

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 JULY 2023

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)

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.

The report also provides an update of the current position on the development of the Work Programme for the years 2023/24. The Committee is invited to determine the proposed Work Programme to submit to the Council meeting on 11 July 2023 for consideration/adoption at that meeting.

INVITEES

None.

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 inclusion of the matters set out in the “purpose of this report” section above seeks to further re-inforce the inter-relationship of the matters referred to. 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

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

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

- (1) Work Programme for 2022/23 – 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.”

Work Programme 2023/24

The Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee is one of two overview and scrutiny committees established by the Council to specifically focus on the following areas of Council work (as detailed in Article 6.02(i) of the Council’s Constitution):

“To perform the role of Overview and Scrutiny and its functions in relation to:

- *Community Leadership developing the external focus of overview and scrutiny on “district-wide” issues (and where appropriate sub-regional, regional and national issues), in particular, through collaborative work with local partner authorities, providers, stakeholders and members of the public.*
- *Approval of discrete researched and evidenced reviews on the effectiveness of*

partnership operating in the area with particular focus on:

- *Community Safety*
- *Health and Well-being*
- *Economy, Skills and Educational Attainment*

- *Community engagement, development and empowerment*
- *Leisure and Tourism (except matters relating to budgets)*
- *Housing strategy and Homeless Service (except the Housing Revenue Account)*
- *Emergency Planning”*

The Constitution provides for the two overview and scrutiny committees to submit a work programme to full Council for approval. Rule 7 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules sets out the position as follows:

“Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will submit a work programme for the year ahead and a review of the previous year’s activities to the full Council for approval. In addition it will be responsible for co-ordinating and prioritising its work programme on an ongoing basis.

In preparing, co-ordinating and prioritising its programme, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take into account:-

- *The General Role and Principles of undertaking its functions, as set out in Part 2 Article 6;*
- *The planned work on the preparation of elements of the Budget and Policy Framework, as set out in the Council’s Business Plan;*
- *The need for statutory timetables to be met;*
- *The wishes of all members of the committee;*
- *Requests from the Cabinet to carry out reviews; and*
- *Requests from Group Leaders in accordance with Rule 8.”*

In considering the Work Programme of enquiries, the Committee must have regard to the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the themes of that Corporate Plan are:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Building Sustainable Communities
- Strong Finances and Governance
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy
- Community Leadership through Partnerships

The Committee should be aware that at present the Corporate Plan for 2024-28 is currently being worked on and provisions may have to reviewed once the new Plan is adopted.

An invitation was sent to Councillors on 16 May 2023 asking for input into the development of both Overview and Scrutiny Committees Work Programmes.

We received responses from three Councillors that included the following suggestions in relation to this Committee:

- Essex Highways – The state of roads and pavements
- Essex Highways- Public right of ways
- Education – SEND provision

A meeting with the Chairman of the Committee was held on Tuesday 20 June 2023 at which time suggestions set out in Appendix D.

A meeting of the Committees Chairman with the Chairman of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Councils Leader and their Deputy Leader was held on 20 June 2023 by virtue of the Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- (a) Considers and notes the progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme 2023/23, feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations and the list of forthcoming decisions; and**
- (b) Considers the proposals for the Committees Work Programme (as set out at Appendix D) and approve a recommended Work Programme to be submitted to Council on 11 July 2023.**