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| Local Members' Interest |
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Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 1 June 2015

Work Programme Planning 2015-16

Recommendation/s

1. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee review the draft work programme for 2015-16 and advise on content (see Appendix 1);

That the Committee consider identifying Members who would be willing to participate in a Working Group on Infrastructure+;

That the Committee consider identifying a Member who would be willing to participate in the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Working Group (see Appendix 2).

Report of the Scrutiny and Support Manager

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

2. The scrutiny structures have been designed to ensure effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's key outcomes set out in the County Council's Strategic Plan 2014-18, Leading for a Connected Staffordshire – Our Vision for 2014-18. Three priority outcomes have been identified. "The people of Staffordshire will:

- Be able to access more jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth;
- Be healthier and more independent;
- Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

3. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee is responsible for scrutinising:

- Education, learning and skills
- Prosperity and economic growth
- Highways infrastructure and connectivity

and is aligned to the following commissioning priorities:

- Ready for Life
- Right for Business
- Enjoying Life

4. The Council has identified 14 priorities for 2015-16. The Committee has responsibility for holding the relevant Cabinet Member to account in regard to delivering the following priorities from this list:

- Modelling the future learning and skills infrastructure and our new relationship with schools
- Delivering the economic growth programme
- Delivery skills for employment and growth, working with the Education Trust
- Agreeing Staffordshire model for early intervention and prevention (cross cutting)

5. The Select Committee is encouraged to identify issues that reflect these priorities and/or are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider. The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Last year Members considered the Infrastructure+ contract with Amey. Members were asked how they would like to scrutinise the governance of this partnership going forward and it was agreed that a Working Group be set up in June 2015 to consider this. Membership of this Working Group is now sought.

6. Members are encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme is a dynamic document and is reviewed at every meeting of the Committee to ensure that its contents are still relevant and will add value to what the Council and partners are doing.

7. Members are invited to comment on the attached draft Work Programme (Appendix 1).

8. Members are invited to nominate a representative to participate in the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Working Group (see Appendix 2).

Report

Background

Remit and Membership of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

9. The Committee will lead on ensuring effective accountability of the impact of learning and skills and an effective highways and transport network on ensuring sustainable economic prosperity within the county. The Committee has statutory education co-optees on the Committee representing parent/governors (elected by all parent/governors in Staffordshire schools) and the Lichfield Diocese and the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

Developing the Work Programme

10. In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

Is the matter a concern to local people? (You may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing).

Is the issue an identified priority for the County Council or partners?

Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance? For example, has this issue been identified by external auditors or inspectors?

What difference could scrutiny make?

What would happen if you did not look at this issue?

11. Members are encouraged to raise issues at any point during the year. This can be done by:

Completing the proposal form for work programme items (on line <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/decisionmakingcouncil/roleofscrutiny/GetInvolved.aspx>;

Hard copies of the form are available on request;

Talking to the Select Committee Chair/Vice Chair or Scrutiny and Support Manager/Officer;

Raising items under the 'Work Programme' item on the meeting agenda; or

Councillor Call for Action.

The simplest method is to raise the issue at the Select Committee meeting. The Work Programme is not 'set in stone' and should be seen as a dynamic document that changes to reflect emerging priorities. However, it is important to plan for the next two/three meetings to ensure that reports are prepared and Members/Officers can be invited to attend and have the dates of meetings in their diaries.

12. Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they do and do not want to include in the work programme, there are some issues carried over from last year that the Committee may want to complete. The draft Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 to this report also includes items from the current Forward Plan; items that the Committee is asked to scrutinise on an annual basis and some new items that have been proposed for inclusion by the Cabinet Member and/or Senior Officers on which the Committee views are sought prior to a decision being taken.

13. From time to time representation from this Committee is requested by the Chairs of other Committees. Attached as Appendix 2 is a current request from the Chair of Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee for a member of this Committee to join a Working Group on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

Method of Scrutiny

14. Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Scrutiny and Support Manager and/or Scrutiny and Support Officer. Members may wish to:

Consider an item at a single meeting;

Consider an item over a series of meetings;
Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice);
Undertake an Inquiry Day (or days);
Undertake joint scrutiny with members of another Select Committee;
Invite expert witnesses to give their views;
Seeking the views of service users/carers and/or the general public (public calls for evidence).

Reviewing the Work Programme

15. There will be an opportunity to review the Work Programme at every meeting. The Chair/Vice Chair and shadow Cabinet leads meet informally with the Cabinet Members on a termly basis to review the Work Programme and to evaluate outcomes delivered by scrutiny and identify emerging priorities to enable longer term planning of scrutiny activity ('triangulation meetings').

Member Training and Development

16. Training and development sessions will be organised for Members as required. Members are invited to make any suggestions for development with the Chair, Scrutiny and Support Manager or Julie Roberts, Member Development Officer.

Link to Strategic Plan

17. The remits of the Council's Select Committees link to the strategic priorities set out in the Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan 2014-2018, Leading for a Connected Staffordshire – Our Vision for 2014-2018. Work programmes should link to community priorities or strategic outcomes if they are to deliver noticeable outcomes for local communities and the organisation.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

18. Select Committees are encouraged to identify whether any of the issues for their work programmes are 'cross cutting' and would benefit from joint working. In such cases joint working groups with Members from the relevant Select Committees can be set up.

Equalities and Legal Implications

19. The County Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact. Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

The Select Committees will be updated as necessary on any matters affecting their operation that relate to legislation, regulations, and the County Council's Constitution.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

20. Work programmes which are effectively prioritised will ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit.

Risk Implications

21. The key aspects of risk management in regard to scrutiny work programmes are:

- ensuring that there are clear outcomes from the scrutiny process that impact positively upon the people and communities of Staffordshire and link to corporate priorities; and
- that there is adequate capacity for the select committees to complete the work that has been agreed.

Climate Change Implications

22. The Committee will need to consider the implications for climate change of any recommendations it makes in relation to those issues included on the work programme. The Committee should also consider the implications of the scrutiny methods it decides to utilise – for example, travelling for best practice visits.

Contact Officer:

Name: Tina Randall, Scrutiny and Support Manager
Telephone No.: 01785 276148
Address/e-mail: tina.randall@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices/Background papers

Appendix 1 - Draft Work Programme
Appendix 2 – Letter from Chair of Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee