

Divisions Affected - All

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2021

WORK PROGRAMME 2021

Report by Director of Law and Governance

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the work programme for the 2021/22 Financial year as detailed in paragraph 11 and 12 of the report.

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Committee members in determining their work programme for the 2021/22 financial year.
2. The Committee held an informal session on the 4 November 2021 to discuss content of the work programme for 2021/22.
3. This report sets out the following information to assist the Committee in this process:
 - The principles of effective scrutiny and the criteria against which work programme items should be considered;
 - The roles and responsibilities of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - The work programme suggestions made to the Committee for consideration for the 2021/22 work programme
 - The outcome of the informal Committee discussion undertaken on 4 November 2021

Principles to apply to the Work Programme

3. The following key principles of effective scrutiny should be considered when the Committee is determining its work programme:
 - ❑ **Be selective** – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.

- ❑ **Add value with scrutiny** – Items should have the potential to ‘add value’ to the work of the council and its partners. If it is not clear what the intended outcomes or impact of a review will be then Members should consider if there are issues of a higher priority that could be scrutinised instead.

It is recommended that Members limit the number of items they wish to consider at a meeting to 2 or 3 to maximise the time and attention they can give the topic and maximise the potential for adding value.

- ❑ **Be flexible** – Members are reminded that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in their work programme to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration/comment during the year and accommodate any developmental or additional work that falls within the remit of this Committee.
- ❑ **Engagement** - Effective Overview and Scrutiny should provide extensive opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Engagement with patients, service users and with the general public can help to improve the quality, legitimacy and long-term viability of recommendations made by the Committee. Patients, service users and the public bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to scrutiny, this engagement can help the Committee to understand the service user’s perspective on individual services and on co-ordination between services. The Committee is encouraged to ensure it considers opportunities for engagement with service users and the public when agreeing its work programme.

Models for carrying out scrutiny activity

4. There are a number of means by which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can deliver its work programme. Members should consider which of the following options is most appropriate to undertake each of the items they have selected for inclusion in the work programme:

Item on a scheduled meeting agenda/hold an extra meeting of the Committee	The Committee can agree to add an item to the agenda for a meeting and call Cabinet Members/ Officers/Partners to the meeting to respond to questioning on the matter.
Task Group	A small group of Members, with officer support, meet outside of the scheduled meetings to gather information on the subject area, visit other local authorities/ sites, speak to service users, expert witnesses and/ or Officers/ Partners. The Task Group can then report back to the Committee with their findings to endorse the submission of their recommendations to Cabinet/Council This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews.

The Committee asks for a report then takes a view on action	The Committee may need more information before taking a view on whether to carry out a full review so asks for a report to give them more details
Individual Members doing some initial research	<p>A member with a specific concern carries out some research to gain more information on the matter and then brings his/her findings to the attention of the Committee if s/he still has concerns.</p> <p>This can only be done if agreed by the Committee which must consider the impact on resources and officer time in commissioning such items. Any emerging reports would need to go through the Council's reporting clearance process.</p>

5. Note that, in order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to allow the Committee to make a direct contribution, the Committee may choose to take some "information only" items outside of meetings, for example by email.
6. The Committee has also discussed the possibility of creating a Scrutiny Hub service which will provide the Committee with an ability to access and deal with certain matters in a smarter way outside of Committee meetings. This will be taken forward in the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan.

Suggested Criteria to consider

7. As the aim of the work programme is to ensure that scrutiny makes the biggest impact possible the following criteria was suggested to the Committee meeting on 22 September and to Councillors completing the limited work programme suggestion exercise:
 - a. Is the issue a priority area for the Council?
 - b) Is it a key issue for local people?
 - c) Are improvements for local people likely?
 - d) Is it an opportunity to contribute towards significant policy development?
 - e) Does it examine a poor performing service?
 - f) Will it result in improvements to the way the Council operates?

2021/22 Work Programme Suggestions

8. Attached at Appendix A is a list of all the work programme suggestions that were received by or made to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assist its work programme considerations. This list is to act as a guide to assist in the work programme discussions and the steer sought moving forward.

Committee Preparation

9. The Committee held an informal discussion on 4 November 2021 in order to help it prepare for its work programme considerations. At this discussion the Committee discussed work programme suggestions received, the thoughts and direction provided by the Chair of the Committee on potential work programme

content and the priority indications provided by the Committee at its September meeting.

10. As a result of these conversations a draft work programme was developed that is set out below:

24 November 2021	
	Library Strategy
	Street Design Guide
<i>Property Strategy – This is not on work programme for November meeting, however an overview of development process for the strategy is sought by the Committee to inform how they could be involved. It is proposed that officers be engaged to see when this could happen with this required in December or January.</i>	
2 February 2022	
	Property Strategy
	Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
6 April 2022 – Annual Crime & Disorder Scrutiny meeting	
	Community Safety Matters - focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best Practice and how OCC compares ○ Current approach and partnership working ○ Community Safety Partnership ○ PCC and links to Police and Crime Plan ○ Fire & Rescue Service Community Safety Plan ○ Public perspective on key issues
	Fire & Rescue Service Inspection Report

11. In addition to the items detailed above the informal discussion also requested the establishment of 2 working groups, those being as follows:
- **Carbon Reduction Targets** – Member Group to provide performance overview of current targets and make suggestions for development of future targets
 - **Transport Policy Development** – Member Group to provide oversight of current and emerging transport policy development and consultation
12. The Committee is asked to endorse the work programme identified above as developed at the informal discussion on 4 November 2021.

Financial Implications

13. The implementation of this Work Programme is funded within the current budgets for the service and as such there are no direct financial implications to report.

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Legal Implications

14. This report does not raise any direct legal implications.

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Head of Legal Services

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Director of Law and Governance

Annex: Appendix 1 – Work Programme Suggestions

Background papers: Report to Place OSC: Work Programme –
22 September 2021

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November 2021

APPENDIX A - PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22
WORK PROGRAMME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Committee Member Suggestions	
Flooding - Adapting to current situation and future planning	<p>Review of current approach to Flooding in Oxfordshire and future planning to cope with future flooding predictions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of Council and Highways Authority ○ Role of Environment Agency ○ Partnership working and processes – current effectiveness ○ Planning/ highways drainage/ serious flooding events/ section 19 investigations ○ Views of flooded communities ○ Consider where lessons could be learned to help mitigate future impacts on communities ○ How to manage expectations for preventing flooding events from extreme weather ○ Future plans to deal with flooding and climate change
Roadwork Permissions – Utilities	To better understand and influence how Oxfordshire's schedule of highways work is prioritised so as to better inform, engage and consult with residents; what the partnership relationship with Utilities involves and what can be done to improve residents' experiences.
Council Parking Contract (£1.6million loss)	Post-scrutiny review of what happened and lessons to be learnt
Recycling Centres and Household management of waste	To understand the current waste management system and identify where improvements can be made to enhance performance; to understand the requirements of the relevant Council Strategy and seek the views of residents on recycling and household management of waste.
Highway Maintenance Budget	To better understand and influence how Oxfordshire's schedule of highways work is prioritised so as to better inform, engage and consult with residents.
Local Transport and Connection Plan	Review of Plan and what work is underway to inform and improve it.
Freight	Does the Council have a Freight Strategy? What are the key issues in Oxfordshire from a Freight/ Public/ Business perspective? How does this relate to the Climate Change agenda?
Rural Active Public Transport	Is the Council's approach delivering for the rural users and the rural economy? What impact is the approach having on inequalities, employment and deprivation?

CO2 Outputs	Is the Council on target to achieve its CO2 reduction objectives? Are those objectives fit for purpose? How does this relate to Administration's priorities?
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Cabinet Member Suggestions

Street Design Guide	Cabinet endorsed the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide at its meeting in September 2021 – what are the implications of this decision and can the consultation undertaken to inform be improved?
Carbon Reduction Framework	How does the Council plan to deliver Carbon Reduction objectives and how does this relate to the Council's developing new Council Plan?

Officer Suggestions

Library Strategy Development	Pre-scrutiny policy development
Property Strategy Development	Pre-scrutiny policy development – large piece of work, Committee may wish to focus on certain elements of developing strategy content
Fire & Rescue Service Inspection Report	Scrutiny of inspection report and proposed response
Fire & Rescue Service Community Risk Consultation Document	This will inform the future strategic direction of FRS provision in the County
Future of High Street and Retail out of High Street	What is the Council's approach to retail both in and out of the high street across the County and is it effective? What is considered best practice? What are the views of residents and business?

Limited Engagement Exercise Suggestions

- Responding to covid pandemic as an organisation
- Climate change and the school building programme
- Parking provisions
- Drain/ gully/ grip maintenance and improvement programme
- Meeting CO2 reduction targets in the transport system
- Engaging fairly with the public
- Active Travel & Modal Shift
- Consultation Practices and participatory decision-making
- Connecting Oxford