

WORK PLANNING UPDATE 2020-2021

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the proposed schedule of Policy Review & Performance (PRAP) Scrutiny Committee meeting dates for 2020/21.
2. To seek Members' views on opportunities for informal task and finish research.
3. To seek Members approval for the continuation of the Committee's Performance Panel and an extension of its work.

Background

4. The Council's Constitution empowers each Scrutiny Committee to set its own work programme for the forthcoming year (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7). This is good scrutiny practice and is traditionally undertaken at the beginning of a municipal year and updated as the work progresses. However, due to the current Covid-19 crisis the process for 2020/21 has been delayed. The Committee is therefore tasked with constructing a work programme that ensures the time available to the Committee is used most effectively and maximises the impact of scrutiny.
5. The Committee's Terms of Reference confer two distinct scrutiny roles. Firstly, an overarching responsibility to scrutinise, monitor and review the overall corporate performance and improvement of the Council. Secondly, to scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of specific functions, such as the Corporate Planning and Performance framework, Finance, Digital

Strategy/ICT, Human Resources, Governance, Legal Services, Property, Procurement, Customer Services and Cardiff's Public Services Board. A copy of the terms of reference has been attached to this document as **Appendix A**.

6. The current organisational structure means the Committee's responsibilities fall within four of the Council's Directorates. The list below is a good indication of the Council business within each Directorate that falls within the Committee's Terms of Reference;

- The Corporate **Resources Directorate** falls within the Committee's remit in its entirety and comprises: Finance and Revenue Services; Commissioning and Procurement; Human Resources People Services; Corporate Health & Safety; Digitalisation/ICT and Customer Services (including 24/7 services and C2C); and Information Governance.
- The **People and Communities Directorate** includes Partnerships and Community Engagement; Communications; Corporate Performance and Improvement; Bi-lingual Cardiff.
- The **Economic Development Directorate** includes Corporate Landlord, Strategic Estates (including both the operational and non-operational portfolios), Facilities and Operational Management.
- The **Governance and Legal Services Directorate** falls within the Committee's remit in its entirety and comprises; Committee & Members' Services; Electoral Services; Equalities, Glamorgan Archives; Legal Services; and Scrutiny Services.

7. During the Covid-19 lockdown, scrutiny committees were suspended, with Council agreeing to enable measured and proportionate scrutiny via a Covid-19 Scrutiny Panel, consisting of the five Scrutiny Chairs.

8. In July 2020, Full Council agreed to restart the five standing scrutiny committees, with a specific remit within their area of responsibility, to:

- Undertake pre-decision scrutiny of all Cabinet decisions, where appropriate and proportionate to do so;

- Scrutinise any issues which are time critical and/ or may have a significant adverse reputational impact on the Council; and
- Develop priorities for potential scrutiny consideration during 2020/21, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member/s and Director/s.

9. The report to Council also specified that, in the event of a second peak in Covid-19 cases and further lockdown measures, the Covid-19 Scrutiny Panel would again take on the scrutiny function, until the standing scrutiny committees were able to be supported to resume their functions.

10. Scrutiny plays an essential role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's decision-making process and the way in which it delivers services. The main roles of the Scrutiny Committees are:

- Holding to account the Cabinet and officers, as decision-makers.
- Being a '*critical friend*', questioning how decisions have been made, providing a '*check and balance*' to decision makers and undertaking reviews of services and policy.
- Providing a voice for citizens.

Work programming 2020/21

11. The remit for the restart of Scrutiny Committees provided direction and boundaries to the committee's work programming, requiring a focus on pre-decision scrutiny; issues that are time critical; items that may have a significant adverse reputational impact on the Council; and are priorities identified by relevant Cabinet Members and Directors.

12. Where scrutiny of a topic requires a more in depth approach then it will take place in the form of a task and finish group informally outside of Committee. There is an opportunity for the Committee to focus on the topic of maintaining the momentum of home and agile working, as outlined in the previous agenda item. Members may wish to offer observations as to the scope of this work.

13. The Committee currently has an established Performance Panel with a remit to monitor performance and to consider specific performance reporting developments and issues. Members may wish to discuss the continuation of the Panel and its membership. In previous years the Chair has extended an invitation to include all Chairs of Scrutiny in a target setting session pre-Corporate Plan publication (late January).

14. The Leader has openly engaged with the Performance Panel for the past two years. This year there is an opportunity to extend the Panel's work with an additional session proposed for late in November/early December, to review performance at month 6 of 2020/21 against Corporate Plan targets. This session would then be used to inform early Cabinet conversations around 2021/22 corporate target setting and significantly expands the opportunity for scrutiny impact.

Timing	Task
Late Nov/early Dec 2020	Informal work session to review performance at month 6 against Corporate Targets 2020/21
Late Jan/early Feb 2021	Informal work session to inform Corporate Plan target setting 2021/22.

15. The proposed extension to Scrutiny engagement with the Corporate Plan acknowledges the benefit of progressive interaction between policy development and scrutiny, illustrated by informal engagement sessions. The informal sessions also enable the Scrutiny function, comprised of five Scrutiny Committees, to demonstrate an impact of Scrutiny on the Corporate Plan, the Council's highest level strategic document.

Length of Committee Meetings

16. Audit Wales (formally WAO) advise that scrutiny committees aim to last no longer than three hours, whilst maintaining robust and appropriate levels of scrutiny across the terms of reference, by ensuring agendas are of a

manageable size and that work occurs outside committee meetings. On average, this equates to agendas consisting of no more than two substantial items.

17. This timeframe takes on added significance with meetings held remotely, given advice to keep remote meetings as short as possible. Scrutiny Chairs have discussed the length of meetings and decided to aim to keep meetings to 2.5 hours, where possible.

Dates of Committee Meetings

18. At the September 2020 meeting of PRAP Members agreed that in future remote meetings would commence at 4.30pm.

19. The full calendar of meetings, including remote monthly committee meetings for this Committee, was agreed by Full Council on 24 September 2020. Members are therefore requested to note the following confirmed dates in their diaries. Where the Committee is requested to undertake pre-decision scrutiny, to secure the appropriate impact and maintain effective governance any comments and observations will need to be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member prior to the programmed Cabinet date.

2020/21	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
Committee	10 Nov	8 Dec	20 Jan	17 Feb	16 March	tbc	tbc
Cabinet	12 Nov	10 Dec	21 Jan	18 Feb	18 March	22 April	20 April

Legal Implications

20. 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

21. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the schedule of Policy Review & Performance (PRAP) Scrutiny Committee meeting dates for 2019/20.
- b. Agree that an informal task and finish research exercise proceeds, focusing on remote/home working.
- c. Approve the continuation of the Committee's Performance Panel, an extension of the Panel's work, and agree nominations to the Panel.

Davina Fiore
Director of Governance & Legal Services
7 October 2020