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**ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider options and seek Members' approval for the Committee's 2024/25 planned programme of work.

**Background**

2. Good scrutiny practice and the Council's Constitution empowers each Scrutiny Committee to set its own work programme for the forthcoming year (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7). At this time each year the Committee is tasked with agreeing a work programme 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.

**Role of the Committee**

3. Members are reminded that the Committee's Terms of Reference confer upon it 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 Corporate Planning, Improvement and Performance, Finance, Digital Strategy/ICT, Human Resources, Governance, Legal Services, Property, Procurement, Customer Services and Cardiff's Public Services Board.

4. The Council's organisational structure means the Committee's responsibilities fall within four of its 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; the Central Transport Services (CTS); Commissioning and Procurement; Customer & Digital Services (including 24/7 services, C2C; Digital Services and ICT); Finance (including Information Governance); and Human Resources People Services.
- The **People and Communities Directorate** includes Policy Performance and Improvement (including partnerships, research and insight and engagement); Cabinet Office; Communications, Media and Design; Bi-lingual Cardiff.
- The **Economic Development Directorate** includes County Estates (including both the operational and non-operational portfolios), Corporate Health & Safety, Strategic Estates; Property Services; Design, Construction and Maintenance.
- The **Governance and Legal Services Directorate** falls within the Committee's remit in its entirety and comprises; Monitoring officer duties; Protocol Office; Committee & Members' Services; Electoral Services; Glamorgan Archives; Legal Services; and Scrutiny Services.

5. Full Council has approved the 2024/25 meeting dates for this committee up to May 2025 as follows:

- Wed 11 September
- Wed 9 October
- Wed 13 November
- Wed 4 December
- Wed 15 January
- Wed 26 February 10am start – *budget scrutiny*.

- Wed 12 March
- Wed 9 April
- Wed 7 May
- June 2025 – tbc
- July 2025-tbc

6. Members were recently notified of an additional committee to be held on **Tuesday 24 September at 4.30pm** with a specific remit for pre-decision scrutiny of the Core Office Full Business Case.
7. The Committee will therefore potentially meet twelve times between September 2024 and July 2025 and must programme topics for its forward work programme accordingly.
8. Scrutiny is a well-established function of the Council's decision-making process and the way in which it delivers services. It plays an essential role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness and the main roles of the five Scrutiny Committees are:
  - i. Holding to account the Cabinet and officers, as decision-makers.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. Providing a voice for citizens.

## **Work Programming**

9. The Committee work programme is routinely developed throughout the summer in preparation for approval at its September meeting. It can be updated and amended continually during the year in order to respond to urgent priorities, policy developments, and unplanned pre-decision opportunities as a consequence of revisions to the Cabinet Forward Plan. It also has to remain flexible and responsive in order to cover any urgent issues occurring throughout the year.

10. The list of options is attached at **Appendix 1**. It includes suggestions gathered from Members, Senior Managers and Strategic Plans, together with work carried over from the 2023/24 programme, earmarked for further monitoring in 2024/25. Members will have an opportunity to discuss and agree this list.
11. This list at Appendix 1, with provisional indications of priority assigned by the Chair, was circulated in August. Members were invited to suggest any changes to the priority assigned. Where items are marked **red**, they will definitely be programmed, **amber** the committee will aim to scrutinise, and **green** will only be scrutinised if several red and amber items slip.
12. There are more items listed than can be programmed. As a guide, to ensure effective scrutiny two-three substantive items can be programmed per meeting. Best practice aims for meetings to be 2.5 hours or less, where possible.
13. The list of topics has been grouped as *Corporate/Strategic, Performance, Participation & Engagement, Partnership Scrutiny, Resources -Financial, Resources - Human Resources, Resources - other, and Governance & Legal Services*. Where dates are provided, they are as indicated by the published Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Plan or by the lead officer. At the bottom of the list, as a reminder, are the key priorities listed in the Corporate Plan 2024/27 for which the Committee has substantive scrutiny responsibility, notwithstanding its overarching responsibility for the Council's key strategic and financial planning documents.
14. Where Members consider the scrutiny of a topic requires a more in-depth approach then it may either take the form of a *Short Scrutiny* using a whole formal meeting, with extended recommendations to Cabinet in the form of a letter or may take the form of a *task and finish* group informally outside of Committee.
15. In the interests of good public engagement, the Committee's Forward Plan is published on the Council website, refreshed on a quarterly basis.

## **Way Forward**

16. Members are invited to discuss the options listed at **Appendix 1**, agree priorities, and whether any further scoping of work is required. The final programme will then be drafted.

## **Legal Implications**

17. 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**

18. 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:

- i. Agree its work programme for 2024/25, having prioritised its work from topics listed at **Appendix 1**. This will become the outline work programme for the Committee, notwithstanding matters that arise throughout the year that are unknown to the Committee at this point in time.
  
- ii. Note that the work programme will be updated on a quarterly basis and published on the Council's website.

**DEBBIE MARLES**

Director of Governance & Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

5 September 2024