

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 24 FEBRUARY 2016**

### **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) is asked to:
  - (a) review the existing 2015/16 Scrutiny Work Programme; and
  - (b) make preparations to develop the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2016/17.

#### **Background**

2. The current Scrutiny Work Programme was developed in the spring of 2015. Suggestions for future topics were sought from Members and discussed with Directors and other relevant officers. The resulting proposed Work Programme was considered and agreed by the OSPB on 23 April 2015 and Council on 14 May 2015.
3. At the last meeting of OSPB, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would update their Work Programmes in light of progress made during the year including any items added during the year. The updated Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1.
4. It was also agreed to begin preparations to develop the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2016/17 (Development Timetable at Appendix 2).

#### **Developing the 2016/17 Work Programme**

5. Overview and Scrutiny is a Member-led function and it is important that Members are involved in every stage of development of the Work Programme.
6. It is proposed that Members develop the Work Programme for 2016/17 by considering the:
  - a) Items from 2015/16 Work Programme that were not completed or require follow up
  - b) outcomes of the Budget Scrutiny 2015/16 process
  - c) views of Members as community champions
  - d) views of the Executive
  - e) views of officers
  - f) views of stakeholders and partners
  - g) views of the public.
7. It is proposed that the Board considers each section listed above and decide whether it wishes to consider content and suggestions from this area in its 2016/17 Work Programme and if so, how it wishes to develop this content.

### Items from 2015/16 Work Programme that were not completed or require follow up

8. The Board is asked to review the 2015/16 Work Programme to see if there are any issues that have not been completed or started that it would like to include in its 2016/17 Work Programme (Appendix 1).

### The outcomes of the Budget Scrutiny 2015/16 process

9. The Board is asked to take into account the outcomes of the Budget Scrutiny process when determining the content of its 2016/17 Work Programme. At its meeting on the 28 January 2016 the Board accepted the recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny process which are detailed in Appendix 3.

### Elected Members

10. Overview and Scrutiny is a Member-led process, it is therefore important that the views of Members are taken into account in determining the content of the Work Programme, particularly as Members are community champions and most likely to be aware of issues of concern to the public.

11. It is therefore proposed that the Board conducts a consultation exercise with all non-executive Members (it is proposed that Cabinet Members are consulted separately) to begin immediately, with the results to be reported to the April 2016 OSPB meeting.

### Executive

12. Overview and Scrutiny needs to be independent of the Executive but equally it shouldn't duplicate work that is already being undertaken. Executive Members are also well placed to know what policy decisions will be required in the upcoming year and where policy may need improvement or refreshing.

13. It is recommended that a consultation exercise be undertaken with Cabinet Members to seek to identify areas which would benefit from Overview and Scrutiny to begin immediately, with the results to be reported to the April 2016 OSPB meeting.

14. In addition the Board will have an opportunity to question the Leader of Council at its April 2016 meeting on his vision and objectives for Worcestershire County Council. It is recommended that the Board seek suggestions for Work Programme items directly from the Leader during this meeting.

15. The Board is also recommended to take into account the vision and objectives of the Leader of Council when deciding upon the content of its Work Programme, particularly in regards to how that vision will be both delivered and its performance measured.

### Council Officers

16. Council Officers are on the front line in delivering services, it is important to seek their support in developing a Work Programme in order to ensure that service delivery issues have an opportunity to be identified by those who are responsible for their delivery.

17. It is recommended that a specific consultation exercise is held with all senior officers as a means of identifying service issues and areas for policy improvement to begin immediately, with the results to be reported to the April 2016 OSPB meeting.

18. In addition it is recommended that all officers of the Council be invited to make suggestions for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme via the most appropriate means, such as the Council's Intranet site, to begin immediately with the results reported to the April 2016 OSPB meeting.

### Stakeholders and Partners

19. Work Programming is all about deciding what the most important things are for Overview and Scrutiny to look at. Success relies upon speaking to the right people at the right time. An effective Work Programme will represent the concerns and the services provided by our partners and stakeholders and it is therefore important that their views are sought as part of the work programming process.

20. The Board is asked to consider if it would like to consult the District Councils across Worcestershire for Work Programme suggestions, this could be particularly useful in developing suggestions and links in regards to Crime and Disorder Scrutiny as it is the Districts that interact with the various Community Safety Partnerships.

21. It is recommended that Partners and Stakeholders be invited to make suggestions for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme via the most appropriate means, with the results reported to the April 2016 OSPB meeting.

### Public

22. A key principle of Overview and Scrutiny is that it should reflect the voice and concerns of the public, in order to do this the Overview and Scrutiny function needs to review real issues that matter to real people.

23. By consulting with Elected Members the function is already seeking the views of community champions and those that are likely to be touch with the issues that matter to their constituents.

24. The Board is required to consider and agree how it would like to consult with the Public in relation to developing the Work Programme. There are a number of options available:

- a) Accept that the views of the Public have been represented through the Elected Members that represent them
- b) Seek public suggestions by utilising local media sources such as press, radio etc
- c) Direct engagement with community groups
- d) Surveys of the wider public by piggy back on existing council engagement activities and/or conducting public surveys in areas such as shopping centres
- e) Consideration of issues that seem over represented through the Council complaints procedure

## Other Areas for Consideration

25. In addition to the potential areas for gaining Work Programme suggestions listed above the Board is recommended to also consider the following when determining its Work Programme:

- Council Forward Plan and other key Council Business Plans
- Strategic Plans of Partners
- Evidence from inspections and peer reviews

## **Guidance**

26. The Board is reminded that it has agreed to use criteria listed below to help determine its Work Programme. A topic does not necessarily need to meet all of these criteria in order to be included, but the criteria is intended to help guide the Board in prioritising topics for inclusion. The criteria is as follows:

- Is the issue a priority area for the Council?
- Is it a key issue for local people?
- Will it be practicable to implement the outcomes of the scrutiny?
- Are improvements for local people likely?
- Does it examine a poor performing service?
- Will it result in improvements to the way the Council operates?
- Is it related to new Government guidance or legislation?

27. The Board also needs to take other matters into consideration when determining its Work Programme, such as:

- Is the subject specific – so that those undertaking the scrutiny review can understand exactly what they are scrutinising and why?
- Do Members have the required skills to be able to review the chosen topic?
- Is the review achievable within the timescale allowed?
- Do Members have the time and resources available to be able to complete the review?
- Ensure that the Work Programme is flexible, so that it can adapt to changes throughout the year. A good Work Programme responds to issues that arise during the year and does not tie itself down to lengthy projects that may become less relevant because of an unexpected policy change or decision.

28. A good Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme will:

- Complement the priorities and work of the council and its partners
- Reflect the concerns of local communities, and
- Identify those issues where scrutiny can make most impact

29. Similarly the Board may wish to consider the following criteria in identifying issues and topics that are **not** suitable for inclusion in the Work Programme:

- The issue is already being examined by another body.
- The matter relates to a specific case falling within the complaints procedure.
- The issue relates to an individual disciplinary matter or grievance

30. Finally, in determining a Work Programme it is important for Members to:

- Ensure that the Work Programme includes a balance of different types of work, including short-, medium- and long-term reviews. Issues could be considered at single meetings, or may need to be the subject of a longer term, more in-depth scrutiny review;
- Have regard to the ongoing work of the OSPB and scrutiny panels, including performance monitoring, budget scrutiny, crime and disorder scrutiny and consideration of the Corporate Plan;
- Ensure that the OSPB and panels retain sufficient capacity to respond to issues that may crop up unexpectedly within the year, including call-ins;
- Take into account the resources available to support scrutiny.

### **Purpose of the Meeting**

31. The Board is asked to

- (a) review the updated Work Programme and consider the need for any further amendments;
- (b) discuss and consider adopting the approach detailed in this Report for developing its Work Programme for 2016/17 and in doing so
- (c) consider how it would like to consult with the Public in developing its Work Programme for 2016/17.

### **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1: 2015/16 Scrutiny Work Programme (updated February 2016).

Appendix 2: OSPB Work Programme 2016/17 Development Timetable

Appendix 3: Recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny Process

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

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#### Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and minutes of the OSPB meetings held throughout 2015/16
- Agenda and minutes of Council meeting held on 14 May 2015
- [All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)