

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present:

- a) The items due to be considered at the Committee's meeting scheduled for 1st February 2021 and seek confirmation of the information required for the subsequent meeting, scheduled for 3 March 2021.
- b) To present an update on the latest position from the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees held in December 2020 regarding potential items for the draft interim Forward Work Programme;
- c) To request the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings, having regard to the Q2 Performance Update report that will be presented to the Committee on 14th January 2021 and using the agreed Criteria Form.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee must publish a Forward Work Programme (FWP) as far as it is known.
- 3.2 An effective FWP will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected, as well as the approach that will be adopted; i.e. will the Committee be undertaking a policy review/ development role ("Overview") or performance management approach ("Scrutiny").
- 3.3 The FWPs will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors and Cabinet.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 30th September 2020, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, Scrutiny Annual Report, etc. were mapped.
- 4.2 Forward Work Programme Update reports were submitted to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees held in October / November for consideration, and to be fed back to this Committee to set a focused overall Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.
- 4.3 At the time of the reports, the Council had been advised that due to the revised timing of the Local Government financial settlement from Welsh Government, scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would need to be considered by Scrutiny Committees after Cabinet considers draft MTFS proposals on 19th January 2021 and not in the December cycle of meetings as originally planned. Consequently, arrangements have been made to move the date of the January meetings to facilitate this, as approved by Council on 18th November 2020.
- 4.4 At the first meeting of SOSC 1, 2 and 3 which were held in October and November, the Committees received Forward Work Programme Updates and agreed to receive updated briefings from the relevant Corporate Director upon the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon their Service areas and the operational response, in their meetings in December and that the MTFS would be considered in the January cycle of meetings, for the reasons stated in paragraph 4.3 above.

Identification of Further Items

- 4.5 The SOSCs were also asked whether they wished to identify any further items for consideration on the interim Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings, using the prior agreed Criteria Form. The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such

as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to ensure a strategic responsibility for Scrutiny and that its work benefits the Authority. The SOSC's agreed it would be prudent to wait until the Corporate Directors report to their December meetings, before identifying further items for consideration for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme.

4.6 The draft interim Forward Work Programme for COSC and the SOSC's is presented below:

Next Cycle of Meetings:

Scrutiny Committee:	Date:	Report:
Combined Scrutiny Committee of all Scrutiny Members for	Wednesday 20 th January 2021 at 10am	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for: - Education & Family Support; - Communities.
Combined Scrutiny Committee of all Scrutiny Members for	Thursday, 21 st January 2021 at 10am	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for: - Social Services & Wellbeing; - Chief Executive's.
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Monday, 1 st February 2021 at 10am	Medium Term Financial Strategy and Draft Budget Consultation Process (to present the Committee with the final report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) and the responses from all the Scrutiny Committees and the final BREP Recommendations upon the Draft Budget Proposals and MTFS.

Following Cycle of Meetings:

Scrutiny Committee:	Date:	Report:
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 rd March 2021	Budget Monitoring 2020-21 Q3 Revenue Forecast

At the December round of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings where Corporate Directors presented updates to the respective Committees:

SOSC 1 proposed a report upon blended / hybrid / remote learning including the safeguarding of welfare and wellbeing as an item for their Work Programme for the next meeting after the MTFS, scheduled for 15th March 2021, and the consideration of the MTFS could also identify any emerging items of concern to be proposed for the FWP for the Committee.

SOSC 2 agreed that the consideration of the MTFs could identify any emerging items of concern to be proposed for the FWP for the Committee as an item for their next meeting scheduled for 21st April.

SOSC 3 requested a further update from the Corporate Director - Communities when the vaccine programme was being delivered with a focus on taking things forward post pandemic. The Committee also agreed that the consideration of the MTFs could identify any emerging items of concern to be proposed for the FWP for the Committee as an item for their next meeting scheduled for 21st April.

Following the Q2 Performance report to this Committee, the Committee may wish to propose an emerging area of concern from any identified for allocation to the relevant Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.7 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a Local Authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.
- 4.8 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 4.9 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

Scrutiny Member Training

- 4.10 Members may recall that following consultation with the Scrutiny Chairs, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Questioning Skills Training for Scrutiny Members and Training for Scrutiny Chairs was held remotely via Microsoft Teams in November. Copies of the presentation and resources will be circulated to Scrutiny Members.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 The work of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council constitution to be updated.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality impacts arising directly from this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The delivery of the Forward Work Programme will be met from within existing resources for Overview and Scrutiny support.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Confirm the draft interim Forward Work Programme in paragraph 4.6 above, having regard to the latest position from the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees held in December regarding potential items for the draft Interim Forward Work Programme;
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wish to be included in the item for the 3rd March Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, including invitees they wish to attend;

- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings, having regard to the Q2 Performance Update report and using the agreed Criteria Form.

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Background documents: None