

Overview & Scrutiny Committee
10 August 2021

Title: Work Programme, Forward Plan & Comments from Cabinet

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Portfolio Holder: Not applicable

Public report

Wards of the District directly affected: Not applicable

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report informs the Committee of its work programme for 2021/2022 (Appendix 1) and the current [Forward Plan](#).
- 1.2. In addition, it provides the Committee with the response that Cabinet gave to its comments regarding the reports on 12 August 2021 (Appendix 2).
- 1.3. Appendix 2 details the decisions Cabinet & Employment Committee made in respect of the Task & Finish Group – Race & Equality recommendations. Part of these amended the recommendations made by the Task & Finish Group considerably.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members consider the work programme (Appendix 1) and agree any changes as appropriate.
- 2.2. The Committee to; identify any Cabinet items on the Forward Plan on which it wishes to have an input before the Cabinet makes its decision; and to nominate a Member to investigate that future decision and report back to the Committee.
- 2.3. Members note the responses made by the Cabinet on the Comments from the Cabinet report (Appendix 2).
- 2.4. Members note the decisions made by Cabinet and Employment Committee in respect of the Task & Finish Group (Appendix 2).
- 2.5. Members decide the course of action to be taken in respect of the decisions made by Cabinet on the Task & Finish Group's report (Appendix 2).

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1. The work programme should be updated at each meeting to accurately reflect the workload of the Committee.
- 3.2. The proposed plan at Appendix 1 has been developed in order for the Committee to focus on the four agreed core themes (Covid 19, Climate Change, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Business Plan). While this Committee will

not have as much focus on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, it will have to spend significant times looking at the other areas in detail.

- 3.3. Two of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.
- 3.4. If the Committee has an interest in a future decision to be made by the Cabinet, or policy to be implemented, it is within the Committee's remit to feed into the process.
- 3.5. The Forward Plan is actually the future work programme for the Cabinet. If a non-cabinet member highlighted a decision(s) which is to be taken by the Cabinet which they would like to be involved in, that member(s) could then provide useful background to the Committee when the report is submitted to the Cabinet and they are passing comment on it.
- 3.6. Appendix 2, Comments from Cabinet, is produced to create a dialogue between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It ensures that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is formally made aware of the Cabinet's responses.
- 3.7. Where Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made a recommendation as opposed to a comment, the Cabinet is required to respond to the recommendation(s) made, including whether or not it accepts the recommendation(s).
- 3.8. Both the Cabinet and Employment Committee took the same decision in respect of the Task & Finish Group's report. This referred all the work undertake so far to the Transformation Programme Advisory Board (PAB) for them to progress and asked the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider ceasing the work on the second stage of the work and also passing this to the Transformation PAB.

4. Background

- 4.1. The five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.
- 4.2. The pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions falls within the role of 'holding to account'. To feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions, the Committee needs to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which it would like to have an impact upon.
- 4.3. The Council's Forward Plan is published on a monthly basis and sets out the key decisions to be taken by the Council in the next twelve months. The Council only has a statutory duty to publish key decisions to be taken in the next four months. However, the Forward Plan was expanded to a twelve-month period to give a clearer picture of how and when the Council will be making important decisions.
- 4.4. A key decision is a decision which has a significant impact or effect on two or more wards and / or a budgetary effect of £50,000 or more.

- 4.5. The Forward Plan also identifies non-key decisions to be made by the Council in the next twelve months, and the Committee, if it wishes, may also pre-scrutinise these decisions.
- 4.6. There may also be policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could pre-scrutinise and have an impact upon how these are formulated.
- 4.7. The Committee should be mindful that any work it wishes to undertake would need to be undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan.
- 4.8. At each meeting, the Committee will consider their work programme and make amendments where necessary, and also make comments on specific Cabinet items, where notice has been given by 9am on the morning after Group meetings. The Committee will also receive a report detailing the response from the Cabinet, on the comments the Committee made on the Cabinet agenda in the previous cycle.
- 4.9. The Forward Plan is considered at each meeting and allows the Committee to look at future items and become involved in those Cabinet decisions to be taken, if members so wish.
- 4.10. As part of the new scrutiny process, the Committee is no longer considering the whole of the Cabinet agenda.
- 4.11. On the day of publication of the Cabinet agenda all Councillors are sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 09.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Cabinet items they would like the Committee to consider.
- 4.12. As a result, the Committee considered the items detailed in appendix 2. The response the Cabinet gave on each item is also shown.
- 4.13. In reviewing these responses, the Committee can identify any issues for which they would like a progress report. A future report, for example on how the decision has been implemented, would then be submitted to the Committee at an agreed date which would then be incorporated within the work programme.