

Local Members' Interest
N/a

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 31 July 2017

Work Programme Planning 2017/18

Recommendation

1. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee consider and agree an initial list of priorities to form the basis of the work programme for 2017/18.

Report of the Scrutiny and Support Manager

Summary

2. The revised scrutiny structures have been designed to ensure effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's key outcomes set out in Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan 2014-2018. The Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee is responsible for scrutiny of:

Promoting prosperity and economic growth
Highways, infrastructure and connectivity
Flood and water management
Education, learning and skills

3. In developing a work programme the Committee is encouraged to identify issues that are a current priority for local people and communities and/or are a priority for the Council and partners. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you collectively as Councillors represent then the likelihood is that it is something the Committee should spend time on. 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. Members are encouraged to raise and discuss issues that should form the basis of the work programme and review these periodically throughout the year to ensure they remain relevant and will add value to what the Council and partners are doing.

Report

Remit of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

4. The Committee will lead on ensuring effective accountability for promoting prosperity and economic growth; for highways, infrastructure and connectivity and education, learning and skills. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Staffordshire is the Lead Local Flood Authority. This Committee is the designated Committee for consideration of flood and water management in the county.

Developing the Work Programme

5. This meeting is an opportunity for the Committee to begin to identify and prioritise what it wishes to scrutinise during the current municipal year. Cabinet Members and officers will be present at the meeting to deliver a presentation regarding the County Council's responsibilities in relation to promoting economic prosperity and growth, highways, infrastructure and connectivity, flood and water management and education, learning and skills. The Cabinet Members have also been invited to contribute to the discussion to highlight some of the key priorities they are focussing on this year.
6. When agreeing matters for your work programme you are encouraged to ask the following questions:
 - Is the matter of particular 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?

At the end of Appendix 1 a number of items have been proposed for scrutiny this year by the Corporate Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

Matters carried over from Last Year's Work Programme

7. The Committee met seven times during the last municipal year. The Committee undertook a detailed and extensive work programme last year. The following items were on the Work Programme but due to prioritisation being given to other matters were not considered:

Impact on Staffordshire of Britain's vote to leave the European Union.

EU Funding Programme. The former Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills added this item to the Work Programme.

Overview of Regeneration Projects. The former Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills added this item to the Work Programme.

Post -16 Education. The former Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills added this item to the Work Programme.

Skills and Apprenticeships Levy. The former Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills added this item to the Work Programme. This matter is being led by our Human Resources Team and it is suggested that we refer this to the Corporate Review Committee, who are responsible for scrutinising our corporate services.

Entrust Service Level Agreement Key Performance Indicator Working group.

Last year the Committee had a small group of Members (Councillors Tagg, Hollinshead and Peale and Mr Paul Woodhead) reviewing the Performance Indicators that had been established in regard to the contract that the Council has with Entrust. The Working Group met on three occasions. The last meeting was on 18 October 2016. Advice is sought on how the Committee wishes to take this matter forward.

Infrastructure+. Members have been regularly involved in scrutiny of the Council's contract arrangements with Amey. Members have been asked to continue to scrutinise the Improvement Plan and Performance Review.

Progress on the SEND (Special Education Needs Disability) Transformation.

Members considered this matter in March 2017 and asked for a further progress report after the election.

Progress on the Countryside Estate. This item was deferred in March due to the absence of the Cabinet Member. A request has been received to bring this item to the September meeting for pre-decision scrutiny.

School Funding for the Future. Members requested that this item be added to the Work Programme when they met in March 2017.

A draft Work Programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Matters arising on Forward Plan of Key Decisions

8. The Forward Plan contains an item on the Supported Bus Network. The Committee's comments are requested on this matter.

Recurring Work Programme Items

Flood Risk Management. The Committee has scrutinised the local authority's risk assessment on an annual basis and have been asked to consider this in September.

Libraries in a Connected Staffordshire – Mobile and Travelling Library – monitor review outcomes. Members previously considered this matter on two occasions in 2015 and agreed to scrutinise the impact of review at a later date.

Scrutiny Review - Working Together to address the impact that HGVs have on Staffordshire roads and local communities. The predecessor Committee received an initial response to their recommendations on 13 September 2016. The Committee should follow up the Cabinet Member's response to their recommendations.

Future Operating Model for Staffordshire Arts' Service and the Shire Hall.

Members scrutinised this matter on 13 September 2016 and it was agreed that developments in regard to the Shire Hall should be monitored through the Committee's work programme.

Skills and Employability Self-Assessment. Members have been asked to consider this assessment which is subject to external annual review by Ofsted.

Superfast Staffordshire (Broadband). The Committee has previously received updates on this matter in October 2013, October 2014 and July 2015. Members are asked to consider what impact the Superfast Broadband Strategy has in regard to the 'Prosperous' agenda.

Training and development

9. Member and Democratic Services ran two induction sessions on an Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny on 30 May and 1 June 2017. Further training and development sessions will be run for Members as required. Members are invited to make any suggestions for development with the Chair, Scrutiny and Support Manager or Lynne Coates, Member Development and ICT Officer.

Method of Scrutiny

10. Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate timing and method of scrutiny for that issue (proposals for some items may be provided). 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 group of Members to look at over a period of 2-3 months; or undertake an inquiry day
 - undertake joint scrutiny with members of another Select Committee.
11. The choice of method will depend in part on the scope of the matter, capacity and the opportunity for locality working and community engagement in the review. Experience suggests that single issue meetings and small task groups tend to deliver greater recommendations and outcomes than heavy agenda at scheduled committee meetings.

All Party Member Groups

12. The County Council has agreed to establish All Member Party Groups. These groups will be tasked with supporting the Council's long term policy ambitions putting forward proposals of how public services in Staffordshire could address community issues that will arise over the medium to long term. There will be four All Party Member Groups focussed around Innovation; Improvement; Community and External Relationships. They will be chaired by Cabinet Support Members.

Reviewing the Work Programme

13. There will be an opportunity to review the work programme at every Committee meeting. Members are encouraged to raise issues at any point during the year and this can be done by:
 - completing the proposal form for work programme items (on line or in hard copy);
 - talking to the Chair/Vice Chair and Scrutiny and Support Team;

- raising items under the 'Work Programme' item on meeting agenda.
14. The simplest method is to discuss the issue at the work programme item on meeting agenda. In developing a work programme, Members do not need to set in stone the work programme for a full year. To prepare reports and for officers/ witnesses to attend meetings it is important to plan items for the next two to three meetings. Beyond that it is possible that new issues may have arisen that will take precedence; hence it is advisable to review the work programme quarterly and treat it as a dynamic document. This way the Committee will be better able to respond to community concerns as and when they arise.

Link to Strategic Plan

15. The remits of the Council's Select Committees link to the strategic priorities set out in the County Council Strategic Plan 2014-18. 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

16. Select Committees are encouraged to identify whether any of the issues for their work programmes are 'cross cutting' and would benefit from joint working.

Equalities and Legal Implications

17. 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.
18. 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

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

Risk Implications

20. 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

21. 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.

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Appendices/Background papers

Appendix 1 - Draft Work Programme