

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE POLICY

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A**) for this Committee for discussion and consideration;
- b) To request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) To request the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6;
- d) To note that the proposed draft Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee (COSC), with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SOSC), following consideration in their July Committee meetings.

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**:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.

Best Practice / Guidance

- 3.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 3.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximize the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.
- 3.5 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) guide to work effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

4. Current situation/proposal

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

- 4.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 18 May 2022, the standing statutory reports to this Scrutiny Committee upon: the Corporate Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget, Performance and Budget Monitoring, etc. have been mapped to the appropriate timely meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme (FWP).

- 4.2 The draft outline Forward work programme for each Scrutiny Committee have been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
 - Directorate Business Plans;
 - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
 - Committee / Member proposed topics;
 - Policy Framework;
 - Cabinet Work Programme;
 - Discussions with Corporate Directors;
 - Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.
- 4.3 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g., the MTFS including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in December 2022, following which the Committee will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2023.
- 4.4 An effective FWP will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The FWP will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each SOSC reported and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors.
- 4.5 The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programmes will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP. The SOSC FWP's will be included in the standing FWP Update report from then on with any feedback from each SOSC meeting included.

Identification of Further Items

- 4.6 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 maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. Criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST:	The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;
ABILITY TO CHANGE:	Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

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 Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

4.10 The draft outline Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's 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.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of 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 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme for the Committee in **Appendix A**, make any amendments and agree its Forward Work Programme.
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the report for the next two Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6.
- d) Note that the proposed draft Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective SOSC following consideration in their July Committee meetings.

Kelly Watson

Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

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Contact Officers: Meryl Lawrence
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny

Lucy Beard
Scrutiny Officer

Jessica McLellan
Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: (01656) 643515 / 643613 / 643263

Email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal address: Democratic Services - Scrutiny
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

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