worcestershire
c o u n t y c o u n c i l

COUNCIL
12 MAY 2016

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - 2016/2017

Recommendation

1.   **The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board recommends that**

    (a) the 2016/17 Scrutiny Work Programme be endorsed, and

    (b) the Overview and Scrutiny work programme consultation exercise be noted.

Summary

2. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board have agreed a suggested 2016/17 Work Programme to be considered by Full Council. The work programme was developed following a consultation exercise that is detailed within this report.

Background

3. 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.

4. 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 2016/2017 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.
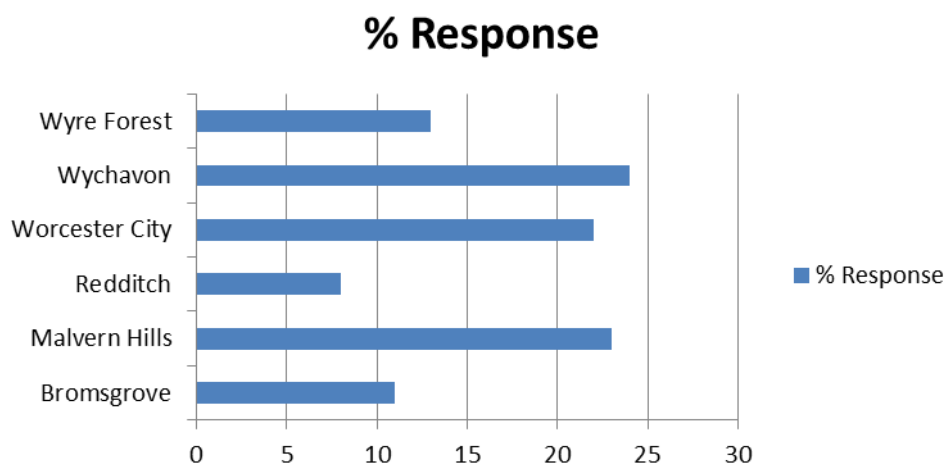
6. The Work Programme consultation exercise for 2016/17 involved consideration of the following:
   a) Items from 2015/16 Work Programme that were not completed or require follow up
   b) outcomes of the Budget Scrutiny 2015/16 process
   c) views of Members as community champions
   d) views of the Executive
   e) views of officers
   f) views of stakeholders and partners
   g) views of the public.

7. 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.

8. The Leader of Council consulted his Cabinet members as part of the consultation exercise in order to develop suggestions for the Work Programmes form a Cabinet perspective. A series of suggestions were made by the Cabinet.

9. 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.

10. The Chief Executive consulted the Strategic Leadership Team as part of the consultation process and provided a series of suggestions.

11. The central part of the consultation exercise was the creation of a webpage where anyone wishing to make suggestions for the Work Programme could go and make them. The web page asked if participants were a County Councillor, Council Officer, Partner, Business or member of the Public and then invited them to make suggestions based around the current four Council Priority areas of:
    - Open for Business
    - Children and Families
    - The Environment
    - Health and Wellbeing

12. The online survey did allow other suggestions to be received outside of the Council priority areas.

13. 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)

14. 65 suggestions were received directly by Democratic Services and 305 respondents completed the questionnaire, providing in excess of 3000 topic suggestions. Responses to the questionnaire came from:

General Public	83%
Business	2%
County Council Officer	9%
Partner Organisation	5%
County Councillor	1%

15. Responses to the questionnaire came from all across the County:

% Response

Chairman and Vice-Chairman Proposal

16. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board agreed that each suggestion that was received should be given a score, using the scrutiny topic criteria scoring system, and that this score should be given by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB.

17. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB scored all suggestions, details of this scoring was then circulated to all OSPB Members who were invited to comment. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB met on the 26 April to consider feedback provided by OSPB members and agree upon a final set of topics/issues to be included in the work programme to be put to Council for approval.

18. The criteria and scoring that was used and applied by the Chairman and Vice Chairman to work programme suggestions 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)

19. 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 to promote suggestions that could genuinely lead to service improvements and outcomes.

20. The work programme suggestion from the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for approval by Council contains a wide range of topics all of which have been suggested through the consultation exercise. The suggestions have been predominately made by members of the Public but have also been supported by Partner Agencies, Council Officers and Elected Members. The suggested list is as follows:

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board	
Task Group Reviews	**Sexual Violence and Rape** • What are the responsibilities of the County Council and Partners? • Who provides support services and funding? • Could we provide a better service in Worcestershire? **Can Worcestershire County Council do more around environmental mitigation?** • Buying future energy supply • Could we look to provide energy supply? • What is the culture of the organisation and how does WCC strategically mitigate environmental issues?
Priority Areas/Themes for the Work Programme:	
1.	**How effective are Worcestershire County Council communication mechanisms?** • Councils use of social media • Highways • Communicating to Public, Officers and Councillors
2.	**Equalities & Disability: How well do we meet our statutory duties?**
3.	**Complaints Reporting – is it fit for purpose?**
4.	**Commissioning** • Accountability of commissioned services to the Council, Elected Members, service users and the Public • How is accountability address in the commissioning process? How is it covered in contracts and tendering? • Quality Assurance

	Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
1.	**Is Mental Health provision in Worcestershire fit for purpose?** • What treatments are provided? • Is local need identified and addressed? • What alternatives to medication are provided?
2.	**Health Accountability: CCGs, GPs and Health & Wellbeing Board** • How is the CCGs held to account? • How are GPs in the County held to account? • How is the Health & Wellbeing Board held to account? • What is the role HOSC in holding these bodies to account?
3.	**Maternity, Neonatal and Gynaecology Services** • Review of 'temporary' change in service provision • Direction of travel • Is proposed service fit for purpose?
4.	**Public Health** • What role can Public Health play in preventing and managing demand for social care and health services?

	Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel:
1.	**Care Provider Market** – vital review continues
2.	**Care Act Obligations** • Is the Council meeting its obligations
3.	**Technology in Care** • Analysis of successful IT across the health and care sector with a view to showing success against:- supporting people to stay at home, promoting independence, increasing quality of life, reducing the cost of care and protecting personal dignity. • The claim is always that IT increases the potential for loneliness, is this correct?
4.	**Homecare** • Is the current service provided by WCC and commissioned out services fit for purpose?
5.	**Transition** • Review of transition from Children Services to Adult Services

	Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel:
1.	**Vulnerable Children** • Child employment and labour • Education at home • CSE
2.	**0-19 Agenda**

	• Starting well service • Children's centres • What will be future service provision?
3.	**Pupil Referral Units** • Review of current provision of service and how it is delivered • Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties • Alternative provision
4.	**Social Work** • Issues within current service provision • Performance of agency staff • Social Workers moral and support • Recruitment and retention • Caseloads
5.	**How can Worcestershire County Council help improve the Educational Attainment of Children in Disadvantaged Areas**
To note:	Home to school transport issue referred to the existing Bus Services Task Group Review

Corporate & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:	
1.	**Worcestershire County Council Workforce** • What future skills/roles does the Council need? • What skills gap exists? • Does WCC pay and reward effectively? • Does WCC have a strong succession management system? • Does WCC recruit the required talent and behaviour? • Do WCC Managers support a performance driven culture based on achieving the best outcomes for the people of Worcestershire? • Are the corporate values embedded across the organisation?
2.	**What can Worcestershire County Council do to maximise income generation?**
3.	**How can Worcestershire County Council support Local Business?** • Can Worcestershire County Council use Social Value Act to procure services locally?
4.	**Worcestershire County Council use of Property** • Accountability of the Place Partnership • How do we use our property? • Review of capital monies and property
5.	**Culture: How can we utilise the Culture of Worcestershire to maximise the benefit to the County?** • Analysis of cultural offering and how it can be improved • Role of Council and partners • Funding opportunities – are they being utilised?

Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel:	
1.	**Annual review of the Worcestershire LEP's contribution to all sectors of Worcestershire's economy** • Accountability, remit, resources and performance

	• Relationship with partners • Agriculture and Tourism economies
2.	**How can WCC support Retail whilst it is in transition and help support and retrain retail employees?**
3.	**What are the benefits to Worcestershire of 20 MPH speed limits and how does this link to Residents Parking Policy?** • Criteria for selection • Evidence of benefits • Analysis of current Residents Parking Policy
4.	**How to improve getting around the County** • Congestion • Roadworks • Cycling, footways, footpaths and bridle paths • Public transport
5.	**Flooding and External Partners** • Role of Severn Trent & Environment Agency

21. In addition each Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel will have items that were part of the 2015/16 work programme that require completion.

22. As well as the items suggested above each Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel has standard agenda items that it will include in its activities, these are:
    • Review of Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan
    • Performance Management
    • Call-ins (OSPB)
    • Budget Scrutiny Process
    • Leader of Council Q&A (OSPB)
    • Crime & Disorder meeting (OSPB)
    • Substantial Variation considerations (HOSC)
    • Quality Accounts (HOSC)
    • Safeguarding (A&WB and C&F)

23. At the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board meeting held on the 21 April 2016 the Leader of Council committed to involve the Overview and Scrutiny function in the Corporate Plan Refresh process. OSPB will advise the Overview and Scrutiny Committees/Panels on how they feel this should be delivered in consultation with the Leader of Council.

Lessons Learnt from Consultation Exercise

24. Given the short period of time and low cost of the consultation that has been undertaken the response rate has been encouraging, over 3000 topic suggestions were received.

25. 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.

26. It is therefore noted that more needs to be done in future to increase County Councillor responses to the consultation from a Divisional perspective.

27. 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. It is suggested that OSPB in consultation with the Scrutiny Unit and Communications examines how Council Officers can better be consulted in future.

28. A large number of suggestions were received for functions that fall within the remit of District Councils in Worcestershire; these suggestions will be forwarded to the relevant District Council along with a summary of the exercise that was undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board.

29. It is suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board issues a press release that details the following:
   - Summary of the work programme process and results
   - The process that has taken place (scoring etc.)
   - What has happened as a result of the consultation
   - Details on how to get involved in future
   - A thank you.

Deciding upon a Work Programme - Guidance

30. When deciding upon what to include in the various Overview and Scrutiny work programmes Members of OSPB were advised to take into account the criteria scoring that had been assigned to suggestions by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of OSPB.

31. Similarly OSPB were informed that they 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

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points
County Council: 01905 763763
Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765
Email: worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk

Specific Contact Points for this report
Richard Udall and Liz Eyre, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Jodie Townsend, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager, 01905 844871
JTownsend1@worcestershire.gov.uk

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:

- OSPB Work Programme Consultation Scoring by Chairman and Vice-Chairman **(Copy available from Scrutiny Unit, copy will be made available on the Council Scrutiny webpages)**
- List of all work programme suggestions received as part of OSPB consultation exercise **(Copy available from Scrutiny Unit, copy will be made available on the Council Scrutiny webpages)**

All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.