

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SETTING THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

The report outlines the agreed process for setting the Scrutiny Work Programme.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

STOCKTON'S SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

1. Council approved revised scrutiny co-ordination arrangements which sought to strengthen coordination of the scrutiny work programme. Key features of the new arrangements, which are still in place today, include:
 - Greater emphasis on **policy review and development** work
 - Strengthened **project management** of in depth scrutiny reviews
 - **Improved communication** mechanisms, including regular "tri partite" discussions between Scrutiny Members, Cabinet Members and Officers during the course of reviews
 - Identification of "**link officers**" for reviews from within the service or organisation under scrutiny
 - Establishment of a **Scrutiny Liaison Forum** to facilitate dialogue between scrutiny and Cabinet Members. This enables SMT and Cabinet Members to comment on priorities for the scrutiny work programme
 - Establishment of **Executive Scrutiny Committee** to approve and coordinate the work programme
2. Our formal structures and informal mechanisms have sought to foster a constructive working relationship between Cabinet and scrutiny and have led to a flexible work programme adapting quickly to changing priorities for the Council.
3. Over the years the Council's scrutiny function has consistently received positive feedback from external inspections such as the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. The Scrutiny Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary was one of six national finalists in the Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny category of the MJ Awards in 2016 and individual Members have been recognised for individual contributions to scrutiny.
4. Attached at **Appendix 1** are extracts from Part 4 of the Constitution setting out the role of Scrutiny Liaison Forum and Executive Scrutiny Committee in discussing and ultimately setting the work programme.

PROCESS FOR SETTING THE WORK PROGRAMME

5. In line with the Constitution, each year the Chair of Executive Scrutiny Committee writes to all Members inviting topics for review. Members are encouraged to suggest topics which support the Council's policy principles, identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services. At the same time an email is sent to SMT asking officers suggest topics, thereby feeding in ideas from management team meetings and the wider workforce.
6. In addition, an item is included on the annual Overview Meetings of each Select Committee allowing officers to highlight potential areas for in depth review and Select Committees to feed in their suggestions.

PICK System

7. It has been customary for a number of years to invite topics suggestions via a pro forma asking for basic information on the topic proposed and the justification for scrutiny.
8. A "PICK" prioritisation tool is used to give the topic a score based on public interest, impact, performance and efficiency issues and context. An initial score is allocated by one scrutiny officer for consistency. It should be stressed that the score is a tool to aid prioritisation and is not binding in any way.
9. The prioritisation is then discussed by Scrutiny Liaison Forum and priorities from that Forum are presented to Executive Scrutiny Committee who ultimately set the Work Programme and allocate reviews to Committees.
10. Executive Scrutiny Committee are not bound by the initial PICK score or SLF prioritisation.

OTHER SCRUTINY WORK

11. In addition to in the depth reviews which form the majority of the Scrutiny Work Programme, Select Committees also receive updates and reports on other items including:

Overview

12. Recognising the overview role of the scrutiny function, annual overview meetings were established to provide Members with an overview of all the services reporting to the various Select Committees and to question Cabinet Members and Senior Officers on their performance and understand the challenges and issues arising ahead of setting the following year's work programme. This complements the more in depth work probing specific issues.
13. Crime and Disorder Select Committee is the designated statutory scrutiny committee for crime and disorder issues as required by legislation. The annual overview meeting fulfils the statutory requirement to include an annual update on crime and disorder as a minimum.

Monitoring

14. In addition, Select Committees continue to receive progress reports in respect of the reviews which have concluded until they have been fully implemented. Following approval of review recommendations, an action plan is presented for Committee approval followed by twice yearly progress updates.

Quality and Safety

15. In response to high profile cases in the media relating to the quality and safety of health, children's and social care services and the increased expectation on Councils to put in place internal mechanisms to undertake rigorous internal review and challenge, Children and Young People Select Committee now receive regular performance reports in respect of children's services. Adult Services and Health Select Committee also receive performance reports on adult social care issues and a range of other reports and updates are provided as part of the enhanced performance management arrangements. These include Annual Reports from the Council, Trusts and CQC, NHS Local Accounts; CQC Inspection Reports; HealthWatch Enter and View Reports etc. Member site visits to frontline services take place on a rolling programme. The last Ofsted Inspection recognised the work of Children and Young People Select Committee and, in particular, the extensive work to scrutinise frontline practice.

Health Scrutiny

16. Adult Services and Health Select Committee continues to be responsible for receiving statutory and non-statutory health consultations / updates on service changes. It is therefore important to build in a degree of capacity within the programme to deal with other emerging issues.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The work programme is resourced within existing budgets.

18. Any constitutional changes require Council approval.

RISK ASSESSMENT

19. There is a need to meet legislative requirements and for the Council to put in place internal mechanisms to ensure the safety and quality of key services in addition to deploying resources in the most effective way. The selection of appropriate topics for review can help to support service improvement; the selection of inappropriate topics will lead to the waste of officer and Member time and resources.

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Background Papers:

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not Ward Specific

Property Implications:

None

Extracts from Part 4 of the Constitution

Work Programme

Select Committees will provide the Executive Scrutiny Committee with views on the Select Committees' priority areas for policy development and review insofar as their respective terms of reference are concerned.

Following liaison with the Executive Scrutiny Committee each Select Committee will adopt a programme of time-limited scrutiny reviews in relation to specific policy development and the review of existing policy. The total of each Select Committee's programme of work will represent the Council's overall scrutiny work programme. This overall Council work programme will be established by the Executive Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Scrutiny Committee will receive and consider input from all non-Cabinet and Cabinet Members on suggested areas of scrutiny work, including views from the Scrutiny Liaison Forum on emerging policy development review topics and from the Select Committees on their priority areas for review. Taking these views into account, the Executive Scrutiny Committee will consider, prioritise, develop and co-ordinate the Council's scrutiny work programme, ensuring that there is efficient use of the Select Committees' time, that the potential for duplication of effort is minimized and will manage any changes in year.

The Executive Scrutiny Committee will also receive and respond to requests from Cabinet and/or the full Council for policy development advice and new priority review areas, allocating them if appropriate to one or more of the relevant Select Committees. Within this context, the Executive Scrutiny Committee will be responsible for the prioritisation, co-ordination and monitoring of the Council's Scrutiny work programme and each Select Committee's activities in that respect, advising on timescales, liaising as appropriate with each Select Committee and determining how scrutiny reviews will be resourced.

Scrutiny Liaison Forum

Terms of Reference

1. To provide a Forum to foster and develop a closer, more constructive working relationship between the Cabinet members, the Corporate Management Team and Scrutiny chairs and thereby assist in the efficient and effective working of scrutiny and the scrutiny work programme in order to deliver the Council's key priorities and secure added value.
2. To receive briefings from Cabinet Members/Corporate Management Team and Executive Scrutiny Committee Members on emerging policy development areas.
3. To consider the current scrutiny work programme position and progress in delivering its aims.
4. To consider and ensure support for the current scrutiny work programme and its delivery.
5. To consider any special issues which may require urgent policy development advice or scrutiny work.
6. To undertake appropriate liaison with the Executive Scrutiny Committee on future policy development issues and review topics.

Membership

To include:

The thematic Select Committee Chairs; the Chair of the Executive Scrutiny Committee; Cabinet Members and the Corporate Management Team.