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| SUBJECT: | WORK PROGRAMME REPORT |
| MEETING: | STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE |
| DATE: | 20th July 2017 |
| DIVISION/WARDS | |
| AFFECTED: | All |

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 This report recommends a 'planned approach' to Scrutiny Forward Work Programming in order to maximise the effectiveness and added value of scrutiny activity, ensuring focus upon topics of the highest priority for the Council and those which reflect the public interest.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee adopts the process suggested in this report to develop their Select Committee work programme, taking into account:

- The responsibility to scrutinise performance and key risks in order to provide effective challenge to the Council's Executive;
- The duty to scrutinise wider public services provided to Monmouthshire residents as a result of powers afforded to them through the Local Government Measure;
- Capacity/resources when prioritising topics for scrutiny and agreeing their inclusion into the work programme.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Select Committees are required to agree a work programme at the start of each municipal year that outlines their work commitments for the year ahead (Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010). The Select Committee work programme should as far as possible be agreed at the beginning of each municipal year, however, it can be updated during the year to accommodate urgent items at the Committee's dispensation.

IDENTIFYING KEY TOPICS

- 3.2 Topics for the work programme can derive from a wide range of sources including:
- Risk Register – key risks have been allocated to Select Committees which are responsible for considering the risks and where appropriate, challenging the performance of the Executive and the actions being taken to mitigate risks.

- Performance monitoring reports / budget monitoring reports – the Select Committees undertake regular monitoring of the Council's performance and progress in implementing previously agreed actions.
- The Cabinet's Forward Plan (attached to this agenda) – topics on the Cabinet Forward Plan can be considered by Select Committees in advance to enable the Committee to inform the Cabinet's decision by making evidence-based recommendations.
- Suggestions/requests made by: Council Members, senior management, Scrutiny Officer, partners and stakeholders – a topic may be identified for scrutiny because of changes to legislation/government guidance, or a policy is recognised as being in need of updating or reviewing locally and it would be beneficial for the committee to review the policy.
- Corporate/strategic plans ~ such as the Council's Improvement Plan.
- Highlighted Issues ~ in audit and inspection reports.
- Public Consultation ~ Outcomes of public consultation on the work programme.

3.3 In addition to standing items such as budget monitoring, performance monitoring and risk management which are considered on a regular basis, Cabinet Members and Officers may suggest topics which they feel warrant scrutiny, however, it remains the Committee's prerogative to set and agree their work programme. In doing so, the Committee should identify and agree the highest priority topics, which will add the most value.

3.4 Topics requiring long and detailed examination can be looked at in detail over the course of several meetings and should be included in the Committee's work programme with timescales. Select Committees are advised to consider whether a "short scrutiny" via several focussed meetings would be more appropriate than a Task and Finish Group, given the dynamic environment / fast pace of change within which modern councils operate. Short scrutinies allow the work programme to be flexible and to accommodate urgent items. Due to the level of resources and the time taken to deliver outcomes via Task & Finish Groups, Select Committees are advised to establish no more than one Task and Finish Group per Committee at any one time.

4.0 PRIORITISING TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY

4.1 Some key principles for Members to consider when setting the work programme are:

- Topics should add value and support corporate priorities.
- The timing of scrutiny activity should achieve maximum impact.
- Where appropriate, partners, stakeholders and the public should be involved.
- Allowing some flexibility in the work programme will enable urgent topics to be included if they arise.
- The aim should always be to seek improvement in service provision.
- The work programme should be achievable within available resources.

Checklist for prioritising Topics for Scrutiny

| Public Interest | Evidence |
|--|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Is this a “high profile” topic? ❖ Is there evidence of significant public interest? ❖ Is this an area where a lot of complaints are received and/or bad press? ❖ Would this review provide opportunities for the local community to have a say? ❖ Is substantial survey / research work required? | |
| Impact | Evidence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Will this review have a significant impact on the “well-being” of people in Monmouthshire? ❖ Does a local community/interest group have much to gain/lose? ❖ Is there work required to develop the routes to influencing change? (consider external influences) ❖ Would it make a big difference to the way services are delivered? ❖ Would it make a big difference to the way resources are used? | |
| Performance | Evidence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Is the Council / are other organisations under- performing in this area? ❖ Is performance poor compared to others and do we understand why this is the case? ❖ Are we are performing well, but spending too much of our resources in this area? ❖ Are there few local or national performance measures/targets by which to measure our performance? | |
| Influence | Evidence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Has this service been recently reviewed or inspected? ❖ Will this issue be part of an improvement review or external inspection in the next two years? ❖ If the service is to be reviewed or inspected soon, can Select Committees make a positive contribution by focussing on specific aspects and making recommendations? ❖ Are there any current or future major changes forecasted which reduce or pre-empt the value of the investigation? ❖ Are changes to this service planned and can Scrutiny positively influence change? | |

4.2 The above checklist is designed to assist the Committee in selecting appropriate topics for scrutiny by encouraging Members to consider the anticipated outcomes and impact of any scrutiny activity. Any topics chosen for an in-depth review via a

Task and Finish Group should be scoped by the Scrutiny Officer to assess their feasibility, the likely objectives, and potential lines of inquiry and Terms of Reference prior to commencement.

5.0 TOPICS SCRUTINISED DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR (May 2016/17)

5.1 Along with routine performance and budget monitoring reports, scrutiny of the risk assessment and annual budget scrutiny, the following key topics were scrutinised during the previous year:

- ✓ Waste:
 - Future of the Civic Amenity Site Contract
 - Recycling Review Outcome and Implementation Plans
- ✓ Grant Funded Partnerships
- ✓ Public Protection:
 - Licensing
 - Commercial environmental health
 - Environmental health
 - Public health
 - Trading standards
- People Services:
 - Attendance and well-being policy
 - Stress management
 - Annual Report
- ✓ Sustainable Development Policy
- ✓ Flood Risk Management Plan
- ✓ Managing Public Open Space
- ✓ Street Lighting
- ✓ Public Toilets
- ✓ Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- ✓ Welsh Language Strategy
- ✓ Castle Meadows Abergavenny Change of use of River Usk
- ✓ Environment Act Biodiversity and Resilient Ecosystems Forward Plan
- ✓ Strategic Equality Plan
- ✓ Wales Audit Office Review of Kerbcraft ~ progress report
- ✓ Alternative Service Delivery Model ~ scrutinised jointly
- ✓ Housing: scrutinised jointly
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing
 - Monmouthshire Letting Service
 - Homeless Prevention - Rent Guarantee Scheme

6 FUTURE SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

6.1 The July Select Committee cycle will primarily focus on familiarising new Members with the scope and remit of their Select Committees and assisting them in setting a forward work programme.

6.2 Work programme discussion meetings have taken place between the new Chair of the Select Committee and the former chair and chief officers have highlighted the following topics for consideration for future scrutiny:

- Volunteering Policy
- Waste:
 - Recycling
 - Anaerobic Digestion
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Gypsy and Traveller Provision
- Flood Risk Management Plan
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan ~ joint scrutiny with Economy and Development (Jan / Feb 2018)
- Local Development Plan ~ joint scrutiny with Economy and Development
- Affordable Housing ~ joint scrutiny with Economy and Development and Adults
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal ~ joint scrutiny
- Cycling and Walking Product ~ joint scrutiny with Economy and Development
- Outdoor Education Review ~ joint scrutiny with Economy and Development
- Alternative Service Delivery Model ~ joint scrutiny ~ all select committees
- Road Safety Policy ~ ongoing Task and Finish Group

6.3 Members will be likely to have their own suggestions for topics for scrutiny and will be asked to identify these, being clear of the scrutiny role and the intended outcomes of suggested scrutiny activity.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None identified.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report, however, Select Committees are reminded that they have a responsibility to consider any of the above implications through their chosen scrutiny activity.

9. CONSULTEES:

None.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Recommendations/Outcomes from the Strong Communities Select Committee May 2016/17
Cabinet Forward Plan

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