

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 5th February 2015

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PART I **FOR COMMENT & DECISION**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to identify priorities and topics for its Work Programme for the 2014/15 municipal year.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

2.1 That the Committee:

- 1) identify the major issues it would like to cover in the 2014/15 municipal year;
- 2) agree, where possible, timing for specific agenda items during the 2014/15 municipal year; and
- 3) consider whether there are any items which it would like to request one of the Scrutiny Panels add to their Work Programmes for the municipal year.

3. **Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

- **Economy and Skills**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Housing**
- **Regeneration and Environment**
- **Safer Communities**

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee leads the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

4. **Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold those that make decisions to account and help Slough's residents by suggesting improvements that the Council or its partners could make.
- 4.2 Prioritising issues is difficult. The Scrutiny function has limited support resources, and therefore it is important that the work scrutiny chooses to do adds value.
- 4.3 There are three key elements that make up the responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- provide transparency and public accountability for key documents relating to the financial management and performance of the Council;
 - scrutinise significant proposals which are scheduled for, or have been taken as, a Cabinet/Officer delegated decision; and
 - strategic shaping of service improvements relating to the Cabinet Portfolios of Finance & Strategy and Performance & Accountability
- 4.4 In considering what the O&S Committee should look at under points two and three above, Members are invited to consider the following questions:
- *To what extent does this issue impact on the lives of Slough's residents?*
 - *Is this issue strategic and pertinent across the Borough?*
 - *What difference will it make if O&S looks at this issue?*
- 4.5 The topics listed include those suggested by Committee Members during the 2014/15 municipal year.

5. **Suggested Topics**

- 5.1 It is generally recommended that a Scrutiny Committee should aim to look at no more than two or three items in any one meeting. This limited number can prove challenging, but does allow the Committee to delve down into specific subject areas and fully scrutinise the work that is being undertaken.
- 5.2 This list is summarised in Appendix A, including a list of, as yet, unprogrammed items
- 5.4 This will be a continuous process, and flexibility and responsiveness vital to success. It is important not to over-pack the Committee's agenda at the start of the year, which will not allow the flexibility for the Committee to adapt to take into consideration issues that have arisen during the year.

6. **Resource Implications**

- 6.1 Overview and Scrutiny is supported by 1 FTE member of staff. This officer is responsible for support the O&S Committee and three Scrutiny Panels. Therefore, this is a finite resource and consideration must be given, in conjunction with the work programmes for the three Scrutiny Panels, as to how the resource is used during the year.

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee plays a key role in ensuring the transparency and accountability of the Council's financial and performance management, and strategic direction. The proposals contained within this report highlight some of the key elements which the Committee must or may wish to scrutinise over the coming municipal year.
- 7.2 This report is intended to provide the Committee with information and guidance on how best to organise its work programme for the 2014/15 municipal year. As previously stated, this is an ongoing process and there will be flexibility to amend the programme as the year progresses, however, it is important that the Committee organises its priorities at the start of the year.

8. **Appendices Attached**

A - Draft Work Programme for 2014/15 Municipal Year

9. **Background Papers**

None.