

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD 21 APRIL 2016**

### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) is asked to:
  - (a) Review the programme undertaken to develop proposals for the 2016/17 Work Programme;
  - (b) Consider the suggested Work Programme topics for 2016/17 from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB;
  - (c) Decide upon Work Programme proposals to put to Full Council for consideration;
  - (d) Consider how the Work Programme can be further developed throughout the year in order to ensure that it is responsive to the voice and concern of the people of Worcestershire; and
  - (e) Consider lessons learnt from the Work Programme consultation exercise.

#### **Background**

2. Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well, it can help to lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.
3. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for its Overview and Scrutiny function, the Work Programme is developed by taking into account the results of the annual Work Programme consultation exercise, the views of the budget scrutiny process, and by prioritising work using scrutiny feasibility criteria in order to ensure that Work Programme topics are selected objectively and that the 'added value' of a review is considered right from the very beginning.

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

4. 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.
5. The Work Programme consultation exercise for 2016/17 involved consideration of the following:
  - 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.

### **What Consultation to develop the Work Programmes took place?**

6. Each Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Committee had an item at its previous meeting (with the exception of Environment and Economy who had their March meeting cancelled) to discuss and make suggestions for items to be included in the Work Programmes from a Panel/Committee perspective. A series of suggestions were made through this process.
7. The Leader of Council consulted with his Cabinet members as part of the consultation exercise in order to develop suggestions for the scrutiny Work Programmes from a Cabinet perspective. A series of suggestions were made by the Cabinet.
8. County Councillors were contacted directly by the Scrutiny Unit as part of the consultation exercise asking for suggestions from a Divisional Councillor perspective; a number of suggestions were made through this process.
9. The Chief Executive consulted with the Strategic Leadership Team as part of the consultation process and provided a series of suggestions.
10. The central part of the consultation exercise was the creation of a webpage where anyone wishing to make suggestions for the scrutiny Work Programme could go and make them. The web page asked if you were a County Councillor, Council Officer, Partner, Business or member of the Public and then invited you to make suggestions based around the current 4 Council Priority areas of:
  - Open for Business
  - Children and Families
  - The Environment
  - Health and Wellbeing
11. The online survey did allow other suggestions to be received outside of the Council priority areas.
12. The survey was promoted in a number of ways to try and draw attention to the consultation exercise and increase the number of surveys completed. The survey was promoted by:
  - Email out to all Parish Councils
  - Email out to all Partner agencies and groups, including health partners, Local Enterprise Partnership and other business groups, and the Voluntary and Community Sector
  - Email out to Viewpoint Public Panel
  - Item in Councillor Newsletter, 3 e-mails to all County Councillors and request to Group Leaders to encourage members to complete the survey
  - Advertised via Council Twitter feed
  - Advertised on Council Facebook page
  - Radio interview with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB with Signal 107 Radio

- Media event with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB with the Worcester News
- SID news feature
- Directorate emails to Heads of Service (to encourage staff to complete the survey)

### **Chairman and Vice-Chairman Proposal**

13. In order to assist OSPB in agreeing Work Programmes to be put to Full Council for approval the Chairman and Vice Chairman of OSPB met on the 13 April to consider every suggestion made as part of the Work Programme consultation exercise. At this meeting they used the Scrutiny suggestion criteria to score every suggestion in order to identify a list of priority Work Programme topics for each Overview and Scrutiny Panel/Committee.
14. The criteria that was used and scoring that applied was as follows:
- Is the issue a priority area for the Council? (2 points)
  - Is it a key issue for local people? (4 points)
  - Will the scrutiny have a clear impact on services? (3 points)
  - Are improvements for local people likely as a result?(3 points)
  - Does it examine a poorly performing service? (2 points)
  - Has it been prompted by new Government guidance or legislation? (2 points)
  - Will it result in improvements to the way the Council operates? (4 points)
15. The scoring system applied to the criteria has been set to encourage higher scores to suggestions that reflect the concerns of the public and service users and that can genuinely lead to service improvements and outcomes.
16. At the meeting on the 13 April, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman scored every suggestion in order to provide a suggested priority list for each Overview and Scrutiny Panel/Committee which is attached at **APPENDIX 1.**
17. The purpose of this suggested priority list is to provide guidance and assistance to OSPB when it considers the Work Programme suggestions to be put to Full Council.
18. Attached at **APPENDIX 2** is a full list of all suggestions received and considered with the scrutiny criteria scoring.
19. When determining suggestions to include in the proposal the Chairman and Vice-Chairman also took into account issues that were included in the 2015/16 Work Programmes that had not been reviewed and suggestions from the 2016/17 Budget Scrutiny Challenge Group.

### **Future Work Programme Development**

20. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes should be rolling documents that are capable of responding to new issues of concern arising at any time throughout the year; it is therefore recommended that OSPB looks for additional opportunities to consult on Work Programme content throughout the year.

21. There is a County Council Roadshow scheduled for June 2016, it is suggested that OSPB seek to include Overview and Scrutiny content in this roadshow.
22. It is suggested that OSPB considers how it can best consult with the public and others on the Work Programme and on work that it is undertaking.

### **Lessons Learnt from Consultation Exercise**

23. Given the short period of time and low cost of the consultation that has been undertaken the response rate has been encouraging.
24. The response level from individual County Councillors has been less encouraging, perhaps a reason for this is confusion over the forum in which they have been asked for suggestions. Members may have contributed by providing suggestions under the individual Panel discussions or through the Cabinet discussion. They may then have felt that they had contributed and as a result did not complete the request made to Councillors as individual Divisional Councillors.
25. The response rate from County Council Officers was also low; this could be down to them not being aware of the online survey and of what Overview and Scrutiny is.

### **26. Deciding upon a Work Programme - Guidance**

27. When deciding upon what to include in the various Overview and Scrutiny work programmes Members are advised to take into account the criteria scoring that has been assigned to suggestions by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB.
28. 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
29. 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**

30. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) is asked to:

- (a) Review the programme undertaken to develop proposals for the 2016/17 Work Programme;
- (b) Consider the suggested Work Programme topics for 2016/17 from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB;
- (c) Decide upon Work Programme proposals to put to Full Council for consideration;
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- (e) Consider lessons learnt from the Work Programme consultation exercise.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Priority List for each Overview & Scrutiny Panel/Committee (To Follow)

Appendix 2: Full list of suggestions received and considered (circulated to Members of Board and available on the Council's website here (To Follow)

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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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.](#)