

Report to: Annual Overview and Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 19 July 2017

Report Title: Update on 2016-17 Work Programme and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017-18 municipal year

Report By: Mark Horan Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on the status of the 2016/17 Scrutiny work programme
2. To set out proposed key lines of inquiry for the 2017/18 Scrutiny work programme.

Recommendation(s)

That the Annual Meeting reach agreement on the key lines of inquiry proposed for the Scrutiny work programme for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

Reasons for Recommendations

It is the responsibility of Members serving on Overview and Scrutiny to set their own work programme for each municipal year at the Annual Meeting, whilst taking into account the advice of officers present.

Introduction

1. A number of ideas for the 2017/18 Scrutiny work programme have been drafted by officers and members (attached at appendix).
2. Scrutiny Steering Group met on the 27 June to consider and prioritise these ideas.
3. Scrutiny has also recently completed a [review](#) of their existing scrutiny arrangements as part of the 2016/17 work programme.
4. This review highlighted both capacity issues and a knowledge gap as impacting on existing scrutiny work and identified new ways of working such as an Inquiry Day to assist with future scrutiny review work.
5. Scrutiny will need to be mindful of these [findings](#) as well as the likely impact on scrutiny capacity during quarter 4 in the lead up to all out local elections, when agreeing their 2017/18 programme.

Update on the 2016/17 Scrutiny work Programme

6. The 2016/17 Programme [here](#) has been completed to time, cost and specification with two exceptions:
7. The update item on block-chain technologies and the implications of this for local authorities has been postponed as the use of this technology is still in its infancy.
8. The update on green initiatives and income generation opportunities is intend to be picked up as part of the 2017/18 programme under 'income generation' given developments in this area.
9. Scrutiny members are also reminded that there are still a number of recommendations to be implemented from their review of existing scrutiny arrangements introduced above.
10. Implementation of these recommendations will impact on both officer and scrutiny members capacity and scrutiny may wish to bear these in mind when agreeing what again is an ambitious prospective programme for the year ahead.

Prospective 2017/18 Scrutiny Work Programme

11. As a result of discussions at Scrutiny Steering Group on the 27 June, scrutiny members prioritised items of particular interest from the list of ideas (appendix).
12. The main priority identified was income generation.

Income Generation

13. Members were interested in how income generation ideas are gathered and prioritised and the criteria applied to decide which opportunities and ideas are further developed.

14. Furthermore Members discussed the role of the Income Generation Board in assessing opportunities, risks and making recommendations on which proposals should be taken forward, and the role of officers and members in supporting this process.
15. The review would also consider how ideas which had previously been submitted by members and officers had been progressed.
16. Members agreed that a potential way to pursue these areas of interest was to consider the associated income generation reports destined for Cabinet in September in the context of those lines of inquiry discussed..
17. Appropriate officers, members of the Income Board Group and lead members would be asked to attend a scrutiny meeting to address these lines of inquiry.
18. Such a meeting would in line with the recent scrutiny review report be potentially open to all members.
19. A subgroup of scrutiny, and potentially wider members, would be drawn up to refine these lines of inquiry in advance of such a meeting to be scheduled in early autumn.

Education

20. Scrutiny members have a long standing interest in education, having previously undertaken a review of [Is Hastings making the most of being a University Town?](#) and a [Review of Engaging with Academies](#).
21. Scrutiny Steering Group members requested that the Director of Operational Services (HBC) provide an update (quarter 1) on the formation of a University Centre as a basis to consider whether more in depth scrutiny activity is required.
22. Following the motion to Council in February 2017, scrutiny are keen to understand the process by which schools can transfer to academy status, and in particular the prospective transition of Castledown Primary into the Ark academy chain. Members were also keen to discuss the provision for children with Special Educational Needs within the town
23. Building on the previous scrutiny review on engaging with academies, members intend to meet with Carole Dixon (Education Futures Trust) for an update on the current educational landscape, including progress with implementing the recommendations of the earlier scrutiny review.
24. It was hoped that Carole could also assist members in identifying areas for further consideration, and a meeting would be scheduled as soon as possible after the work programme has been agreed.
25. Discussions acknowledged that the input of ESCC would be important in such Scrutiny and that it could also be worthwhile liaising with the appropriate ESCC Scrutiny committee on this matter.

Regeneration and Housing

26. Members were interested in a range of topics within this area and Scrutiny Steering Group considered the possibility of aligning these topics.
27. Scrutiny Steering Group recommended holding an Inquiry Day to consider the impact of recent changes to legislation in respect of homelessness.
28. A focus group of members would be formed to consider the structure of the inquiry day and the members, officers and partners who would need to be involved.
29. The group noted that work was ongoing to support the further cultural regeneration of the town. Members were particularly keen to receive an update on efforts to support the local music scene.
30. Work was also underway to develop a master plan for the White Rock Area and members would continue to monitor progress with this.

Other Ideas

Grenfell

31. Members were also keen to ensure sufficient capacity is left within the scrutiny programme, to enable its members to contribute to a cross-committee working group following up on the local implications in response to the Grenfell tragedy.

St Leonards Crown Post Office

32. Similarly there is desire to retain scrutiny capacity to maintain a watching brief on St Leonards Crown Post Office and provide an appropriate consultation response to their proposals following a number of scrutiny questions put to the Crown Post Office during the 2016/17 programme.
33. If members are keen to progress a collective scrutiny response to the current proposal out for consultation, they will need to do so prior to 9 August, when the consultation closes.

Remaining ideas

34. Scrutiny Steering Group did not specifically discuss the 'proposed review of the first year of the pilot private warden scheme' and 'Devolution' (both on the ideas list).
35. It is envisaged that reviewing the pilot of the new warden scheme can be considered at an appropriate quarterly performance review meeting to be decided in due course.
36. Similarly, there is the view that scrutiny and possibly wider members receive an update on 3Cs devolution proposals in due course but that this update follows the implementation of recommendations from the Council's recent Local Government Association (LGA) Peer review due at Cabinet on 4 September.
37. It is anticipated that the LGA response may also give members a further steer in relation to some of the concepts raised under their discussions to date on income

generation. Particularly in respect of new models for service delivery and impact on existing staff resources which may well link into devolution discussions.

Next Steps

38. That scrutiny approves the lines of inquiry set out for the 2017/18 scrutiny programme (see summary snapshot attached), or reach consensus where variations to the lines of inquiry are proposed.
39. That scrutiny members put themselves forward to be part of a working group to progress the following:
 - Income Generation - to firm up lines of inquiry post receipt of associated Cabinet papers.
 - Education – to consider next steps following a briefing and advice from Carole Dixon as per paragraph 26.
 - Homelessness Inquiry Day – to consider the impact of new legislation
 - Grenfell - volunteers for a cross committee working group
 - St Leonards Post Office – Volunteers to compile a collective response to the consultation if desired.
40. Further working groups will be identified at Scrutiny Steering Group where appropriate following updates proposed and general approval of the 2017/18 work programme.

Wards Affected

All.

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)
Risk Management
Environmental Issues
Economic/Financial Implications
Human Rights Act
Organisational Consequences
Local People's Views
Anti-Poverty

Additional Information

Documents are hyper-linked in the main body of the report.

Officer to Contact

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