

Allerdale Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 April 2022

Selection of items for the OSC work programme

Report from	Specialist - Policy
Wards affected	All
Is this a key decision	No

1.0 The reason for the decision

- 1.1 At this meeting the Committee is considering potential items for its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year. This report provides background information to assist with the process of selection.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees items to form a draft work programme against the criteria herein.

3.0 Background and Introduction

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny must add value to the work of the Council and produce worthwhile outcomes for local people.
- 3.2 The guiding principle of Overview and Scrutiny is that it should involve constructive challenge with the aim of improving decision making and make a positive contribution to policy development and improving performance.
- 3.3 It is the responsibility of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to select suitable topics to be scrutinised and to set an annual work programme at the beginning of each municipal year. It also states that the work programme will be made up of priority issues and allow for the inclusion of ad hoc and urgent items during the year.

4.0 Content

- 4.1 When selecting topics, the Committee should have in mind a Council and borough rather than a ward level focus (although it can be useful if experiences at ward level are fed in when appropriate).
- 4.2 Capacity is also an important consideration. The nature of Overview and Scrutiny can lead to the number of topics exceeding the Council's capacity to deal with them in a thorough and effective way. The Committee should therefore consider the need

to focus on priority issues which matter most and deliver outcomes that will make a difference.

- 4.3 Work programme topics may be regular 'standing items' (e.g. scrutiny of Executive business and performance monitoring and budget scrutiny) or specific one off pieces of work.
- 4.4 A structured approach to topic selection is crucial. Discipline is essential – individual issues, inappropriate issues and non-priorities need to be filtered out in a fair, consistent and open and transparent way. A selection process will help identify these and support this.

Positive reasons to select a topic

- Improvements to local people and communities are likely
- It is a corporate priority for the Council
- There is evidence that it is a key issue for customers and communities with high levels of dissatisfaction
- Evidence identifies an area of poor performance
- Barriers exist which create inequality in service provision

Reasons to reject a topic

- It is already being addressed and would lead to duplication
- It is not within the remit of the Council (for example parts of Health Scrutiny/other partnership scrutiny where scrutiny mechanisms are in place and the Council can feed into these)
- It is part of a legal process
- It falls within the Council's complaints procedure
- It is subject to a disciplinary/grievance procedure
- It is unlikely to result in real or tangible improvements for local people and communities

Questions to ask before selecting a topic

- Why would we do this?
- How does it link to the Council Strategy?
- What would the Committee wish to achieve and why?
- What benefits could result for local people and communities?
- What evidence is there to support the need for a review?

Competing topics

If too many topics are suggested for the time available, consider:

- The importance in terms of the Council's aims and priorities
- The potential benefit of the widest possible section(s) of the community

4.5 Committee members met informally on 24 March 2022 to consider suggestions for work programme items that had been received from elected members and senior officers. Through discussion members have refined and grouped those suggestions to form the list presented at Appendix 1.

4.6 The Committee is now asked to review the list at Appendix 1, giving an opportunity for committee members who were not able to attend the session on 24 March an opportunity to comment on the suggested topics.

4.7 The agreed list of topics for the work programme can then be presented to the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May for adoption.

5.0 Delivery arrangements

5.1 Once topics are selected, for meetings the Committee can -

- a) Identify 'standing items' at the outset (annual budget/performance against the Council Strategy – quarterly reports)
- b) At each meeting the Committee can review the Forward Plan for forthcoming items requiring input or scrutiny
- c) Consider issues for potential in-depth review/inquiry (e.g., significant community concerns, major problem areas, poorly performing services, inequality in service provision, consistent areas of over/under spending).
- d) Consider issues for potential policy review or development (is something not working, are there gaps in policy, is input needed on major policy developments)
- e) Consider suggesting topics for external scrutiny where there are statutory duties or significant community concerns
- f) Regularly invite suggestions from members of the Council, the Executive, officers, partners and community organisations and groups.

6.0 Implications and Impact

6.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee role is central to contributing improvements assisting the delivery of the Council Strategy.

6.2 Finance/Resource implications

None directly from this report.

6.3 Legal and governance implications

None directly from this report.

6.4 Risk analysis

Not applicable.

6.5 Increasing satisfaction and service

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognises the important contribution it makes to the Council's overall satisfaction.

6.6 Equality impacts

None directly from this report.

6.7 Health and Safety impacts

None directly from this report.

6.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts

None directly from this report.

6.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts

None directly from this report.

6.10 Other significant implications

None from this report.

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix number	Title of appendix
1.	List of topics to be considered for the programme

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Appendix 1

Draft work programme for the Scrutiny and Overview committee

Meeting dates

2022	2023
Fri 27 May	Fri 13 Jan
Fri 24 June	Fri 17 Feb
Fri 22 July	
Fri 19 August	
Fri 16 Sept	
Fri 14 Oct	
Fri 11 Nov	
Fri 9 Dec	

Access to health services – GPs and Dentistry

- To consider the delivery of GP and Dentistry services with particular regard to services in Workington
- To scrutinise the plans of the NHS for these services
- To work with County Health Scrutiny, Health Watch and Patient Participation Groups to understand the needs of the community in these services

Monitoring of regeneration programmes

- To review the delivery of the Maryport and Workington Town Deal programmes
- To review the delivery of the Wigton programme, part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal
- To understand the impact of rising inflation, especially the significant rise in the cost of materials on the delivery of these projects, to understand what mitigation measures are in place given the fixed total funds available
- To consider any lessons for future projects

Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy

- To consider delivery progress and understand what the priorities for Allerdale Borough Council and then Cumberland Council might be

UK Shared prosperity Fund Investment Plan

- To scrutinise the development and content of the Investment Plan to be developed in 2022/23

Inflation and cost of living impact on Council services

- To ensure the council, its contractors and suppliers understand the impact that rising inflation has on service delivery costs across the council.
- To consider the budget and service impact on key services areas such as Disabled Facilities Grants and Allerdale Waste Services.

Gypsy and Traveller Site

- Consider the consultants report into suitable sites for this statutory service

Customer Services

- To consider the impact on residents of appointment only and digital by default models of customer service
- To consider how public service delivery hubs as 'one stop shops' for public services can be delivered, as detailed in the economic growth strategy.
- To hear directly from customer service staff on the needs of residents

Local Government Reorganisation

- The work of the Cumberland Joint Committee
- The arrangements for the scrutiny and overview function of the shadow authority

Democratic participation in voting

- Examine the process of identifying the location of polling stations, consultation processes, requirements for the size and number of polling districts and the timetable for review
- Community Governance Review

Other topics

- The Council's role in corporate parenting
- Examine the use of the Public Value concept in assessing the Council's decision-making processes

Regular and annual items

- Quarterly performance and financial reports
- Community Safety Partnership Review
- Updates from representatives to other scrutiny bodies