

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

28 October 2014

Developing the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

1. Purpose

To report the outcomes of the meetings between the Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and relevant Executive members and Associate Directors. Meetings considered the Council's priorities for the Environment Select Committee and the potential future work priorities of this Committee.

To propose some Committee work priorities for discussion, prior to referral to the O&S Management Committee for endorsement.

2. Background

Following local elections in 2013 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee supported discussions between the select committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman with the relevant Cabinet members, portfolio-holders and directors to gain a more informed understanding about Executive priorities. Outcomes from these were reported at committee and, where agreed, formed the single overview and scrutiny forward work programme. This approach is being repeated this year with the meetings taking place September to November.

3. Proposed work priorities

Having considered the priorities of the Executive the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would like to propose the work areas below as Committee priorities approximately for the next 12 months. In some cases further work is needed to refine a topic's scope and decide how it will be approached. This list is intended to aid discussion and develop this committee's element of the O&S forward work programme, prior to endorsement by the O&S Management Committee.

The Chairman and Vice-chairman have been mindful that greater value can be added by focusing on a few key areas than by attempting to cover everything. They have also referred to the criteria listed below when selecting the suggested topics:

- Is the topic considered a priority by the Executive? Is it included within the Council's Business Plan 2013-17?

- Is the topic a major area of Council spend?
- Can the Council have a real impact on this issue? (i.e. is it a national issue or decision that is largely beyond the Council's control)?
- Does the topic affect a large number of people or a smaller number of people very significantly?

4. Waste

The main area of work for the Waste Team will be on the new contract for waste services for the next 12 months, that will be going out to tender and is due to be awarded in May 2015. On this basis it was proposed that scrutiny's role may include:

- Involvement post tender to review the bids
- To receive regular reports during the 2 year mobilisation plan phase
- Review the responses to the garden waste collection consultation and the financial modelling report that will be going to Cabinet in December

In addition, it was deemed appropriate for the Waste Task Group to be reconvened for the purpose of reviewing the communications that go out to householders regarding waste and recycling, in particular plastics and where there is a change in service. This should be done with reference to the role of communications, given the ongoing budgetary pressures and ensuring the communications that are employed provide best value and achieves its purpose. The Task Group may also wish to complete some more detailed work around the Hills Annual Report when available.

The **Business Plan 2013-17** includes the following relevant outcome:

"3. ... A large and growing proportion of waste is recycled."

This Outcome is underpinned by the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Wiltshire Council Waste Management Strategy 2012.

5. Planning

It was expressed that the Committee may usefully consider the following:

- How the Council will operate post adoption of the Core Strategy (with the exception of neighbourhood plans, which will be the responsibility of town and parish councils)

- What would be the best strategy to inform and engage with town and parish council members about the new planning system and the process of neighbourhood planning?
- What are the learning points from neighbourhood plan pilot schemes?
- The implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan

The **Business Plan 2013-17** includes the following outcome:
 “3 – Everyone in Wiltshire lives in a high quality environment”

It is stated that to achieve this outcome “we will use our planning powers to protect the countryside and maintain the vitality of market towns and local high streets – we will implement the Wiltshire Core Strategy to help town and parish councils plan the future of their areas through the neighbourhood planning process.”

6. Highways and Transport

The three priorities that the Cabinet member identified in the discussions were as follows:

- Investing in highways;
- Passenger transport, including bus concessions; and
- Parking.

It was felt that the subject of parking was adequately covered via the current scrutiny Parking Review Task Group which has had early engagement in helping to develop the consultation that will be going out shortly, along with a scrutiny representative appointed to the Project Board.

The **Business Plan 2013-17** includes the following Outcome and Key Action:

Outcome: “3 – Everyone in Wiltshire lives in a high quality environment... Wiltshire’s transport system meets the needs of local residents and businesses. The transport system promotes sustainable transport in larger settlements and along Wiltshire’s main commuting corridors.”

Key action: “1. Invest additional money 2014–2017 to reduce the historic backlog in highways maintenance.”

This Outcome is underpinned by the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Local Transport Plan 2011- 2026.

7. Proposals

1. To approve the following topics as the work priorities for the Committee going forward and refer them to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for endorsement.
 - New waste contract
 - Communications to householders regarding waste and recycling
 - Neighbourhood Planning
 - Gypsy and Traveller Plan
 - Business post-adoption of the Core Strategy
 - Investing in highways
 - Passenger transport
 - Car parking
 - Flooding
2. To note that the following Task Groups will be coming to a close at the next meeting:
 - Community Infrastructure Levy Task Group
 - 20mph Policy Task Group
 - Adoptable Estates Task Group
3. To reconvene the Waste Task Group, with the addition of a new member on account of Cllr Alan Hill stepping down from the Task Group, to look at communications going to householders on waste collections and recycling and an in- depth look at the Hills Annual Report.
4. To note that Military Civilian Integration and Local Enterprise Partnership Task Groups will be overseen by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at least during the early stages.

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