

Meeting COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

Portfolio Area

Date 1 April 2019



COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To agree the Scrutiny Work Programme for the Select Committee for the new Municipal Year.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Members' feedback on ideas for improving Scrutiny (see section 4) be noted.
- 2.2 That having considered ideas put forward by individual Members, and from the public (see section 5), the Committee determines the subject matters to be added to a 'long list' work programme of potential Scrutiny reviews items for 2019/2020.
- 2.3 That consideration is given to including in the work programme, specific monitoring or review of recommendations from previous studies (see section 6.2).
- 2.4 That the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meetings to carry out policy development work identified so far for the Committee (see section 7.1) be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committees are asked to draft their work programme ahead of the new Municipal year in order that work may begin as soon as the Committees are appointed at Annual Council. Any outstanding and unfinished studies, where applicable, might also need to be included.
- 3.2 During January and February 2019 Members provided feedback on the current Scrutiny activity and on ideas for the Work Programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.
- 3.3 When considering what work to undertake in the coming year, Members may wish to consider if the matter in question is of a cross-cutting nature and might lend itself to being considered jointly with another Select Committee.
- 3.4 Officers have also been requested to bring to the Committee's attention, likely Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PHAG) policy development items that the Select Committee might be requested to consider and comment on before reports there are submitted to the Executive.
- 3.5 The Committee may also consider whether specific time should be allocated for monitoring or review of recommendations of previous studies. It is recognised that there is a limited dedicated officer resource for the scrutiny work of three Scrutiny Committees and therefore it is important to ensure that work plans are in place in order that the call on those resources and on each Committee's time on all its activities are prioritised and evenly spread across the year.

4 MEMBERS' IDEAS FOR IMPROVING SCRUTINY

- 4.1 In January 2019, all Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees were emailed a survey to gauge views of the Scrutiny work undertaken and ideas for future studies. The following summary is based on the ten replies received from the 22 Members who are on one or more of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.2 Members were asked to comment on current scrutiny activity and any issues that could be addressed to improve the current arrangements. Members provided challenge around the following areas:
 - 4.2.1 Scrutiny of the way that we do Scrutiny.
 - 4.2.2 Involvement of opposition members in the Scrutiny process – should opposition members occasionally be able to chair some Scrutiny functions like working parties?
- 4.3 Members have also previously provided feedback following Scrutiny Member Training, this included the following points:
 - The scrutiny process must be more Member-led and Members must take greater ownership
 - There must be time made available to engage in scrutiny investigations and information gathering. Time committed must be utilised efficiently
 - Members need to work on prioritisation

- Members need to work on identifying sources of verbal and written evidence and assessing the value of them.
- Members should review decisions post implementation
- Members must feel able to challenge evidence presented
- Any papers, reports and evidence must be presented in a timely way
Members can say that they won't consider issues presented late

4.4 As part of the 2019 Members' Survey, Members did not provide any comment and suggestions for Scrutiny Member Training.

5 MEMBERS' AND RESIDENTS' IDEAS FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY REVIEWS

5.1 Scrutiny Members' Suggestions for Future Scrutiny Review Items

5.1.1 The following issues have been raised by Members as potential Scrutiny review items:

5.1.2 **The length of time that Housing assets (Bathrooms and Kitchens) go without being replaced?** **Officer comment:** A written response to this question can be provided. (Lead AD – Housing & Investment)

5.1.3 **Use of LCB funding** - How much LCB funding is used to support costs incurred by community groups to pay for garages or for events or projects created by SBC for public use/attendance or to fund central budget shortfall? **Officer comment:** A response to this question can be provided. LCB's were thoroughly reviewed in 2016 and the outcome of that review was revisited in 2017/18. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)

5.1.4 **Homelessness** – What are the underlying causes as this is on the increase again locally? Look at the current procedures and the homeless prevention strategy (x2 Members asked to review this). **Officer comment:** A review of the Homelessness Strategy was completed June 2013 and was revisited for monitoring in January 2015 & again in March 2015. A presentation was provided to Members in June 2017. This continues to be a key issue and there are links to wider work being undertaken in conjunction with HCC Public Health and the Hertfordshire CE's Group. An Executive report is scheduled for 2019 preceded by a Portfolio Holders Advisory Group (PHAG) meeting in 2019 also there will be a Stakeholder Survey as part of the process to develop the new strategy in 2019/20. (Lead AD – Housing & Investment)

5.1.5 **SLL** – Members wish to consider this ahead of the contract retender process starting in 2020 – links with future development of the facilities at Fairlands Valley Park. **Officer comment:** Subject to Members consideration and the preferred way forward the new Leisure Management Contract is due to commence in April 2023. It could be helpful to run a leisure management option session, perhaps with industry specialists to outline the options for the Council ahead of the current contract ending in April 2023. This could be delivered via one session later in the municipal year. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)

5.1.6 **Sports & Leisure across the town** – What provision is there? Who provides it? How are the Council involved? Are costs monitored? How many people are involved? **Officer comment:** Subject to the development of an

appropriate scope a review of the combined private and public leisure and cultural services offer could be helpful to inform the development of SBC's future Leisure Management arrangements and could contribute more broadly to the Cultural Strategy. We would need to consider how this could be resourced though because the priority project for 19/20 is the progression of the new Wet & Dry Leisure Centre scheme to final business case stage as agreed by the Executive in December 2018. With this in mind Members may wish to consider focussing attention on the business case for the new Leisure Centre and the scope for the review of the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)

- 5.1.7 **Museum Review** – Whatever happened to the Museum review? Is there anything likely to happen in, say, the next five years? (x2 Members asked to revisit this) **Officer comment:** The Museum review was last considered in 2016 (following a review in 2012 and a revisit in 2014). A further review would need to take account of the Exec (in December 2018) asking officers to look at options for SALC. As noted above the Assistant Director, Communities & Neighbourhoods may wish to seek Members support in developing the scope for such a review. We could focus this around the museum ambitions featured in the Cultural Strategy and to gain support for the First New Town's Museum idea and how this might relate to broader leisure/cultural facilities plans. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)
- 5.1.8 **Neighbourhood Wardens** – (x2 Members asked to review this) and the Neighbourhood Strategy in relation to how views of interested parties are being included (not revisit resident engagement) **Officer comment:** More broadly a review of the Cooperative Neighbourhood Management (CNM) programme will be presented to the Executive at its meeting in March 2019 which would precede the start of the new Municipal Year. An update on the proposed Area Based Working model could be provided via a one-off meeting in Quarter 4 2019-20. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)
- 5.1.9 **The Healthy Hub** – systems, operation and effectiveness. **Officer comment:** It is suggested that this could be a key focus for the 2019/20 annual public health session. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)
- 5.1.10 **The Community Centre Review** (x3 Members asked to review this) **Officer comment:** The Committee will see the report on Community Centres before it goes to the Executive in 2019 at a PHAG meeting in 2019 (to be scheduled). (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)
- 5.1.11 **The roll out of the new play areas across the town** (x2 Members asked to review this) **Officer comment:** An update to the Committee can be provided. (Lead ADs – Communities & Neighbourhoods & Stevenage Direct Services)
- 5.1.12 **Revisit Damp & Mould/Arts & Culture Strategy** **Officer comment:** The Committee received an update on Damp and Mould in 2018. With regards to the Cultural Strategy it is relatively early days so if Members wish to review progress this could be scheduled for quarter 4. (Lead AD – Housing & Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods)
- 5.1.13 **Fly-tipping of bulky goods** – Who pays for fly-tipped white goods at SBC flat blocks? Does the Council prosecute? If not, why not? (also raised with the E&E Select Committee) **Officer comment:** The Assistant Director

Housing and Investment can provide Members with a written response to this issue to explain the current arrangements. (Lead AD – Housing & Investment)

- 5.1.14 **The range, choice and style of live entertainment offered at the Gordon Craig Theatre** (This was raised for the O&S Committee but would be a matter to be considered by the Community Select Committee – and linked to 5.1.5, 5.1.6 & 5.1.7 above). **Officer comment:** It is suggested that officers confirm the current contractual obligations in this regard in the first instance to help inform the development of any potential scope. Alternatively this could be considered by way of a general update on the Cultural Strategy. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods)

- 5.1.15 **The role of Community Development Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens**. (This was raised for the O&S Committee but would be a matter to be considered by the Community Select Committee – and linked to 5.1.8 above)

- 5.1.16 **Fairlands Valley Park Leisure Facilities – Officer comment:** This is linked to a piece of work started in 2019 with the E&E Select Committee. The E&E Select Committee have committed to look at the Parks and Open Space Strategy in 2019-20 and would like the CSC to consider the discrete area of Fairlands Valley Park facilities and how these link to the wider P&OS Strategy. This could be worked on separately and then a joint meeting could be held to link the reviews. (Lead AD – Communities & Neighbourhoods & Stevenage Direct Services)

5.2 **Statutory and Standing Items**

- 5.2.1 Crime and Disorder Committee (Statutory Committee)

- 5.2.2 Public Health Meeting (Standing Item)

5.3 **Items that are on the existing work programme but have not been delivered so far and deferred for 2019-20:**

- 5.3.1 **Community Neighbourhood Management** Comment from the Assistant Director Communities & Neighbourhoods – Rob Gregory: As detailed above at 5.1.8 a paper is being brought to the Executive regarding the CNM programme in March 2019.

5.4 **Issues Raised by the Public**

- 5.4.1 None so far but any issues identified from the public via the Council's social media and the website will be updated at the meeting.

- 5.4.2 Members are asked to consider, which of the above items they wish to include in their work programme and which approach they favour to review the items, based on those suggested at paragraphs 4.4 and 4.4.1, namely a more in-depth review or a one-off discussion item?

- 5.4.3 Members should note that whatever issues they agree to be scrutinised as a main review item would be subject to a full scoping process and subsequently a scoping document would need to be agreed by the Committee at a future meeting. Other items, which can be addressed by a briefing and discussion item, may not require a full scoping document.

5.5 **Work Programme Schedule for 2019/20**

- 5.5.1 When the Scrutiny Work Programme is agreed by the Community Select Committee, the Scrutiny Officer will, using the agreed dates for generic Select Committee meetings in the Calendar of Meetings, draw together a work programme schedule for the 2019/20 Municipal Year, including scrutiny review meetings, monitoring of previous reviews selected by Members and policy development meetings, which will be circulated to Members, and electronic diary invites will be sent to all Community Select Committee Members.

5.6 Alignment of Scrutiny with the Strategic Leadership Team

- 5.6.1 It is important that the three Scrutiny Committees (Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Community Select Committee and the Environment and Economy Select Committee) are aligned to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). As such, the following Scrutiny Committees are covered by the relevant nine Assistant Directors and SLT areas:

5.6.2 Customer – Community Select Committee:

Assistant Director for Housing and Investment (Jaine Cresser) and the Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods (Rob Gregory)

5.6.3 Place – Environment and Economy Select Committee:

Assistant Director for Direct Services (Craig Miller), Assistant Director for Regeneration (Pat Lewis), Assistant Director for Housing Development (Ash Ahmed) and Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory (Zayd Al-Jawad) (Interim Chris Berry)

5.6.4 Transformation and Support – Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation (Richard Protheroe), Assistant Director for Finance and Estates (Clare Fletcher) and Assistant Director for Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology (Caron Starkey interim AD)

5.6.5 Role of the Assistant Directors and Scrutiny

- 5.6.6 The Assistant Directors will take a leadership role in assisting and supporting the relevant Scrutiny Committees and specific reviews that align to their area of expertise. The Assistant Directors will support each review through its various stages, from scoping of reviews, attending Chair and Vice-Chair briefings and offering support to the Scrutiny Officer in providing written and oral evidence for reviews as well as identifying 'Critical Friends' and other review witnesses. The Assistant Directors will liaise with the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder(s) and the Senior Leadership Team (CE and Assistant CE's).
- 5.6.7 Strategic Director, Matt Partridge from the Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for the Scrutiny function, deputised by Strategic Director Tom Pike.

6 MONITORING REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Committee may consider there is a need to undertake some follow-up work on recommendations arising from previous studies. It may be

considered sufficient to simply request update briefings from the relevant Heads of Service to be circulated to Members at appropriate intervals. However, if the Committee requires more detailed consideration or examination of the progress of previous recommendations, this should be factored into its work programme.

6.2 Reports within the remit of this Committee that have been issued over the last five years or have been revisited within the last five years are as follows:

- Housing Allocations Review (Completed 7 February 2018, Executive response 6 April 2018). Members are invited to schedule a report back on the actions linked to the recommendations in the 2019/20 Municipal Year.
- Community Transport Review (Completed January 2014, Executive response May 2014). Members could schedule a report back for monitoring of recommendation agreed actions in 2019/20
- Decent Homes Review (Completed January 2014, Executive response September 2014). Members considered a report back monitoring the recommendations and agreed actions on 23 October 2018
- Community Safety Action Plan (Statutory review meeting, March 2014, November 2014, March 2015, November 2015, March 2016, March 2017, March 2018 and is scheduled for a meeting in March 2019)
- Public Health Discussion Item (annual review meeting April 2014, March 2015, October 2016, Sustainable Transformation Plans November 2017 and February 2019)
- Museum Review (Completed November 2012, Executive response January 2013, revisited for monitoring of recommendation agreed actions November 2014 & again in October 2016)
- Homelessness Review (Completed June 2013, Executive response August 2013, revisited for monitoring of recommendation agreed actions January 2015 & revised update March 2015, Rough Sleepers and Homelessness presentation June 2017)
- Local Private Rented Sector (Completed March 2015, Executive response June 2015, was scheduled to be revisited for monitoring of recommendations and agreed actions in March 2017 but was deferred to June 2017)
- Local Community Budgets Review (Completed March 2016, Executive response June 2016, revisited for monitoring of recommendation agreed actions Summer 2017)
- Damp and Mould in Stevenage Homes (Completed January 2017, Executive Member Response March 2017 – In addition, the Community Select Committee agreed to consider an update report on the performance of the service following improved monitoring arrangements and delivery of the Damp and Condensation Strategy in the autumn of 2017. This was deferred until 2 October 2018, when the Committee received an update document)

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ADVISORY GROUP - POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR 2019/2020

7.1 Following consultation with the Assistant Directors for Housing and Investment (Jaine Cresser), Community and Neighbourhoods (Rob Gregory) and Stevenage Direct Services (Craig Miller), the following matters have been identified for potential Policy Development to be undertaken with the relevant Portfolio Holders during the 2019/2020 Municipal Year:

- Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy, scheduled for Executive in July 2019, PHAG meeting in June 2019
- Housing Older Persons Strategy, scheduled for Executive in July 2019, PHAG meeting in June 2019
- Housing Service Charge Review, scheduled for Executive in December 2019, PHAG meeting in October/November 2019
- Rent Policy, scheduled for Executive in January 2020, PHAG meeting in December 2019
- Tenancy Strategy, to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20
- Customer Strategy, to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20

7.1.1 The above schedule is subject to change and Members will be contacted with a meeting invitation closer to the PHAG meeting. Any further issues that the Assistant Directors can give notice of for Portfolio Holders Advisory Groups, Policy Development work in 2019/20 will be advised throughout the year.

7.2 These meetings will continue to be clerked by Constitutional Services but are private informal meetings Chaired by the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder and supported by the relevant Assistant Director.

8 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

8.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8.1.2 A small budget of £1000 is held to support the work of the Select Committees in their research and study.

Legal Implications

8.2. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The recommendations made in this report are to facilitate the Committees to fully undertake this role.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.3. There are no direct Equalities and Diversity implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Specific equalities and diversity implications are considered during each scrutiny review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

All documents that have been used in compiling this report, that may be available to the public, i.e. they do not contain exempt information, should be listed here:

- BD1 Submissions from Councillors and the Public.