

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 27 July 2023

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny proposed Work Programme 2022/23 recommendations

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

Key Decision: N/A

Purpose of Report

The report presents the final recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny committee work programme that ran for the municipal year 2022-23.

Overview and Scrutiny work programme forms a key part of the committee's work. Any recommendations put forward by the committee will be for the benefit of the organisation and the public.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. Finance review group recommends the following;**
 - a) Councillors to receive specialised financial training**
 - b) Councillors to receive briefings when requested on decisions with financial implementations.**
 - c) Overview and Scrutiny to identify pre decision scrutiny opportunities for involvement and development**

- 2. Equalities review group recommends the following;**
 - a) Overview and Scrutiny to review the Park Safety Project**
 - b) Equalities Working Group to continue meet and investigate lines of enquiry**

- 3. Living Environment review group recommends the following;**
 - a) Overview and Scrutiny to invite Southern Water for discussions about their future plans for the town**
 - b) Overview and Scrutiny to review the use of My Hastings by residents**
 - c) Overview and Scrutiny to review Climate Change delivery plan**

- 4. Follow up theme review group recommends the following;**
 - a) Motions constitutional reform requesting 6 monthly reports to Full Council be reviewed and agreed.**
 - b) Overview and Scrutiny to review Sea Change's past and future activities in the borough**

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The council's financial situation requires critical decision making by councillors. The committee would like to see this skill set enhanced. They believe early intervention in key decisions will lead them to be more robust and resilient.
2. The Park Safety Project responded to public needs. A review will ensure these are still being met. The Equalities Working Group have identified further areas of opportunity and development.
3. The living environment in our borough needs to be clean and healthy to promote good health and wellbeing. It is important that the public see the council actively pursue this.
4. It is important that key parts of previous work programmes are followed up and finalised.

Introduction

1. The Overview and Scrutiny committee sets a work programme for each municipal year. This year's work programme was agreed at Annual Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 27th July 2022.
2. The committee grouped the work into 4 themes; Finance, Equalities, Living Environment and Follow up 2021. The agreed work programme for 2022/23 can be found in appendix A.
3. The committee pursued their lines of enquiry in several ways through updates, briefing and informal meetings. These were delivered and supported by a range of Officers and Portfolio Holders.
4. The committee would like to thank them for their help with the work programme and their continued support.

Finance Theme conclusions

5. Councillors found during their investigations that there needed to be stronger financial skill set amongst the councillors to make critical decisions.
6. They believe this can be achieved through specialised training, briefing and pre scrutiny decision involvement.
7. Their recommendations are being made to reflect the current needs amongst councillors and the council's financial situation.

Equalities Theme conclusions

(i) Violence Against Women and Park Safety project

8. The Park Safety Work has been completed and feedback from the public has been generally positive. The committee will monitor its impact on park users and will undertake a review at a later point this year.

(ii) Equalities Working Group

The Equalities Working Group has met several times and have established that they would like to continue their lines of enquiries. The working group will still be open to all councillors.

Living Environment conclusions

9. The committee are still concerned by the Southern Waters performance in relation to bathing water quality, sewage discharges and flooding in the borough.
10. They would like to invite Southern Water to talk about plans for the town and the prevention of further incidents.
11. The committee would like to encourage the further promotion of My Hastings. The committee notes the recent positive reporting figures and would like to investigate further on how residents are using the service.

12. The committee would like to see the climate change delivery plan for the year. They welcome the Portfolio Holder's invite to work closer on this.

Follow Up Theme conclusions

13. The committee recommended a constitutionally reform for a 6 monthly report to Full Council on how motions had been implemented as part of the 2021/2022 work programme. The committee would like this reform to be agreed.
14. The committee would still like the opportunity to review Sea Change's activities and future plans for the borough.

Timetable of Next Steps

15. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Overview and Scrutiny to agree recommendations	Recommendations agreed	27 th July 2023	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Agreed recommendations sent for response to relevant committee or Officer	Report to relevant committee	September	Democratic Services

Wards Affected

None

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score:

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

Additional Information

Appendix A- Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23

Officer to Contact

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