

Rother District Council

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 June 2022
Title:	Annual Work Programme
Report of:	Chief Executive
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	Members to give consideration to Council priorities when setting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the year 2022/23.
Officer	
Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED : That the Committee set its Work Programme for the new Council year and determine which Sub-Committees / Task & Finish Groups it wishes to appoint / re-appoint.

Introduction

1. In accordance with the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will:

approve an annual overview and scrutiny work programme, including the programme of any formal sub-committees and informal task and finish working groups it appoints so as to ensure that the Committee and sub-committees' / working groups' time is effectively and efficiently utilised [Part 4-5, paragraph 1(c)(i)].
2. In order to manage the OSC's workload and ensure that there is sufficient time to fully consider the issues arising, it is recommended that priorities are set. These priorities should take account of the time and resources each work item will require and the importance of that item to the Council's priorities.

Other Considerations

3. In establishing its Work Programme, the OSC needs to consider the terms of reference for each scrutiny or review item, who it wishes to involve and consult with and which key partners or expert witnesses it may wish to involve.
4. In all of these considerations the most important one that the OSC should bear in mind is how the outcome of the Committee's deliberations will have a positive effect on the well-being of residents and businesses of the area. The OSC also needs to consider how scrutiny can be used to engage with the community either directly or by giving a high profile to matters of concern to residents.
5. Members will need to consider these issues in tandem with the Executive Priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-27 when setting the Work Programme.

Annual Scrutiny Work Programming Meeting

6. The Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting this year was held on Tuesday 17 May. Along with Members of the OSC and other non-Executive Members, the meeting was attended by the Corporate Management Team and the three Heads of Service. The Work Programme was examined alongside key work priorities of the Council for 2022/23.
7. Members will need to consider whether the OSC's Work Programme, attached at Appendix A, needs to be amended to reflect any items identified at the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting. The notes arising from the meeting are attached at Appendix B to the report.

Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Groups

8. In accordance with the Constitution, the OSC may appoint up to four formal sub-committees and informal task and finish groups which can include residents, experts or representatives from outside bodies in their membership at any one time. The only proviso being that the same service officers are not involved in more than one active group at any one time. The Committee may also amend the terms of reference of any sub-committees / group it has appointed as appropriate.
9. As a distinction, sub-committees are formally constituted, should reflect the political make-up of the Council and must meet in public with Agendas and Reports available five clear working days in advance of any meeting. Task and Finish Groups are usually less formal, do not normally meet in public and are not required to meet the five clear working day requirement for Agenda publication.
10. Operating guidelines for Task and Finish Groups are now included within the new Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules agreed by full Council on 16 May and these are reproduced at Appendix C to aid the Committee's consideration.
11. In setting and agreeing the Work Programme, Members should consider whether to maintain the existing groups or establish new sub-committees or Task and Finish Groups and, if so, to make appointments to them.
12. During the last municipal year, the OSC did not establish any new Task and Finish Groups. The OSC had previously agreed that the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group (OSCPT&FG) continued its work for a further six months until the end of October 2021, as it had proved too early in the easing of COVID-19 restrictions to make proper judgements regarding the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).
13. The Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group (APT&FG) last met in May 2021 and reported back to the OSC in June 2021 with recommendations for onward approval by Cabinet.

Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group

14. The APT&FG was established in January 2020 to investigate the effects of income, health and housing poverty on local people and the local services that support them. The Group comprised of Councillors S.J. Coleman (Chairman),

J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes, J.J. Carroll, Mrs V. Cook, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, P.J. Gray and C.A. Madeley whilst undertaking its Terms of Reference (ToR).

15. The APT&FG's recommendations were presented to the OSC in June 2021 for onward recommendation to Cabinet on 28 June 2021. Cabinet were supportive of the OSC's recommendations which were subsequently actioned.

Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group

16. The OSCPT&FG was established in October 2020 to monitor the impact of CPE on the level of use of Council owned off-street car parks and consider any changes to charges, hours of operation and permits, whilst taking into account the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the car parks. The Group comprised of Councillors Mrs V. Cook (Chairman), P.C. Courtel, L.M. Langlands, C.A. Madeley, P.N. Osborne and G.F. Stevens whilst undertaking its Terms of Reference (ToR).
17. The OSCPT&FG's recommendations were presented to the OSC on 26 April 2021, recommending various changes to car park operations for onward recommendation to Cabinet. Cabinet were supportive of the OSC's recommendations which were subsequently actioned. It was also agreed by the OSC that the OSCPT&FG should continue its work for a further six months and progress be reviewed by the OSC in January 2022, along with a report to East Sussex County Council regarding RDC's response to CPE.
18. The OSCPT&FG reported once again to the OSC in January 2022, with further recommendations, along with a letter to East Sussex County Council detailing the Council's response to the introduction of CPE, which was recommended for onward approval by Cabinet. Cabinet was supportive of the OSCPT&FG's recommendations.
19. The OSC agreed that the OSCPT&FG be reconvened at a later date to review usage at Manor Gardens car park and ESCC's response to the CPE annual review.

Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group

20. The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group (BTCSG) had initially been established by Cabinet to deliver the vision and objectives of the Bexhill Town Centre Strategy (BTCS) June 2013; the Strategy seeks to collaborate with key groups and agencies in the area in its delivery plan.
21. Following a change of political control and Cabinet Portfolio Holder in May 2019, it was decided that the original timetable was insufficient to develop the BTCS. Therefore, the timetable had been reviewed and Terms of Reference amended accordingly.
22. In November 2019, Cabinet agreed the revised Terms of Reference and an initial allocation of £10,000 of the Town Centre Section 106 funding to start the work of developing a Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan with a further report to come back to Cabinet following the reconstitution of the BTCSG.
23. Working with a wide variety of stakeholders the BTCSG, led by Rother District Council (RDC), was to create a new Town Centre Strategy and Master Plan that would clearly define and articulate the vision for the future sustainable economy

of the area. The BTCSG would also set out a proposed funding approach and be responsible for initiating engagement with key partners to secure funding for the delivery of the Strategy's aims and objectives. The BTCSG was tasked with being ambitious and aspirational in its plans for Bexhill.

24. Following the creation of the Bexhill Town Council (BTC) in May 2021, the BTCSG was disbanded in March 2022 and some of their work transferred to the BTC. The Group will however lend support to BTC on an ad-hoc basis.

Crime and Disorder Committee

25. Under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the OSC is designated as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee'. This is not a separate working or steering group; it simply means that on an annual basis, as part of their regular Scrutiny business, the OSC reviews the work of the Rother and Hastings Community Safety Partnership (RHCSPP) as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee. The Committee's Role when acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee has been clarified in the revised Constitution and can be found at Part 4-5, paragraph 19.
26. The OSC receives an annual report from the RHCSPP. Members of the OSC can then decide whether there are any specific decisions or actions of the RHCSPP that they believe require further scrutiny.

Conclusion

27. Members need to consider, set and agree the OSC's Work Programme for the year, taking into account the various issues set out within the report. The Work Programme should be flexible to accommodate any changes in priorities and circumstances, which may emerge during the year.

Risk Management

28. Failure to set a realistic and achievable Work Programme which supports the Council's Aims and Executive's Priorities may result in the Council losing opportunities for the development of an effective overview and scrutiny function.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	External Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

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Report Contact Officer:	Louise Hollingsworth
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Appendices:	Appendix A Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23 Appendix B Extract of the Minutes from the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting dated Tuesday 17 May 2022 Appendix C Operating Guidelines for Task and Finish Groups
Relevant previous Minutes:	N/A

Background Papers:	N/A
Reference	N/A
Documents:	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2023		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM IN BOLD	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
06.06.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Report: Fourth Quarter 2021/22 Annual Work Programme 	Jeeawon
18.07.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Outturn 2021/22 	Jeeawon
12.09.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Report: First Quarter 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 1 2022/23 	Jeeawon
17.10.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024) 	Jeeawon Byrne
21.11.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Report: Second Quarter 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 2 2022/23 	Jeeawon
23.01.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2023/24 Key Performance Targets 2023/24 	Jeeawon
13.03.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime and Disorder Committee: to receive a report from the Community Safety Partnership Performance Report: Third Quarter 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3 2022/23 	Jeeawon
24.04.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call-in and Urgency Procedures Draft Annual Report to Council 	
ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration incl Leisure Centre, Fountains, Skate Park and Accessibility of Green Spaces across the district Corporate Plan review – referred back by Cabinet Review of the Economic Regeneration Strategy Peer Review Draft Corporate Customer Services Strategy Proposals Litter Strategy Review of the Tourism Strategy and the impact of Airbnbs – TBC Impact of Airbnb and second homes in Rye/Winchelsea/Camber – TBC Effectiveness of 'MyAlerts' Town Hall Renaissance Project Update report from the Local Strategic Partnership Update report from the Health and Wellbeing Board 		

Extract of the Minutes from the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting dated Tuesday 17 May 2022

ASP22/01. PURPOSE AND DESIRED OUTCOMES
(1)

The Chief Executive led Members through the reasons for the meeting. The aim of the meeting was for the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service to have a two-way discussion with Members on the priorities for the year, issues on the street that Members had picked up, officer service plans and other priority areas that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) may need to take into account when setting its Work Programme.

In the past, one major subject had tended to be selected for each meeting giving the OSC the flexibility to look at other items during the year which had provided improved focus.

ASP22/02. KEY WORK PRIORITIES 2022/23 – CMT / HEADS OF SERVICE; CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME; AND TO IDENTIFY ITEMS / COMMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME REPORT TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(2 to 4)

Items 2, 3 and 4 were considered together.

Consideration was given to the Work Programme as well as the items listed under “Items for Consideration”. Members highlighted a number of items they wished to consider adding to the Work Programme:

- Review of the Tourism Strategy incorporating the impact and associated risks of Airbnbs.
- Healthy Living to incorporate leisure facilities (inside and outside) and the skate park.
- Caravan Sites and their hidden communities.
- Review of the Corporate Strategy.
- Effectiveness of Resident Reporting.
- The Council’s role in Public Health and the Wellbeing Agenda.
- Review of Mental Health across the district following the pandemic.

Members were advised that the Town Hall Renaissance Project would require a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in July 2022, together with a Built Leisure Facility Strategy report which would then come back to the OSC in November with a final draft Built Leisure Facilities Strategy following public consultation. Two six-monthly reviews of the Environment Strategy would be required and the Corporate Plan Review and Financial Stability Programme (FSP) Update would be reported later in the year. The Chief Executive suggested that Members may wish to schedule a separate meeting to consider the report from the Crime and Disorder Committee only, which was currently scheduled for 13 March 2023.

Members requested a report on the devolvement of assets across the district in order to make savings. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a report would be going to Cabinet in July on the work being carried out with Bexhill Town Council and the process was being monitored through the FSP which would be reported to the OSC.

Members were advised that a series of Member Briefings were planned to be held throughout the year in order to keep all Members updated with current issues. It was suggested that Members may wish to consider using the Briefings for those items that required an update rather than scrutiny and that they also link in with items going to OSC, so that Members were better informed and updated on the issues prior to the scrutiny process. The Briefings would also provide the opportunity, together with the bi-annual Member Learning Days, for Members to be given guidance on the issues to focus on in reports, in particular the finance and budget items, which Members welcomed. Members suggested that representatives from Outside Bodies be invited to provide updates at Briefings.

It was suggested by the Heads of Service that Members consider receiving reports on the Customer Service Strategy which linked into the work completed by the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group, the Litter Strategy which linked into the Waste and Recycling Contract and the upcoming Environment Bill, a review of the new Enforcement Contractor later in the year and for Environmental Health updates to be given at Member Briefing sessions.

Members were particularly pleased with the work of the Task and Finish Groups and were reminded that the OSC may appoint up to four formal sub-committees and informal task and finish groups which can include residents, experts or representatives from outside bodies in their membership at any one time. The only proviso being that the same service officers were not involved in more than one active group at any one time.

The following items were proposed for consideration and agreement by the OSC to be included on the 2022/2023 Work Programme:

- Town Hall Renaissance Project – 18 July 2022
- Built Leisure Facilities Strategy – draft – 18 July 2022
- Built Leisure Facilities Strategy – final – 21 November 2022
- Two six-monthly reviews of the Environment Strategy – date TBC
- Review of the Financial Stability Programme – date TBC
- Review of the Tourism Strategy and the impact of Airbnbs – date TBC
- A review of Mental Health across the district – date TBC
- Corporate Plan Review – date TBC

After a full and thorough debate, all suggested additions were made to the Work Programme and Items for Consideration as detailed at Appendix 1; these would be ratified by the OSC at its first meeting on 6 June 2022.

ASP22/03. **BI-ANNUAL MEMBER LEARNING DAY**
(5)

Members were advised that the Member Learning Day was scheduled to take place at 10:00am on 14 July 2022 in the Council Chamber.

Consideration was given to topics to be covered and it was suggested that presentations be given on Food and Health Safety across the district, an overview of how the Council was dealing with refugees and an update on homelessness.

The Chair thanked Members, the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Director – Place and Climate Change and Heads of Service for their input and attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3:37pm

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Operating Guidelines for Task and Finish Groups

Formal Agenda	Optional
Informal minutes / notes	Yes, and not routinely publicly available.
Lead Officer(s)	Lead Officer(s) from the relevant service area with support from a dedicated Democratic Services Officer.
Action points	To be compiled by the Democratic Services Officer as part of minutes and circulated to all relevant officers and reviewed from meeting to meeting.
External / public involvement	Each Task and Finish Group to determine whether meetings shall or shall not be public. Stakeholders shall be invited to attend and to contribute to the group's work programmes, including co-option to the group, as appropriate.
Politically balanced	Not essential, but there is an expectation that task and finish groups shall include representatives from each political group, as far as reasonably practicable.
Composition	Appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from non-executive members with the relevant experience / interest. The lead Cabinet member may be invited to contribute in an advisory capacity to reviews.
Size	This shall vary according to the matter under discussion; however, groups should not normally comprise more than five members of the Council.
Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference shall be set and agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the point of establishment and shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The specific issue to be considered; (b) A timescale and deadline; (c) Principal aims and objectives.