

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2017-18</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 24 January 2017
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny helps to improve services, holds decision makers to account and engages with local communities. In so doing it helps to demonstrate that the Council and other public service providers are open and transparent and are delivering high quality, value for money services.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) consider the proposals in the report and agree the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes and timetable for 2017/18;
- 2) agree the process for public consultation on the draft work programmes;
- 3) agree to finalise the work programmes at its meeting on 28 March 2017.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Effective work programming is a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Council Plan and major policy or service changes. It aims to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Committee approves work programmes for itself and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Recent discussions have indicated the need for the work programming process to be more robust and for greater engagement between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive.

The report sets out draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2017/18. It also considers proposals to consult on the draft programme and to clarify and strengthen the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in policy development across the Council.

## **Background**

An effective Overview and Scrutiny function is underpinned by robust work programming. Effective work programming lays the foundations for targeted scrutiny of issues of local importance. It helps to ensure that Overview and Scrutiny adds value and makes a difference. Effective work programming helps to:

- prioritise issues for in-depth work where Overview and Scrutiny can make an impact and add value;
- reduce the need for “information only” reports;
- achieve a balance between pre-decision scrutiny, policy development and performance/budget monitoring;
- contribute at an earlier stage in the decision making process;
- increase public and stakeholder involvement in Overview and Scrutiny;
- retain flexibility in order to respond to urgent issues arising during the year.

At its meeting in July 2016 the Committee considered different approaches to work programming adopted by a range of Councils across the country. These included:

- seeking ideas from Members, Officers, Parish and Town Councils and partner organisations;
- engaging with community groups and special interest groups;
- encouraging public views via social media and the Council website;
- carrying out public surveys or use of Citizens’ Panels and focus groups;
- analysing corporate complaints and customer feedback;
- reviewing key corporate documents such as the Council Plan, peer review and major service inspection reports.

Once a longlist of potential items is compiled, Councils then carry out a sifting process through initiatives such as awayday sessions with Members and partners or a Scrutiny Cafe which brings stakeholders together for a facilitated session aimed at producing a list of key items for review. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a template for developing an annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The key elements and suggested timetable are:

- January – initial consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Members, Executive Members, senior Officers and partner organisations. Public engagement with residents, community groups and partners via the Council’s website and social media.
- February – produce a long list of topics for review. Consult Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Members and Officers and publish details for further feedback.
- March – Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to finalise the work programme.
- April – publication and implementation of the work programme.
- November – mid-year review of the work programme by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **Policy Development and Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Effective Overview and Scrutiny can assist in the development of new policies in

support of the Council's priorities. Councillor Keith Baker, Leader of the Council, attended the Committee's meeting in November 2016 to discuss ideas for improving the working relationship between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

At the meeting there was a consensus that Overview and Scrutiny could play a larger role in policy development. This could be via pre-decision scrutiny of new policies or in depth reviews of specific issues which could lead to new policy development.

In order to improve pre-decision scrutiny, it was agreed that Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Members meet at the start of the work programming process (normally January) to identify new policies and major service changes over the coming year. These issues can then be planned into the Overview and Scrutiny work programme. The Executive Member and lead Officer would be invited to attend the relevant Overview and Scrutiny meeting. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including any recommendations, would then be included in the final report submitted to the Executive.

### **Scrutiny Review Issues**

The issues identified for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny should be of interest or concern for local residents and generate public interest and involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

In order to generate ideas and involvement from local residents, community groups and stakeholders, it is suggested that the Council's website and social media be used to publicise the development of the work programme and to invite suggestions inclusion.

In considering potential issues for review, Members should take into account the previously agreed selection criteria:

- Whether the issue is of local, and preferably current, concern;
- Whether the undertaking of the review can be linked to the Council's Vision, priorities and underpinning principles or would help achieve these;
- Whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council (e.g. as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council programme);
- Is the topic one that is capable of being influenced by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Is the topic of manageable scope – not too wide-ranging and yet of sufficient size to warrant a scrutiny review;
- Whether sufficient resources are available to support the scrutiny review; If a review is warranted, should it have a high, medium or low priority?
- Whether the review should be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself or be delegated to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group.

### **Analysis of Issues**

The Annex to the report sets out a draft work programme for each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees with a list of issues to be considered. The work programmes allow flexibility for the consideration of urgent issues and the call-in of decisions made by the Executive. Once approved, the work programme issues will be timetabled into the programme of Overview and Scrutiny meetings during the year.

Public consultation on the draft work programmes will be carried out via the Council's website, social media and press releases. Members of the public, partners and community groups will be asked to comment on the draft work programmes and to submit their own suggestions for consideration during the year. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will then finalise the work programmes at its meeting on 28 March 2017.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

**The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.**

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0		

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### List of Background Papers

None

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## Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes 2017/18

### 1. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

1.	Co-ordination of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees
2.	Development and monitoring of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
3.	Discussion with Executive Members and appropriate Officers to identify priorities and monitor performance against key targets
4.	Monitoring of the Council Plan and the Corporate Peer Review Action Plan
5.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals
6.	Performance monitoring via the quarterly Council Plan Performance Management report
7.	Monitoring the Executive Forward Programme and the Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme
8.	Monitoring Strategic Development Location (SDL) delivery and development of the new Local Plan
9.	Reviewing the Council's annual Budget Engagement exercise
10.	Monitoring the operation and performance of Council-owned companies
11.	Monitoring the Council's actions in compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010
12.	Approval of the annual Overview and Scrutiny report to Council
13.	Call-In review of Executive decisions
14.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups to investigate specific issues of local interest

## **2. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1.	Monitoring the effective delivery of safeguarding services, including social worker recruitment, retention and training
2.	Reviewing services that contribute to the achievement of the Council's Vision and priorities for children and young people
3.	Children's Services performance indicators and major projects
4.	School performance indicators and Ofsted reports
5.	Impact of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Council reorganisation on Children's Services
6.	Monitoring key strategic initiatives such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the development of the Wokingham Multi Academy Trust
7.	Considering the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board
8.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to Children's Services
9.	Call-In of Executive decisions relating to Children's Services
10.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

## **3. Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1.	Exercising the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities by reviewing the work of the Community Safety Partnership
2.	Exercising the Council's flood risk management responsibilities by monitoring flood risk activities and partnership working with towns and parishes
3.	Council Budget Monitoring
4.	Reviewing the corporate restructure elements of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Council programme
5.	Monitoring the Wokingham Town Centre regeneration project
6.	Reviewing the Council's partnerships with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector
7.	Reviewing highways and transport issues including customer service, car parking and improvements to cycling facilities

8.	Monitoring the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement
9.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals
10.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

#### **4. Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

1.	Monitoring health and social care outcomes and the performance of the local NHS Foundation Trusts
2.	Reviewing progress on the integration of health and social care services
3.	Monitoring progress relating to the development of community hubs
4.	Considering reports and updates from Wokingham Healthwatch
5.	Reviewing the provision of community mental health services
6.	Considering updates on the work of the Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
7.	Reviewing access to primary care services within the Strategic Development Locations
8.	Joining West Berkshire, Reading, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Councils in joint scrutiny of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Plan
9.	Call-In of Executive decisions relating to adult social care
10.	Input into new policies through pre-decision scrutiny of draft proposals relating to adult social care
11.	Appointing Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

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