

Report to: Annual Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Date of Meeting: 18 June 2015

Report Title: Update on 2014-15 Work Programme and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2015-16 Municipal Year

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Purpose of Report

To update Members on the status of reviews from the 2014/15 work programme for Overview and Scrutiny (O & S)

To highlight the O & S Chairs and Vice Chairs recommendations for the 2015/16 Scrutiny work programme.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. The Annual Meeting consider the recommendations of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of O & S and agree the O & S work programme for the 2015/16 Municipal Year**

Reasons for Recommendations

It is the responsibility of Members serving on the two O & S committees, Resources and Services, to set their own work programme for each Municipal Year at the Annual Meeting of O & S, whilst taking into account the advice of officers present.

Introduction

1. The Chairs and Vice Chairs met on the 14th of May and the 8th of June to make recommendations for the 2015/16 Scrutiny work programme.
2. Discussions and associated recommendations were informed by previous debate at the Scrutiny Steering Group (SSG) and previous suggestions for reviews.
3. The Chairs and Vice Chairs are recommending that:

The Annual Meeting receive an update of progress against the reviews (see appendix C) and work programme undertaken in 2014/15.

The Annual Meeting carefully consider the ambitious 2015/16 work programme proposed and flag any further ideas, omissions or revisions.

The format of the meeting is the same as in previous years, where the joint committee remains together to discuss and reach agreement on their work programme.

Prospective 2015/16 Scrutiny work programme

Overview

4. The proposed work programme for 2015/16 includes four distinct work packages and two scrutiny reviews set out in appendix A and timetabled by quarter in appendix B.
5. There are four themed (colour coded) work packages:
 - a. Transforming and future proofing scrutiny functions and processes (red)
 - b. Monitoring and scrutinising the council's transformation programme (yellow)
 - c. Health (green)
 - d. Outstanding commitments and follow up work from previous reviews (blue).
6. Two scrutiny reviews are proposed as part of the work programme:
 - a. A review of the Council's community safety role (lilac)
 - b. A review on digital exclusion as council and partner services move increasingly online (yellow).

Work Packages

7. The focus on organisational transformation begun in the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme continues into the work packages proposed for 2015/16 detailed below.

Future proofing scrutiny functions and processes

8. The first work package is concerned with exploring how the scrutiny function can change in line with broader organisational change.
9. This is informed by discussion at SSG where it has been suggested that consideration is given to the streamlining of the existing formal meetings structure and placing greater emphasis in terms of member capacity into scrutiny reviews, task and finish groups and scrutiny work that has traditionally happened between public quarterly meetings.
10. The Chairs and Vice Chairs propose that a task and finish group be formed in the first half of the year to draft options for a refreshed approach to scrutiny, and that these options be considered at SSG and then subsequently at the appropriate council committees, so that any associated changes can be implemented in the following or subsequent years.

Transformation

11. The second work package is concerned with monitoring progress against the transformation programme.
12. Chairs and Vice Chairs are recommending that scrutiny members receive an introduction to the transformation programme by the council's Transformation and Accommodations Manager at the quarter one Resources meeting (see appendix B).
13. Furthermore they recommend that all members are invited to attend this particular update.
14. This will enable members to better understand the direction of travel for this major council programme and will introduce some of the tools, frameworks and approaches that will enhance our performance management and corporate planning.

Health

15. This third work package reflects a long standing interest of members in a broad area that has witnessed a number of changes in terms of provision and delivery in recent years.
16. The varied and complex aspects of the health agenda are identified in green on appendix A.
17. While members are keen to explore various aspects of the health agenda, it is accepted that it would be helpful for members to receive an overview of the existing health landscape from a professional in this field.
18. This intention has been provisionally worked into quarter one activities listed in appendix B.

19. Chairs and Vice Chairs are also recommending that a scrutiny working group be formed to refine thinking and potentially shape the focus for a review on an aspect of health as part of the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme.
20. Potential areas of work across the quarters for the proposed working group are also outlined in appendix B.

Outstanding Scrutiny commitments

21. This package is concerned with the outstanding scrutiny workload. Appendix B shows how these associated activities (blue) are scheduled quarterly for 2015/16.
22. These activities include updates on long-standing areas of interest and while most of these updates are scheduled to take place at the Services O & S committee, the Chairs and Vice Chairs recommend that all interested members attend for these items.
23. This work will be complemented by a standing item at Scrutiny Steering Group (SSG) where members will review the recommendations from previous reviews and request updates where appropriate.

Scrutiny Reviews

24. The Chairs and Vice Chairs are keen to emphasise that this year's scrutiny reviews build on the general focus on organisational transformation begun in the 2014/15 work programme.
25. In particular, they are keen to bear in mind in the context of the following reviews proposed the overarching theme of the future role and function of HBC and partners within an increasingly digital environment.

Digital exclusion

26. The digital exclusion review proposed provides a more specific emphasis on a key aspect of organisational transformation set out in the 2015/16 corporate plan.
27. Chairs and Vice Chairs are keen that such a review understand what the council and partners are doing to identify and support those who are yet or unable to benefit from online services (those digitally excluded) and what can be learned from good practice elsewhere at a time when the council is encouraging online access to services via the new 'My Hastings online' initiative.
28. Furthermore, Chairs and Vice Chairs are also interested in how to narrow the digital gap and in particular, how those whom regularly contact the council through traditional means such as the phone or face to face can be supported to use digital channels instead?

Community safety

29. The second proposed review is interested in the council's role in terms of existing and future community safety provision.

30. The Chairs and Vice Chairs are keen to review the Council's community safety role, existing performance and what community safety activities and targets are realistic and viable in the context of challenging budgets for the Council and police partners.

Next Steps

31. That the joint scrutiny committee agree the reviews and work packages outlined to include an in principle agreement with the timetable of activities set out in appendix B.
32. Should the work packages and reviews be agreed, it is recommended that appropriate staff from the Council's transformation team attend SSG during the first half of the year to support scrutiny members apply those tools assisting the Council's transformation intentions and, a standard item be placed on the SSG agenda to reflect this intention.

Resource Implications

33. Members are reminded that they need to carefully consider the proposed reviews and work packages undertaken in the municipal year, ensuring sufficient capacity to plan, prepare and fulfil associated commitments.
34. In previous years, O & S have been asked to complete reviews and other commitments within the municipal year to ensure recommendations can be progressed and where appropriate included in work plans for the forthcoming year. This is especially important this year when Borough elections are due.

Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Policy Implications

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

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

Additional Information

Appendix A - O & S Proposed 2015/16 work programme - key themes

Appendix B - Proposed work activities 2015/16 per quarter
Appendix C - Work programme update 2014/15

Officer to Contact

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