

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

23 JUNE 2020

**REPORT OF THE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
ADMINISTRATION,
DEMOCRATIC AND
ELECTORAL SERVICES**

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

SUMMARY

This report reviews the scrutiny work programme for 2020/21 in light of the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the work programme for the remainder of 2020/21 proposed at paragraph 15 be approved.
- (2) That Executive Scrutiny Committee receive regular reports at an appropriate time during the COVID-19 recovery phase.
- (3) That Select Committees resume their work under remote meeting arrangements from July 2020.
- (4) That Select Committees review the scope of in-depth work to include issues emanating from COVID-19, recognising that some elements of planned work may need to be removed (e.g. site visits) and consideration will need to be given to new ways of working to gather evidence.

DETAIL

1. Prior to the work programme for scrutiny being paused in mid-March 2020, Scrutiny Liaison Forum had considered all topic suggestions scored under the "PICK" prioritisation tool and had recommended that topic suggestions 1-12 on **Appendix 1** be included on the Select Committee Work Programme for 2020/21.

2. Scrutiny Liaison Forum also commented that:

- Potholes and Highways Asset Management be combined into one review
- Carbon Monoxide Awareness be conducted as a Task and Finish Review
- Topic 9 – Civic Enforcement and PCSO Powers be combined with topic 26 – Obstructive Parking
- Topic 15 – Roadside Advertising be brought forward as a Task and Finish Review
- Topic 17 – Support for Younger Adults – reconsideration for inclusion on the work programme at six-month review

- Topic 25 – Planning Enforcement – pulled
 - Topic 30 – Discretionary Parking Bays be conducted as a reporting-in review (one meeting)
3. Topic pro-formas for all reviews suggested are included at **Appendix 2**.
4. In addition, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust had put forward the following suggestion:
- **Diabetes education** commencing in schools with regard to prevention and more specialist nursing input across the health system; there are clear Population Health possibilities here. Early intervention will have long term benefits and could perhaps be aligned with PHSE curriculum? Also healthy eating and exercise in schools.
 - **Pre-conception health in women**; Smoking cessation pre-conception, alcohol issues, exercise, weight, diet, risky behaviours, contraception, plans re breast feeding and education etc.
 - **Dementia recognition and pathways in Community**; Links with TEWV and third sector. Primarily, to further develop staff skills as we know large proportion of in patients will have dementia. Perhaps an area for more integration with MH services – e.g. joint case working for preventative health support? There is a Dementia Friendly Stockton project to develop the Borough of Stockton as a nationally recognised dementia friendly community. How we can support this further?
 - **A review of Population Health and Prevention in Stockton**
 - A review of drug and alcohol services – the Public Health registrar has done some great work with commissioned services and the Local Authority on this issue. The presentation could be shared with the Scrutiny Committee.
 - A review of ‘fast food’ outlets and off-licences in the area; - there was a very successful approach in Durham a couple of years ago which could be shared. Again, this is a population health issue – access in communities to fresh and affordable food and healthier alternatives to fast food. Perhaps also a programme with fast food outlets to display nutrition information so people are more informed? Links back to diabetes education too.
 - **A review of pressure on the public sector i.e. anti-social behaviour**. This typically presents as substance misuse or issues of violence and aggression. Ideally, we would agree a collective approach to this across health, social care and police with clear links to public health in local authority and the trust. Also links to responsibilities as an anchor organisation to employ, educate and develop the local population.
5. Scrutiny Liaison Forum recommended that the above topics be considered for scrutiny as part of joint health scrutiny arrangements. With regard to the topics under Population Health and Prevention in Stockton, presentations will be included within the ASCH Select Committee Work Programme.

Impact of COVID-19

6. Following discussion at Scrutiny Liaison Forum, the work programme for scrutiny was paused in mid-March 2020 and, as a result, Executive Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees were cancelled at that time until the end of May 2020.
7. As the restrictions are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, it is timely to consider how scrutiny should operate in the coming months.

8. In recent weeks, Democratic Services have put arrangements in place for Council committee meetings to resume using remote meeting technology. Other Councils nationally are also following suit and are beginning to meet, or have plans in place, to resume their scrutiny meetings.

9. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) have produced a guide on approaches to scrutiny during the crisis <https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020-04-09-covid-guide-2-scrutiny-1st-edn.pdf>. This guide stresses that maintaining a form of scrutiny in the current crisis is critical.

10. The guide acknowledges that scrutiny is an important part of the Governance framework and that Councillors have a vital role in feeding into and bolstering the response in the communities they serve; the scrutiny function provides a mechanism for this work to feed into overall strategy. However, the guide also recognises that scrutiny needs to be conducted in a way that is timely, supportive and proportionate.

11. In resuming the Council’s scrutiny function, it will be important to:

- Include regular updates on the Council’s response to COVID-19 and ongoing recovery
- Complete reviews which are underway whilst reviewing the scope of the work so that issues emanating from COVID-19 are included; some elements of the work may no longer be relevant or practicable to be carried out in view of ongoing social distancing restrictions and it will be important to review the scoping documents with Link Officers, taking into account their capacity and capacity within services to support the work
- Review the relevance of proposed in-depth reviews in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic

12. Given that time has already been lost, Select Committees will only have time to complete existing reviews and potentially **ONE** other piece of work in the current year.

13. With regard to new reviews, the priority of these topics have been reviewed in the current climate.

14. There will also need to be a degree of flexibility in the scheduling of other elements of scrutiny work such as monitoring; services may need more time to present Actions Plans and progress updates taking into account other priorities at the present time.

15. Taking these considerations into account, the following table sets out the potential 2020/21 work programme. Reviews in **bold** are already in progress and the other reviews listed were prioritised by Scrutiny Liaison Forum for the 2020/21 programme and remain relevant for review.

Select Committee	In-Depth Review Topics	Comments
Adult Social Care and Health	Hospital Discharge	Given other work / updates that this Committee will want to consider, it is likely that Hospital Discharge will be the only review completed in the current year. This particular topic is, however, very relevant to the pandemic.
Children and Young People	School Uniforms	The majority of evidence on School Uniforms has already been collected via desktop research, and remaining evidence can be collected remotely.

	Care Leavers EET	From the three other prioritised reviews, it is proposed that Care Leavers EET should be the next review as there will be likely issues about care leavers being able to access training, employment opportunities due to economic impact of COVID-19 and therefore a need to find new solutions and opportunities to support this vulnerable group.
Crime and Disorder	Fly-Grazed Horses Action Fraud	Only one more evidence session is planned for the Fly-Grazed Horses review which has remained topical over recent weeks. Fraud had also been an issue during the pandemic.
People	Local Council Tax Support Scheme Public Consultation Tees Credit Union	Local Council Tax Support Scheme timescales may have slipped. This work will resume in due course. Timescales TBC. The Public Consultation review is relatively inward-facing and work could resume. Tees Credit union is also topical given rise in universal claims. When this work is carried out will, however, be dependent on the appointment of a new Chief Executive of the Credit Union.
Place	Business Support and Engagement Burial Provision	Only one more evidence session is planned for the Business Support and Engagement review which is also very relevant to the pandemic. As it will not be possible to complete Planters in Residential Streets during 2020/21 due to the current restrictions (this can be held over till next year), Burial Provision is therefore proposed as the next new review and remains relevant at this time.

NEXT STEPS

23 June Executive Scrutiny Committee – agree programme for the remainder of the year

CONSULTATION

16. Councillors and Officers were asked to propose topics for the initial work programme.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The work programme is resourced within existing budgets. No legal implications are identified at this stage.

RISK ASSESSMENT

18. 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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<u>Background Papers:</u>	None
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	None