

**Report to:** Annual Overview and Scrutiny Meeting

**Date of Meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**Report Title:** Update on 2017-18 Work Programme and Overview and Scrutiny proposed Work Programme for the 2018-19 municipal year

**Report By:** Mark Horan Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update Members on the status of the 2017/18 Scrutiny work programme.
2. To summarise ideas received for the 2018/19 Scrutiny work programme and to propose next steps for progressing these.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

1. That the Annual Meeting reach agreement on their key lines of inquiry for the Scrutiny work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.
2. To also reach agreement on a representative from the committee to lead on preparation for the quarterly Opportunity Area briefings.

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### **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.

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## Introduction

1. A wide range of ideas for the 2018/19 Scrutiny work programme were drafted by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. These were initially considered by the wider committee at their Scrutiny Steering Group meeting on the 28th of June where these and other associated ideas were proposed.
3. These form the basis for the recommendations that follow for the 2018/19 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.
4. The committee will now need to formally agree a realistic work programme for the year 2018/19.
5. The remainder of the report provides an update on the 2017/18 programme and associated commitments, a summary of ideas proposed for 2018/19 and suggested next steps in terms of progressing these ideas.

## Update on the 2017/18 Scrutiny work Programme

6. The principal review piece undertaken by the 2017/18 Overview and Scrutiny committee continued a longstanding interest in educational attainment and opportunity in the Borough.
7. An [interim report](#) was submitted to the first meeting of the new Overview and Scrutiny committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June.
8. This report proposed that the new committee consider a continued focus in this area and that the new committee nominate a Scrutiny representative to work with the Deputy Leader of the council to assist in the chairing and preparation for quarterly Opportunities Area briefings.
9. The Chairs and Vice Chair are proposing that this representative is the Chair of the previous review and the committee will need to formally approve this if appropriate.
10. The remainder of the [2017/18 programme](#) has largely been completed to time, cost and quality and some of the lines of inquiry resurface in those ideas put forward for this year's programme.

## 2018/19 Scrutiny Work Programme Ideas

### Planning and 106 orders

11. The Chair and Vice Chair had identified a general interest in how the council could get more social value from section 106 orders. This interest chimed with other members of the committee keen to understand more about the implementation and monitoring of 106 orders as well as associated budgets.
12. Questions were also raised with regards to monitoring and review of the Infrastructure Levy Policy and the prospect of a Community Infrastructure Levy. It

was noted that some members of the committee were already in the process of progressing associated lines of inquiry with council officers.

### **External funding streams**

13. Some questions were raised with regards to the Connecting Communities Fund 4 and specific elements and spend relating to this programme. This coincided with a more general interest in how the council decides where to concentrate its funding efforts.

### **Housing/Company, Licensing and Income Generation**

14. The Chair and Vice Chair were particularly interested in the progress of the Housing Company, its business plan and projections as a key part of the council's wider income generation ambitions.
15. This dovetailed with an interest in whether the council is keen to purchase stock to meet our temporary accommodation requirements, what lessons can be learned from the selective licensing scheme to improve the private rented accommodation and, what enforcement steps can/are being taken to pursue non-compliant landlords once licenses are paid?

### **Transformation**

16. The Chair and Vice Chair are keen that the new committee hear from the Leader (and officers where appropriate) to update on the progress of the transformation programme.
17. Particularly, they are interested if the council has made the necessary process and cultural changes to be able to meet the pressing financial challenges? They are keen to know what success looks like for our transformation programme and the extent to which income generation ambitions complement these efforts.

### **Regeneration**

18. Similarly the Chair and Vice Chair share a view that consensus around what success looks like in terms of our regeneration efforts may not be clearly and consistently understood.
19. More widely, the committee acknowledged the various forms of funding that contribute to regeneration efforts such as Community Led Local Development, Clinical Commissioning Group and Opportunity Area monies, but question the extent to which these are joined up in terms of what they are collectively striving to achieve.
20. The committee discussed Summerfield's Leisure Centre and a potential new swimming pool as part of broader regeneration of this area and again questioned what the aspirations are here and the extent to which these could align with those monies and/or opportunities identified in the previous paragraph.
21. Discussion acknowledged that regeneration and indeed aspects of our income generation ambitions hinge on our Local Plan as well as Planning team advice and recommendations and subsequent committee decisions. Again it is queried how

these efforts align with a cohesive specific vision for the town's regeneration that is clearly understood and worked towards across the council.

22. There is also the view that regeneration efforts are structurally imbalanced to the seafront and high profile projects at the expense of statistically deprived communities such as in North East Hastings and Hollington.
23. Committee members were subsequently interested in how the council decides where to place external funding efforts in relation to our regeneration intentions. Or whether our approach to external funding is more ad hoc or opportunistic, skewing our efforts to where sources of funding can be drawn down?

### **Community Safety**

24. The Chair and Vice Chair acknowledged work undertaken by Scrutiny in recent years considering the impact of the council's community safety intentions working through the then Safer Hastings Partnership. They were keen to further understand what partnership work is ongoing to disrupt organised crime and ensure the safety of our young people particularly around the issue of 'cuckooing,' as identified in the Education [interim report](#) received by the committee in June.
25. Wider committee members were also interested in the delineation of community safety work between the council and its partners. In particular the extent to which work by the council would continue in this area and what impact such a focus might have in terms of resourcing other areas of council activity.

### **Other Ideas**

26. The Chair and Vice Chair flagged an interest in scope and future capacity to extend **Direct Service Organisations** (DSO), co-operatives and other forms of local public ownership based on current proposals to Cabinet on an in house Street Cleansing DSO service.
27. To build on the **Single Use Plastics Motion** put forward by Cllr Beaver as a means to progress this intent in wider areas of council responsibility and influence.
28. To monitor **cycle safety** in Alexandra Park as the joined use pathways roll out.
29. To consider **Disabled Facility Grants** spend given a recent history of underspend in this area.
30. For Scrutiny to assist in arriving at what services the council might provide **online only** in the future.

### **Next Steps**

31. Common to a number of these work programme ideas is the need for the committee to understand current or future plans for the organisation as a whole and in turn those service areas identified.
32. The following sub group and task and finish work is proposed and these build on preferred next steps discussed by the committee at Scrutiny Steering Group (SSG):

- a. **Planning and Section 106** – A subgroup is formed to review the findings of councillors whom are already progressing lines of inquiry with officers, reporting back to SSG in quarter two.
  - b. **Single Use Plastics** – A task and finish subgroup is formed identifying recommendations for Cabinet to report to SSG in quarter two and then Scrutiny and Cabinet accordingly once agreed, drawing on officer advice as appropriate e.g. Sustainability Manager.
  - c. **Connecting Communities Fund 4** – A list of associated questions are drafted and posed to the appropriate officer. Findings are reported back to SSG in quarter one.
33. It is proposed that the following areas require an officer update before lines of inquiry are further scoped:
- a. **Online Only Services** – A data report is provided to SSG in quarter one identifying online service take up as a basis to arrive at potential recommendations for service areas that could be online only.
  - b. **Disabled Facilities Grants** – A review of spend is sought during quarter three by the Chair of Scrutiny, in advance of the quarter three performance review meeting.
  - c. **Housing licensing** – SSG receive an update from the appropriate officer on tacking landlords (post licence) at its quarter one meeting.
  - d. **Income Generation and Housing Company** – Councillors will receive the Medium Term Financial Strategy going to Cabinet in September. This is likely to consider income generation projections and it is proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair review this document and propose next steps when the document becomes available. Scrutiny Officers will need to confirm this assumption and/or whether a more specific update or report on income generation is forthcoming.
  - e. **Community Safety** – Scrutiny officers to request community safety plan from appropriate officers and circulate via e mail to the committee as the basis for possible further inquiry in quarter one.
34. It is proposed that progress in relation to the following ideas be initially monitored via the quarterly performance meetings:
- a. **DSO** – The Street Cleansing DSO will likely serve as the testbed for taking a similar approach in other service areas. This will need time to establish and then bed down before associated learning can be applied to other potential DSO service areas.
  - b. **Cycle safety** - in Alexandra Park as the joined use pathways roll out. This may require further exploration via ESCC should we pick up on any associated problems. Scrutiny members should flag these at SSG in the first instance.

35. A meeting with the Leader and Deputy is proposed to set the scene for scrutiny review work and assist the committee refine their lines of inquiry for those areas where next steps have yet to be considered in this report.
36. This meeting would focus on progress of our **transformation** programme. Seeking the Leader's view on where we are as an organisation on our change path, where we intend to be and what success looks like?
37. It is then proposed that the topics of **Regeneration** that encompass **external funding**, the **local plan** and **planning** and many of the areas above are further scoped and lines of inquiry refined.
38. This further scoping would be led by the Chair and Vice Chair and potentially include a subset of the committee (subject to availability) with a completion date of no later than the quarter one performance meeting.
39. There was also the intention that the committee submit a response to the [Hastings Town Centre and Bohemia Area Action Plan](#) consultation (closes 24<sup>th</sup> September) in quarter two.

## Conclusion

40. The key elements of the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19 are set out in appendix A and the committee will now need to formally agree these and the associated steps proposed in line with the report recommendations.
41. This is again a wide ranging programme where following updates and initial work underway, the committee will need to further refine lines of inquiry.
42. The committee will need to bear in mind their own capacity to support an ambitious programme as previous scrutiny committees have recognised councillor [capacity](#) as a key determinate of the success of their programme.
43. The committee will also need to be mindful of officer capacity and may need to reprioritise aspects of their programme accordingly, subject to demands on those officers required to assist with their scrutiny inquiry.

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## Wards Affected

All.

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## 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

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**Additional Information**

Appendix A - Overview and Scrutiny Proposed Work Programme 2018/19

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**Officer to Contact**

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