

Overview of Work Programming Process 2015-16

Setting the Work Programme for the Scrutiny function is an important stage in the Scrutiny process. An effective Scrutiny work programme will identify the key topics that Scrutiny will consider over the coming year. A well planned Scrutiny work programme will help both officers and members plan their workloads as well as providing a clear picture to the public of planned Scrutiny activity.

Factors to Balance in Devising Work Programmes - “Four Cornerstones of Public Scrutiny”

A Scrutiny Committee, and its work programme should:

- Provide ‘critical friend’ challenge to Executive policy-makers and decision makers
- Enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard
- Be carried out by ‘independent minded governors’ who lead and own the scrutiny role
- Drive improvement in public services.

What should a work programme include?

Policy Development – Where the Committee contributes to the Council’s policy development processes by considering green papers or draft policy documents;

Inquiries – Where the Committee undertakes an examination of a topic over a period of time, resulting in a formal report to the Cabinet. These can be short inquiries, such as deep dives, or longer inquiries, as required.

Short Scrutiny Studies – Where the Committee examines a particular service or issue at one or two meetings, rather than a full inquiry. Frequently such scrutiny activity results in a letter being sent to the relevant Cabinet Member with recommendations or comments.

Pre Decision – Where the Committee evaluates and comments on policy proposals before they go to the Cabinet, giving the Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Member’s views prior to making their decision.

Monitoring Performance and Progress – Where the Committee undertakes monitoring of the Council’s performance and progress in implementing actions previously agreed.

Work Programming Principles

- **Add value** to the work of the Council in delivering services to our citizens.
- **Prioritisation** - try to focus on quality over quantity.

- **Thematic** - avoid focusing on just specific services delivered by the Council and consider wider issues.
- **Balance** - to avoid focusing on a limited part of the terms of reference.
- **Involve** - where possible involve partners, stakeholders and the public.
- **Flexibility** – review the work programme on a regular basis and change it as priorities alter.
- **Terms of reference** – work within the terms of reference of the Committee.
- **Team work** -Leave party politics at the door, work as a team and focus on wider issues that impact on all Cardiff citizens.
- Remember, you are the voice of the citizen within the organisation.

Sources of suggested items

A range of potential items have already been identified for consideration in the 2016/17 work programme. These have been provided from a number of sources, as outlined below:

- Items identified as part of the 2015/16 work programme
- Suggestions from elected members
- Suggestions from stakeholders and relevant organisations (pending responses from such organisations)
- Items listed in the Cabinet forward plan
- What Matters Programmes and work stream activities

These suggestions are captured within **Appendix B**. At the July Committee meeting, Members will receive presentations from the appropriate Directors to identify key challenges and projects for the year that the Committee may wish to consider. Committee Members will also have the opportunity to suggest items to be considered when setting the final work programme.

Prioritisation

Members are reminded that the Committee will be unable to scrutinise every item suggested by the sources above. It is important that Committee meetings remain focused and are not overburdened with too many items on the agenda. **Appendix C** provides an example of a blank work programme structure – members will note that there is scope for approximately 20 items to be prioritised for consideration throughout the year.

Sustainability of work programme

In setting a work programme, members should also be mindful of:

- Members capacity to do the work
- Resources available to support Members

- Scrutiny Officers
- Scrutiny Research
- Leave space for items that emerge during the year

The key to making a difference?

- Items need to be timely, i.e. considered at a time when change can be considered or implemented.
- Make sure items meet the **P.I.C.K.** criteria, i.e. they are of **P**ublic Interest, can deliver an **I**mpact, consider **C**ouncil Performance and focus on **K**eeping it in context.
- Items need to be scoped to ensure clear terms of reference

P.I.C.K Criteria

Public Interest

- The topic is of concern to the public
- It is a “high profile” topic for specific local communities
- This is an area where a lot of complaints are received and/or bad press
- The topic has been identified by members/officers as a key citizen issue.

Impact

- The Scrutiny will lead to improvements for the people of Cardiff
- The Scrutiny will lead to increased value for money
- This could make a big difference to the way services are delivered
- This could make a big difference to the way resources are used.

Council Performance

- The topic does support the achievement of the corporate priorities
- The Council and/or other organisations are not performing well in this area
- Do we understand why our performance is poor compared to others
- We are performing well, but spending too much of our resources in this area.

Keeping in Context

- There is new government guidance or legislation that will require a significant change to services and Scrutiny can positively influence change
- Has the issue been raised by the external auditor in the annual letter
- There are no inspections planned in the near future.