

Report of the Director of Governance

Scrutiny Work Planning

Summary

1. This report sets out a range of potential business for this Committee and its operational Sub-Committees to consider moving forward further to the new arrangements for scrutiny identified elsewhere on this agenda. It also informs the Committee of arrangements discussed with Scrutiny Chairs for managing scrutiny work across all Committees during this time.

Background

2. During the Covid 19 pandemic, this Committee has been meeting in public on a monthly basis and learning of the areas in which its Committees have been expressing interest/concern. Attached at Annex 1 is a list of those areas for consideration across all Committees. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but to form the basis of an evolving work plan. Equally, closer definition may need to be given on any agreed work areas to ensure focus is given to precisely what is required and in need of attention.
3. Scrutiny Committee Chairs are planning to meet, informally, to discuss key business and work planning to ensure that business can be managed and supported effectively across all 'Committees', within available resources and according to this Committee's priorities.

Consultation

4. The Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee have been closely consulted on the timetabling arrangements for public scrutiny moving forward to May 2021 and during the pandemic. They have liaised with Scrutiny Chairs on timetabling and on wider work planning arrangements.

Options

5. Members can consider Annex 1 and decide upon options for future work planning arrangements.

Analysis

6. It is crucial during this time that public scrutiny is introduced more widely across the spectrum but that available resources to support its successful re-introduction are managed effectively and are directed according to where there is most need or added value. A clear and simple way of doing this is through a controlled work programme, managed and allocated by this Committee but developed in consultation with all Scrutiny Chairs, having gathered input from their 'Committees'. Annex 1 is a starting point for discussion with this Committee.
7. In choosing what work it wants to do, Scrutiny needs to be mindful of what outcomes it wants to achieve. Working collaboratively with Executive Members and Chief Officers in establishing key work strands is more likely to deliver key support and outcomes.
8. It is suggested that a single work plan covering all Scrutiny 'Committees' be created and managed by Democratic Services in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, based on wider discussion with Scrutiny Chairs/Executive Members/Chief Officers, as necessary, and for regular monitoring by this Committee.

Council Plan

9. A Scrutiny Work Plan can potentially touch upon all priorities within the Council's Plan covering the period 2019-23, as it seeks to provide critical challenge and drive improvement in the Council's services and policies.

Implications

10. There are no direct implications associated with this report or its recommendations across any of the following areas:
 - **Financial**
 - **Human Resources (HR)**
 - **Equalities**
 - **Legal**

- **Crime and Disorder**
- **Information Technology (ICT and digital services)**
- **Property**

Any associated implications will be addressed in any subsequent undertaken by Scrutiny Committees.

Risk Management

11. The consideration in this report is to re-establish scrutiny work planning as more 'Committees' begin to meet publicly again and to have that process effectively managed through this Committee and its Chair and Vice Chair, in liaison with other Scrutiny Chairs. This should eliminate any potential risk of scrutiny work being mis-managed and failing to deliver on its outcomes. Clearly, this risks of non-delivery would be greater if there were no work plan and coordination arrangements.

Recommendations

12. Members are asked to consider Annex 1 and the proposals in this report for establishing one corporate scrutiny work plan managed by this Committee but developed in collaboration as set out in paragraphs 6-8 above.

Reason: To establish clear, effective and manageable scrutiny work planning.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1 – draft work plan

Abbreviations

None