

RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS

A.1 WORK PROGRAMMING – INCLUDING MONITORING OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

(Report prepared by Keith Durran and Keith Simmons)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report provides the Committee with an update on its approved Work Programme for 2022/23 (including progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme), feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquiries undertaken and a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice has been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee's last meeting.

INVITEES

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

The Council commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to undertake an 'Overview & Scrutiny Development Review' in 2021 as a way of further improving that function at the Council. Two relevant recommendations arising from that review were:

“Further strengthening the annual process for developing work programmes for each O&S committee - Engaging Members, Officers, partners and the public to prioritise the topics for review. This could include a selection criteria to identify appropriate topics for the work programme. Currently the work programme is also the last item on the agenda at O&S meetings, we would recommend bringing it to the beginning, so it can be given greater priority and benefit from more considered discussion, rather than being subject to the inevitable end of meeting fatigue.

Reviewing how the recommendations are made and how impact is measured – This could include putting the ‘recommendations monitoring report’ at the beginning of agendas to orientate O&S towards outcomes-focused meetings, alongside an emphasis on finding strong recommendations from questioning to present to Cabinet (or partners) as improvement or challenge proposals.”

The Committee has previously received three separate reports on the issues of (1) Work Programme for 2022/23 (including progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme), (2) feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquiries undertaken and (3) a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice has been given since publication of the agenda for the

Committee's last meeting.

While (since the CfGS recommendations were made) the three reports referred to have been earlier in the Committee's agendas for meetings, the combination of them into one report seeks to further re-inforce the inter-relationship of the matters previously covered separately. As such, it is designed to further support consideration of work programming of the Committee and contribute to addressing progress with the Corporate Plan.

DETAILED INFORMATION

The detailed matters relating to the following matters are set out in the Appendix identified:

- (1) Work Programme for 2022/23 (including progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme) – See Appendix A;
- (2) feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquiries undertaken – see Appendix B; and
- (3) a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice has been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee's last meeting – See Appendix C.

In considering work programming matters, the Committee is further reminded of the other recommendations from the CfGS review undertaken in 2021:

“Considering greater use of task and finish groups – This more informal type of O&S can allow improved cross-party working and detailed investigation of a single issue focussed on producing substantive recommendations.

Improved agenda planning and management - Committees should focus on one or two substantive items per agenda to allow for cross-cutting themes to be properly identified and explored, and different insights brought to bear on critical issues.

Considering how to engage the public in the work of O&S - This could include O&S going on more site visits in the community, inviting the public to offer ideas for work programmes, and greater use of social media channels for resident input and communicating the progress and impact of scrutiny work.

A clearer focus on democratic accountability - Scrutiny of Cabinet Members should form a key part of the work programme, providing an opportunity to hold the Leader and portfolio holders to account for delivery of the corporate plan and any other issues O&S feel is important.”

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- (a) Considers and notes the progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme, feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations and the list of forthcoming decisions; and**
- (b) Determines whether any addition to, amendment of or rescheduling of Work Programme matters are required or other actions should be approved based on the content of this report.**