

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 7 September 2022

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme (2022/23) Update

Report By: Coral Harding, Continuous Improvement and democratic Services Officer

Key Decision: N/A

Purpose of Report

To provide an update of progress for the 2022/23 Overview and Scrutiny work programme and proposed follow up actions..

Recommendation(s)

That the committee note the progress of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year and follow up actions.

Reasons for Recommendations

It is the responsibility of members serving on the Overview and Scrutiny committee to set their own work programme for each municipal year and complete the associated actions by the end of year.

Introduction

1. Following the agreement of the work programme at Annual Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 27th July 2022. The committee has since met to provisionally confirm work groups and lines of enquiry.
2. The confirmed work programme can be found in appendix A. These ideas and themes draw on previous Overview and Scrutiny work. The committee have grouped work into 4 themes this year; Finance, Equalities, Living Environment and Follow up 2021

Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2022/23

3. The committee has decided to pursue 4 themes this year;
4. They have prioritised 2 reviews within each theme to begin with and hope to explore other areas identified within the municipal year.
5. The work programme will use a combination of reviews and updates. It is also accepted that some of the information the require will be obtained from the quarterly review meetings.
6. The committee would also like a 'Meet the Leader' session with Council Leadership.
7. Appendix A sets out the proposed O&S work programme for the year ahead breaking down the proposed phases of each theme over the course of the year.
8. The bulk of the investigative work will be done through Quarter 2 and 3. Any recommendations from this work will be reported in Quarter 4. These recommendations will go to Cabinet or Full Council depending on relevance.

Meet the Leader

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are keen to commence the year by meeting the Council Leadership. The Leader and other cabinet portfolio holders will be invited to give an overview of the year and identify potential opportunities and challenges that the council might face.
10. The committee are currently identifying dates for this meeting to take place and are aiming to conduct this by the end of October.
11. The committee will provide questions in advance to the Leader and other portfolio holders. These questions will relate to the organisation and public interest. They are currently reviewing key documents such the corporate plan.
12. The Overview and Scrutiny committee are keen to build a strong working relationship with the Leader and portfolio holders particularly given the committees 'critical friend' role. They would like to see positive outcomes for the public from a productive partnership.

Finance Theme

13. The Overview and Scrutiny committee are concerned by the large deficit the council faces this year which is currently estimated at £3.2 million. Overview and Scrutiny committee are keen to help support efforts to lessen the impact of the deficit.

14. The work programme is focussing two areas; the disposal of council assets review & project prioritisation and spend review.
15. The council may need to dispose of assets to help with the deficit. The committee have prioritised looking at how a criteria could be created to ensure any assets identified for disposal would provide both best value for the organisation and public interest.
16. The committee are keen to review how projects are prioritised and how financial over or underspends are monitored. They would like to see how the project selection and safeguards processes operate.
17. The review group would first like to meet with Senior Officers to identify the council's current position and processes. They will then focus there lines of enquiry and report back to the committee.
18. These reviews will be led by Councillor Patmore. Councillors Cannan, Hay and Pragnell will be part of the review group.

Equalities theme

19. The Overview and Scrutiny committee wanted to continue previous work from last years work programme. The next steps to this would be meeting up with local groups to gather views.
20. The committee are keen to do this and will be looking at who to approach and how this process will work.
21. They would like to review how the organisation meets its statutory obligations under equalities legislation and the levels of accessibility & considerations in providing public services for a diverse population.
22. They will be asking Senior Officers for information regarding this.
23. The motion to Full Council that asked to look at setting up of an equality working group will be explored further.
24. Councillor Arthur will lead this review. Councillor Foster be part of this review group.

Living Environment theme

25. Overview and Scrutiny noted residents' concerns in relation to their living environment. These included issues such as dog waste, potholes, and sea water quality.
26. The committee originally wanted to prioritise looking at the councils' provisions for waste, recycling, and street cleansing. They are going to look at how residents are using My Hastings online reporting service.
27. The My Hastings review will look at how many people are using it, the promotion of the service to residents, the effectiveness of resolving issues and how data can be used to target to target hotspot areas.
28. Since the Annual meeting held in July there have been further sewage water spills into the sea related to Southern Water. This has been an area of high public interest.

29. Overview and Scrutiny want to review the actions being undertaken by the council to resolve this issue with Southern Water and prevent its reoccurrence. They would like an update on this.
30. Councillor Jobson will lead this review. Councillor Foster and Roberts will be part of this review group.

Follow up theme

31. The previous year's Overview and Scrutiny work programme was not completed in full by the committee, but they would like to continue and monitor progress from previous commitments.
32. They will be looking at how the previous year's motions review recommendations have been implemented. They would like to review the progress on the requested constitutional reform that would see a 6 monthly report to Full council showing how motions had been implemented. They would also like to see how motions have been implemented in the last 6 months.
33. They also would like when the opportunity arises to meet with Sea Change to discuss their achievements and future plans in the town. They are keen to learn about the progress and activity with regards to the town's economic growth and regeneration ambitions.
34. They will be looking at appropriate timings for this meeting and scoping lines of enquiry.
35. This review will lead by Councillor Patmore.

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Overview and Scrutiny to agree their work programme actions	Work programme and actions agreed	7 th September	Overview and Scrutiny committee

Wards Affected

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score:

Have you used relevant project tools?: N/A

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y/N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Y/N
Risk Management	Y/N

Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y/N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y/N
Human Rights Act	Y/N
Organisational Consequences	Y/N
Local People's Views	Y/N
Anti-Poverty	Y/N
Legal	Y/N

Additional Information

Appendix A- Proposed Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Officer to Contact

Officer: Coral Harding

Email: Charding@hastings.gov.uk

Tel: 01424 451484