

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, 12 December 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.

Finance Theme

9. 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.
10. The work programme is focussing two areas; the disposal of council assets review & project prioritisation and spend review.
11. These reviews will be led by Councillor Patmore. Councillors Carr, Hay and Pragnell will be part of the review group.
12. The review group met with Senior officers on 14th November to ask a series of questions concerning the council's finances and asset disposals.
13. The group consisted of Councillors Patmore and Pragnell. They were joined by the Chief Finance Officer, the Transformation & Programmes Manager, and the Estates Manager.
14. During this meeting Officers advised that a Strategic Asset Management plan was being developed. This would include one common register of all assets. Currently asset data is being held in different systems. This would enable more efficient data management and gateway reviews.

15. Councillors asked how assets would be evaluated for potential sale. Officers advised a number of factors would need to be taken into account but would involve a robust evaluation criteria. The council would not be looking for short term fixes when disposing of assets.
16. Officers advised Councillors that the council's financial deficit meant that action was needed urgently to find additional income. There is currently no target figure associated with the disposal of assets.

Equalities theme

17. The Overview and Scrutiny committee wanted to continue previous work from last years work programme. This included reviewing the park safety works and gathering views of local people.
18. Councillor Carr will lead this review. Councillors Arthur and Foster be part of this review group.
19. The review lead has requested an update on the ongoing park safety works and the previous work on the equalities charter.
20. They would like to review and have requested an update on how the organisation meets its statutory obligations under equalities legislation. The review is also looking at how the monitoring of levels of accessibility & considerations in providing public services for a diverse population.
21. The motion to Full Council that asked to look at setting up of an equality working group. The first meeting of this will occur in Mid-January

Living Environment theme

22. Overview and Scrutiny noted residents' concerns in relation to their living environment. These included issues such as dog waste, potholes, and sea water quality.
23. Councillor Jobson will lead this review. Councillors Carr, Foster and Roberts will be part of this review group.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. The review lead has conducted research into this and found that there the online reporting function for waste and recycling on the website receives less use than other areas such as tide times and parking permits.
27. There is a still an ongoing problem with fly tipping particularly with private land and this overflowing out onto pathways. Additionally, residents have also been experiencing issues with this accumulating in public space recently due to bad weather causing its movement.
28. Residents in rented accommodation have been experiencing problems in rectifying issues with their bin areas that are on private land. Overview and Scrutiny would like to explore what solutions the council is able to enact.

29. Overview and Scrutiny have been monitoring the progress of improvements to bathing water quality following sewage water spills related to Southern Water infrastructure.
30. Officers and Lead members have been meeting with Southern Water to resolve the situation whilst local action groups such as Clean Water Action have campaigned for change. Overview and Scrutiny have been monitoring the responses and actions of these activities and welcome all update on this.

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. This work was put on hold for this quarter as the committee felt it was more important to focus on other parts of their work programme.
33. 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.
34. 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.
35. They will be looking at appropriate timings for this meeting and scoping lines of enquiry.
36. 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 | 19 th December | Overview and Scrutiny committee |

Wards Affected

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score:48.1

Have you used relevant project tools?: N/A

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

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

Additional Information

Appendix A- Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Officer to Contact

Officer: Coral Harding

Email: Charding@hastings.gov.uk

Tel: 01424 451484