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**COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to invite Members to consider the approach they would like to take to setting the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2015/16.

**Background**

2. The Council's Constitution states that each Scrutiny Committee will set its own work programme for the forthcoming year (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7). With the establishment of a new administration the Committee is now tasked with constructing a work programme for the year ahead that ensures the time available to the Committee is used most effectively, by considering items in a timely fashion that maximise the impact of scrutiny.
3. This Committee's terms of reference give the Committee responsibility for scrutinising, measuring and actively promoting improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of Education and Children's Services:
  - To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of children and young people, including :

School Improvement	Governor Services
Schools Organisation	Children's Social Services
School Support Services	Children & Young Peoples

Education Welfare & Inclusion	Partnership
Early Years Development	Youth Services and Justice
Special Educational needs	Play Services

- To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including Welsh Government, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.
  - To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures, this may enhance Council performance and service delivery in this area.
4. The calendar of meetings for the year has not yet been agreed. The dates for the meetings that were agreed at Full Council in May 2015, are as follows:
- 4.30pm, Tuesday 9 June 2015 in Committee Room 4 at County Hall
  - 2.30pm, Tuesday 14 July 2015 in Committee Room 4 at County Hall.
5. In addition to the above, the Committee is requested to hold a joint meeting with the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee in order to receive and scrutinise the Director of Social Services' Annual Report 2014/15.
6. Members may also decide to hold Task & Finish group meetings, where several Committee members take on work to investigate and scrutinise a specific area in depth, on behalf of the whole committee, either over a period of time or throughout one day. The subsequent report is then considered by the whole Committee prior to approval.

### **Developing a work programme**

7. The work programme is normally constructed at the beginning of the municipal year but can be updated during the year. Given the range of Directorates and

subjects covered by each Committee, the work programme needs to be carefully constructed to ensure that it meets with the Council's corporate priorities and that the time available to the Committee is most effectively used.

8. There are many scrutiny approaches open to the Committee when constructing its work programme, including:
  - a. **Policy Review & Development** – where the Committee contributes to the development of a policy, at an early stage, by scrutinising and making recommendations on proposals.
  - b. **Pre decision of draft Cabinet reports** - Where the Committee has evaluated and commented on proposals before they go to the Cabinet, giving the Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Members' views prior to making their decision.
  - c. **Inquiries and Investigations** – where the Committee examines a clearly defined topic using a planned approach over a set period of time, resulting in a clear set of key findings and recommendations.
  - d. **Performance Review and Monitoring** – where the Committee regularly analyses Corporate Performance reports as well as key performance data from the service areas within its' remit in order to: highlight good performance; identify poor performance; examine trends over time; benchmark against other authorities; and examine the impact that initiatives and changes in resources have on performance and service delivery.
  - e. **Monitoring Reports** - Where the Committee undertakes monitoring of the Council's Partnership's and Regional Consortium's performance and progress in implementing actions previously agreed.
  - f. **Call Ins** – the Council's constitution allows for any Member to call-in a Cabinet decision prior to implementation. The Call-In period is set at seven working days after the publication of the decision on the Council's intranet site. For a decision to be valid for Call-In it has to comply with criteria and parameters set out in the constitution.
  
9. These activities enable Scrutiny Committees to have a clear input into the development and implementation of the Council's corporate priorities, as well as

the main policies and strategies that form the Council's policy framework. The Committees can also comment on operational and service delivery issues, identify potential improvements and savings, highlight good practice and reflect the voice and concerns of the public. Members can hear from relevant Cabinet members and Officers as well as external witnesses such as statutory partners, third sector organisations, service user representatives, advocacy groups and other stakeholders.

10. Scrutiny Services have developed various tools to assist Committees with developing specific inquiries and investigations for their work programme. The first stage is to identify potential work programme items for consideration, by seeking suggestions from Members and stakeholders, relevant auditors, inspectors and regulators, partnerships, consortiums and regional groups.

11. Following the identification of items and issues, Committee Members will need to prioritise the list to form a balance work programme for the year. Mechanisms that have consistently been used by this Scrutiny Committees in Cardiff include:

a. A mechanism to consistently prioritise topics suggested for scrutiny (known as **PICK**):

- Public Interest
- Impact
- Council Performance and
- Keeping in context.

b. **Scoping reports.** These are designed following discussions with the relevant directorate, stakeholders and to other interested parties to clearly state the terms of reference for each agreed scrutiny inquiry, proposed timescales, involvement of other agencies, major constraints and resource and research issues and the critical success factors that can be used to judge the success of the scrutiny exercise.

## **Way Forward**

12. Members may wish to explore the best approach to developing the 2015/16 work programme. In previous years Members have held a work programming forum to consider options for the work programme and prioritise topics for consideration. The forum's proposals are then presented to Committee for formal approval of the work programme.
  
13. Members may wish to raise particular issues of interest for inclusion in the Committee's work programming forum discussions.

## **Legal Implications**

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications

at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- Discuss and agree the approach to developing the Committee's work programme for 2015/16, so that a final version of the programme can be brought back to Committee later in the summer for formal approval.
- Discuss the request to hold joint meetings with the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Marie Rosenthal**

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

2 June 2015