

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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WARDS: All

PART I **FOR CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to identify priorities and topics for its Work Programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.

2. Recommendations/Proposed Action

2.1 That the OSC:

- 1) identify the major issues it would like to cover in the 2016/17 municipal year;
- 2) agree, where possible, timing for specific agenda items during the 2016/17 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. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy priorities. The OSC, alongside the 3 Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

3.2 The work of scrutiny also reflects the priorities of the Five Year Plan, as follows:

- Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow, and stay
- There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough
- The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living, and cultural opportunities
- Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley

- More people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs
- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances
- The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised
- The Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation

3.3 Overview and Scrutiny is a process by which decision-makers are accountable to local people, via their elected representatives for improving outcomes relating to all priorities for the Borough and its residents. Scrutiny seeks to influence those who make decisions by considering the major issues affecting the Borough and making recommendations about how services can be improved.

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 OSC 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?*

5. **Suggested Topics**

5.1 It is generally recommended that a Scrutiny Committee should aim to look at no more than 3 or 4 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 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 2016/17 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 2016/17 Municipal Year

9. **Background Papers**

None.