee. The Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee agreed to the request to accept the report onto that Committee's forward work plan. In doing so it has alleviated the pressure on Communities Scrutiny Committee's work programme for May.
- 5.3 At the same meeting the SCVCG also determined that the item scheduled on this Committee's forward work programme for November 2013 on Heritage and Arts was more aligned to the remit of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee as the Council delivers a number of these services in partnership with other organisations. Consequently the item has been transferred to Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's work programme for December 2013. The Committee is asked to note and agree the above amendments to its work programme.

### **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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