



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Scrutiny Committee – 2 April 2014

Work Programme for Scrutiny Committee 2014/15

Purpose of report

To provide Members with an opportunity to shape the future work programme for the Committee in the light of the changes to size and terms of reference.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 – Committee Terms of Reference

1.0 Background

1.1 In January 2014 Council agreed to the formation of a new Governance and Audit Committee, with consequent changes to the size of this Committee and its terms of reference. (The revised terms of reference can be found at Appendix 1). As a result it is deemed timely to consider the future work programme to take account of the decreased membership of the committee.

1.2 The terms of reference group the activities of the Scrutiny Committee into six main areas:

- a) Call In
- b) Performance Monitoring
- c) Community Engagement
- d) Receipt of External Reports
- e) Policy Development
- f) Monitoring of Previous Decisions

Proposals for the key areas of activity are outlined in section 2 of this report.

1.3 As councillors will be aware, officer resources are generally decreasing as a result of meeting the financial challenges faced by the council. It should be noted that there are no specific officer resources dedicated to the support of this Committee's activities although a range of officers can and will provide some support to assist in the delivery of the work programme. The majority of activities identified for the work programme will therefore require member input for successful completion.

2.0 Proposals for Future Work programme

2.1 **Call In:** A separate report on this agenda outlines proposals to revise the current procedure to reflect the reduced membership of Scrutiny Committee. To assist with monitoring of policy decisions, the Committee may wish to consider whether individual members should take responsibility for specific policy committees by reviewing papers in advance of the meeting and, where appropriate, having a briefing from the relevant Head of Service on the background to any papers of interest.

2.2 **Performance Monitoring:** Quarterly performance clinic reports will continue to be submitted to the Committee. To assist with understanding it is proposed that the Heads of Service will attend committee meetings in rotation to discuss their particular performance results. Committee members will also be provided with a copy of the relevant service plan to provide a context for the performance indicator discussion.

2.3 **Community Engagement:** The main area of focus in the short term will continue to be relationships with town and parish councils. Visits have now been made to 7 town

or parish councils (Barnwell, Chelveston, Denford, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Stanwick and Thrapston). It is proposed that these visits will continue until all 41 councils/groups of councils have been covered with the aim of completing before the election in May 2015. It is however recognised that because of the fewer number of Scrutiny Committee members that participation of a wider range of ENC councillors will be required to be involved. It is hoped to use the information gathered in the short term to shape the content of town and parish council Briefings and, in the medium term, to shape the content of this council's town and parish council induction sessions offered after the elections.

- 2.4 Overall the results of the visits so far indicate that generally relationships are positive between ENC and our town and parish councils. The key areas for improvement are promoting a wider understanding of awareness of the planning process, especially the determination of planning applications and increasing understanding of the Community Right to Challenge and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 2.5 Looking ahead to other aspects of community engagement, two areas of activity have been identified – Voluntary and Community Sector and other Public Sector Bodies. The focus for the former will include consideration of the role of council representatives on local and regional voluntary and community sector bodies. In the case of other public bodies four possible areas have been identified for consideration:
- The role and responsiveness of County Highways Team as statutory consultees in planning process
 - Northamptonshire Waste Partnership
 - Northamptonshire Travellers Forum
 - Engagement with Health & Wellbeing via the East Northamptonshire Locality Forum
- 2.6 **Policy Development:** A focused review of an area of council or external body activity may be triggered by any of the above areas of activity or from the following:
- Significant changes in external provider services to local residents e.g. local hospital services
 - External reports such as Local Government Ombudsman or Information Commissioner
 - Issues raised by County Health Scrutiny Board or East Midlands Scrutiny Group
- 2.7 Other possible areas of change that may have significant local impacts that the Committee may wish to review in a future part of its work programme include:
- Local implications of the Care Bill – provision of information on care alternatives and funding together with availability of related local services such as extra care facilities and nursing homes.
 - Local Highways – this could range from the processes to monitor and maintain road and footpath condition to consideration of impacts of strategic or funding decisions on public transport provision for local communities

3.0 Possible Future Work Programme for 2014/15

<i>Area of Activity</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Committee</i>
Engagement with Town & Parish Councils	Update on progress and analysis of results	ALL
Performance Reports	Quarterly Report	April, June, September, January meetings
	Head of Service representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental Services• PG/DR• LH/DR• DR/KE	April 2014 June 2014 September 2014 January 2015
Engagement with Voluntary and Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scoping Report• Final Report	June 2014 January 2015
Engagement with other public bodies -	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scoping Report• Final Report	November 2014 March 2015

3.2 The programme post election will be set by the new Committee, although there may be some merit in highlighting potential topics for the following municipal year prior to the election to enable the early adoption of a work programme.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 It is important the work of the Scrutiny Committee contributes to the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

6.2 The work programme should also be realistic in scale and scope so that it can be delivered.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the proposals.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 There are no constitutional proposals arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

9.1 The work of the Scrutiny Committee can contribute to any of the corporate outcomes. However whilst a balanced work-programme will cover most of these over time, the terms of reference suggest that the following outcomes are most important

- Good Quality of Life
- Good Value for Money
- Effective Partnership Working
- High Quality Service Delivery

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to consider the information presented in this report and agree a work programme for 14/15 for this Committee which balances priorities with available resources.

[Reason: to provide a structure to future activity by Scrutiny Committee]

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers:					
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Date: 19/3/14					
CFO		MO		CX	

Scrutiny Committee – Terms of Reference

Amended by Council – 1 March 2010 – Minute 385(b), 1 November 2010 – minute 245(b)

Amended by Council – 13 January 2014 minute 319

- 1 The Council will appoint a single Scrutiny Committee, comprising 11 members of the Council appointed at the Annual Meeting. The Committee's purpose is to manage and co-ordinate the scrutiny process in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution and to monitor council performance
- 2 The Committee may undertake any of the following functions in relation to the review of decisions:
 - a) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
 - b) Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, the Policy and Resources Committee and/or any joint committee in connection with the discharge of any functions or the outcome of the scrutiny process;
 - c) Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
 - d) Exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by a policy committee, sub-committee and/or any joint committees in accordance with the procedure in Part 4 of the Constitution.
 - e) Review and scrutinise the decisions made by, and performance of, the Policy & Resources Committee and Chief Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
3. The Committee may undertake any of the following functions in relation to the performance and efficiency of the council
 - a) Receive reports on the council's performance framework to enable monitoring of overall performance and achievement of the council's policy objectives
 - b) Review services where performance indicators are consistently not achieved, additional resources maybe required or customer satisfaction is low and make recommendations for improvement
 - c) Consider key service area achievements or services with above target performance where there may be transferable learning
 - d) Consider emerging financial risks and significant budget variations
4. The Committee may undertake any of the following functions in relation to policy development:
 - a) Assist the Council in the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
 - b) Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options

- c) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
 - d) Question Members of the Council, the Policy & Resources Committee, Chief Officers and Heads of Council Services about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area and in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
 - e) Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives;
 - f) Consider the specific impacts of policy on young and older people
5. The Committee may undertake any of the following functions in relation to community engagement and co-operation:
- a) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area in pursuit of the place shaping role of the Council by inviting reports from them or by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance
 - b) Establish clear channels of communication with the public and dealing with their concerns, including oversight and review of the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy and reports and investigations from other regulatory bodies such as the Ombudsman.
 - c) Liaise with other external organisations operating in the area with a 'duty to co-operate', whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
 - d) Within the Council's published Petitions Scheme, consider petitions which call for a senior officer of the Council to attend the Committee to answer questions on how a particular service is being delivered; and also to review the Council's response to petitions in cases where the petition organiser feels this is inadequate.
6. The Scrutiny Committee may question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).
7. The Scrutiny Committee may establish ad hoc task and finish working parties to investigate specific topics on behalf of the full committee
- 8.. For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, 'Chief Officers' and 'Heads of Service' have the meanings set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.
9. Proceedings of the Scrutiny Committee, and any working party appointed by it, will take place in accordance with the rules in Part 4 of the Constitution