

Subject:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Planning		
Date of Meeting:	14 July 2014		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) work programme is determined by OSC members after consideration of proposals for scrutiny from elected members, senior officers, partners, stakeholders and members of the public.
- 1.2 **Appendix 1** to this report details planned and current scrutiny work. **Appendix 2** details pending requests for scrutiny. There are brief officer comments on each proposal.
- 1.3 The Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HWOSC) has its own work programme. Suggestions for scrutiny of issues with a core focus on health, public health, adult social care or children's services will be considered by HWOSC members.
- 1.4 OSC members have a variety of options with regard to proposals for scrutiny. These range from agreeing to establish a scrutiny panel, through setting up a member workshop to requesting a formal committee report or an informal briefing. Members may also choose not to progress a request for scrutiny.
- 1.5 In determining their work programme OSC members need to be cognisant of: corporate priorities, the work of the council's Policy committees, officer resources, and member resources.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That OSC members determine which suggestions for scrutiny (see **Appendix 2**) they wish to progress.
- 2.2 That, with regard to the issues that are prioritised, OSC members determine how best to progress each topic.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The OSC considers a number of issues on an annual basis. These include examining corporate performance, complaints data, performance against equalities targets, and scrutiny (via a member-led panel) of the council's annual budget plans.
- 3.2 The OSC also has an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of agreed actions arising from previous scrutiny work, particularly in terms of scrutiny panel recommendations. Typically, the implementation of scrutiny panel recommendations is monitored on an annual basis until all the required actions have been completed.
- 3.3 The remainder of the OSC's work programme consists of issues that have been suggested by elected members, by senior officers, by partner organisations, stakeholder groups or individual members of the public.
- 3.4 Should OSC members agree to adopt such work programme suggestions, there are a number of ways that issues can be dealt with: via formal committee reports, informal briefings, one-off member 'workshops', or via scrutiny panels.
- 3.5 Overview & Scrutiny in Brighton & Hove has a distinguished history of using member-led scrutiny panels to deliver innovative and impactful pieces of work. However, scrutiny panels are very resource-intensive in terms of officer time and also in terms of the demands they make on members. It is therefore important that scrutiny panels are only used where there is a real opportunity to add value – e.g. where there is an issue that clearly needs addressing and where it is apparent that scrutiny via a committee report or workshop is unlikely to produce results.

The council's O&S committees are supported in their work by the Overview & Scrutiny team. There are currently 2.6 FTE posts within the team (including the Head of Scrutiny) supporting core scrutiny functions. Around 1 FTE is required to administer OSC and HWOSC, perform general managerial and administrative duties etc. As a rule of thumb running a scrutiny panel requires around 0.5 FTE of dedicated support. This means that the O&S team can support around three concurrent scrutiny panels, although this will vary depending on the size of issues and the stage that each panel is at. The team is currently supporting four panels (Seafront Infrastructure/Party Houses/Youth Justice/Social Value in Procurement). We anticipate that the team will have capacity to begin an additional one to two panels in Autumn 2014.

- 3.7 **Appendix 1** to this report includes details of current and planned Overview & Scrutiny activity. **Appendix 2** details recent suggestions for scrutiny pending approval. Although OSC members have discussed some of these issues previously, no definitive decision was made. Since the membership of OSC has recently changed it seemed opportune to consider all pending issues together.
- 3.8 OSC members may also choose to suggest their own ideas for the committee panel work programme, to canvass all elected members for their ideas (as we have done in past years), or to invite input from senior officers (ELT) and/or partners (e.g. Brighton & Hove Connected).

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** contains some officer recommendations for a particular course of action (e.g. do/do not establish a scrutiny panel) and includes a rationale for the action proposed. Members are, of course, free to reject the suggested actions and to substitute their own preferences. There are no particular implications that members need to be aware of in making this type of choice, save the pragmatic one that there is a finite amount of officer support available.

5. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 None specifically in relation to this report. However the O&S team regularly communicates with the local community and voluntary sector and the sector does make suggestions for scrutiny (including current scrutiny panels and pending scrutiny requests – see **Appendix 1**).

6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 It is important that the OSC agrees a work programme that complements the work of the council's decision-making committees, that helps drive corporate priorities, that engages with our partners and with local people, and that makes best use of officer and member resources. **Appendix 1** to this report includes some officer suggestions as to how this might best be achieved, but ultimately this is a decision for OSC members.

7. **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Provision has been made in the 2014/15 budget for scrutiny support, resource levels available are set out in paragraph 3.6.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 01/07/14

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 It is a proper function of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to approve an overview and scrutiny work programme, to ensure that there is efficient use of scrutiny resources and that the potential for duplication is minimised.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 04/07/14

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 None at this stage. All scrutiny panels will include an Equality Impact Assessment as part of routine scoping.

Sustainability Implications:

7.4 None at this stage

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Details of current O&S work
2. List of pending suggestions for scrutiny

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None