

Report to: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 July 2013

Report Author: Scrutiny Coordinator

Title: Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

The report presents Partnerships 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:

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 nominates a representative to serve on the Council's Corporate Parenting Forum.

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 The Constitution of Denbighshire County Council 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. When deciding on the work

programme members are asked to take 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 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. One such proposal form has been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting. This refers to the Single Access Route to Housing – Common Allocations Policy (see appendix 2). The Committee is asked to consider this request.

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 3.

4.8 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.

4.9 Regional Emergency Planning Service

An information report on the progress to date with the establishment of a regional Emergency Planning Service was due to be circulated to Committee members during July. However, as a project manager has only recently been appointed and the Transition Board is only in the process of being established, it would be slightly premature to provide members with a progress report this early in the establishment process. Officers anticipate that they should be in a position to submit the report to members during September.

5. Corporate Parenting Forum

All scrutiny committees have recently been requested to nominate a representative to serve on the Council's Corporate Parenting Forum. Elected members will be aware of their duties and responsibilities as corporate parents to the County's looked after children (see Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services' letter dated June 2012 – Appendix 5a attached). The Corporate Parenting Forum, whose membership comprises of senior officers, Cabinet and Scrutiny members, meets on a quarterly basis to monitor and support services for looked after children. A copy of the Forum's terms of reference is attached at Appendix 5b. The Forum's next meetings are scheduled for Friday, 6 September and Friday, 13 December, between 1pm and 3pm, in County Hall, Ruthin. Members are asked to nominate a representative from the Committee to serve on the Forum.

6. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

- 6.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group held its first meeting of the new municipal year on 27 June 2013 and at that meeting it discussed two items referred to it by this Committee at its April meeting.
- 6.2 The first item related to the most appropriate committee to consider the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy, following the public consultation on it and prior to its submission to County Council for adoption. Group members were of the view that the Strategy should be examined by Communities Scrutiny Committee and consequently the item has been provisionally scheduled into that Committee's work programme for 17 October 2013.
- 6.3 This Committee had raised concerns with respect to forward work programme pressures and questioned whether the six weekly scrutiny meetings schedule created such pressures. SCVCG members discussed these concerns but concluded that the six weekly meeting schedules were fit for purpose if work programmes were effectively managed. If urgent business arose ad-hoc meetings could be held.

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 are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the purpose of this report as consideration of the Committee's forward work programme is not deemed to have an adverse or unfair impact on people who share protected characteristics.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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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