
Please find attached the Report and Appendix in respect Item No. 6 on the agenda for the above meeting

6.	Scrutiny Review Work Programme (Pages 3 - 12) Consider the Scrutiny Review Work Programme report. (Copy attached.)	30 mins
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FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Report by Clerk to the Council

SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE

1 June 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides further details of those subjects submitted for consideration for review by the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee and seeks approval for their inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme to be recommended to Council.

1.2 At its meeting on 20 April 2023, the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee considered the subjects which had been submitted for possible inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme and agreed which ones to take forward, with further information on each review to be provided by the Council's Management Team.

1.3 There are 9 topics being taken forward for inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Programme:

1. Public Toilet Provision in the Scottish Borders
2. Employability Service Public Engagement
3. Private Sector Housing Grants and Assessment Process
4. Industrial Estates in the Scottish Borders
5. Covid Recovery Funds
6. Community Access to Schools out-with school hours
7. Shared Lives
8. E-Fleet
9. See Hear Grant Funding

1.4 The Appendix to this report provides information on each Review, including a short description, what aspects of each topic are to be assessed, and proposals for how each review is to be carried out.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Committee:-

(a) AGREES the Scrutiny Review Work Programme as detailed in the Appendix.

- (b) NOTES that this Review Work Programme may be added to at a later date, subject to approval by Scottish Borders Council.**
- * (c) AGREES to RECOMMEND to Scottish Borders Council that the Scrutiny Review Work Programme as detailed in the Appendix is approved.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 20 April 2023, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee considered the subjects which had been submitted for possible inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme and agreed which ones to take forward. Members further agreed that the Council's Management Team would be asked to provide further details, including outcomes for such reviews, for further consideration by the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee prior to it recommending its Review Work Programme for approval by Scottish Borders Council.
- 3.2 In providing further information, consideration has been given to the potential scale of each review, the resources required to take it forward, the timing of such a review and the method of taking the review forward i.e. by way of an information hearing, a focussed hearing or by setting up a Working Group. The breadth of some reviews will need to be taken into consideration, as will the number of reviews being undertaken at any given time, to ensure that Members and Officers do not become over-burdened and resources are not stretched too thinly. Depending on the subject matter, officers from various Services of the Council can provide support to Scrutiny & Petitions hearings and Working Groups.
- 3.3 In keeping with the remit of the Committee, there will be a strategic focus for each review, with information provided to allow scrutiny of delivery against a plan or policy, or benefit realisation against a target.

4 PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEWS

- 4.1 There are 9 topics being taken forward for inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Programme:
 1. Public Toilet Provision in the Scottish Borders
 2. Employability Service Public Engagement
 3. Private Sector Housing Grants and Assessment Process
 4. Industrial Estates in the Scottish Borders
 5. Covid Recovery Funds
 6. Community Access to Schools out-with school hours
 7. Shared Lives
 8. E-Fleet
 9. See Hear Grant Funding
- 4.2 The Appendix to this report provides information on each Review, including a short description, what aspects of each topic are to be assessed, and what will happen thereafter. At this stage it is suggested that no Working Groups are established due to the pressure on officers from other work, but that information hearings are held, which may in turn lead to the formation of a Working Group to consider a subject in more depth, if that proves necessary. For information hearings, once the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee has considered the information before it, Members will then consider whether they are satisfied with that information, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

4.3 In terms of timescales, it is suggested that the reviews are taken forward through information hearings, thus:

- Covid Recovery Funds – August 2023
- Industrial Estates in the Scottish Borders – October 2023
- Private Sector Housing Grants and Assessment Process – December 2023
- Community Access to Schools out-with School Hours – March 2024
- Employability Service Public Engagement – March 2024
- Shared Lives – May 2024
- E-Fleet Impact – late Summer 2024
- See Hear Grant Funding – Autumn 2024
- Public Toilet Provision in the Scottish Borders – Winter 2024/25

4.4 As previously advised, Members should note that this Programme of Reviews is not final and can be added to, subject to Council approval, at any given time over the coming years as further subjects for review arise.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that if the Committee does not produce a work programme of subjects for review that it will not fulfil its remit in the Scheme of Administration. By requesting further details from the Council's Management Team, the Committee will have guidance on potential outcomes and parameters for such reviews.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

The Council has a statutory obligation to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation) and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not. This involves tackling prejudice and building understanding. Additionally, where proposals are "strategic", the Fairer Scotland Duty requires us to show that we have actively considered how we can reduce socio-economic inequalities in the decisions that we make and to publish a short written assessment on how we have done this. At the current stage, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee is finalising the details of the subjects it wishes to include in its Review Programme. Once these subjects have been confirmed and the Programme agreed by Council, an IIA will be completed for each Review subject, as necessary.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

When the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee is considering specific subjects as part of its Review Programme, each subject will be considered as required against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 **Climate Change**

When the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee is considering specific subjects as part of its Review Programme, each subject will be considered as required for its impact on Climate Change.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

When the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee is considering specific subjects as part of its Review Programme, each subject will be considered as required in terms of Rural Proofing.

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report. When the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee is considering specific subjects as part of its Review Programme, each subject will be considered as required in terms of Data Protection.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Acting Chief Finance Officer, the Acting Chief Corporate Governance Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), and Corporate Communications have been consulted on this report, and comments received have been incorporated.

Approved by

Jenny Wilkinson

Clerk to the Council

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: Scrutiny & Petitions Committee, 20 April 2023

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY PROPOSED REVIEWS

1. PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS (Director lead – John Curry)

- 1.1 A request for a review of Public Toilet provision was submitted by Cllr Sinclair and a further request was also received from Stow Community Council to review the closure of the public toilet in Stow. After discussing the requests at its meeting on 20 April 2023, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee agreed to include both requests into the one review to cover public toilet provision in the Scottish Borders. At its meeting on 30 March 2023, Scottish Borders Council approved the future provision of public toilets across the Borders by providing one Council facility per each major existing settlement; and to undertake a condition survey which would lead to enhancements through capital investment (in 2024/25). There was currently additional provision in shops, filling stations, pubs, cafes and non-Council operated visitor attractions across the region and a mapping exercise would be carried out, as part of a co-ordinated communications strategy, to improve awareness and online and physical signposting of facilities for residents, tourists and visitors. The Council would also facilitate community-led initiatives to operate new or additional toilet facilities, although this would not include grant funding communities to take on redundant Council facilities. Where there were gaps in provision, the Council would also consider however, what support could be provided to operate community or business led 'Comfort Schemes' within the constraints of resource and available budget.
- 1.2 As the work to review and enhance the retained Council operated toilet facilities is due to take place over the next 2 years, it is considered best to allow this work to start, and then for Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to hold an Information Hearing to assess the following:
- The results of the surveys of SBC public toilets and the proposed enhancements
 - The results of the mapping exercise for toilet facilities open to the public
 - The communications/signage in place for public toilet facilities across the region
 - Complaints received by the Council on public toilet facilities (or the lack of facilities)
 - Any 'Comfort Scheme' facilities planned/in operation
- At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.
- 1.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Hearing is held in Winter 2024 to allow the work to be well advanced.

2. EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (Director lead – Jenni Craig)

- 2.1 A request for a review of how the Employability Service publicised its work within the Borders was submitted by Cllr Anderson. The Employment Support Service is an outcome focused service which provides support for those who may need additional help to find and sustain paid work e.g. care experienced young people, people with a learning and/or physical disability, people with a sensory impairment, people recovering from a mental illness, those who are homeless or under threat of being homeless, etc. The Employment Support Service offers a variety of services, all designed specifically to assist people in entering the workplace and moving on to working independently.
- 2.2 The Service is currently working on an updated communications plan and it is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:
- Current communications and marketing on the different SBC Employment services available
 - Partnership work and linking in with other organisations
 - Employers' engagement
 - Future developments

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

2.3 Timeline – due to the current work on the updated communications plan, it is suggested that the Information Hearing is held in March 2024.

3. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS (Director Lead – Stuart Easingwood; Officer leads – Gwyneth Lennox and Donna Bogdanovich)

3.1 A request for a review of the Private Sector Housing Grants and Assessment Process was submitted by Cllr Robson. If a person is disabled or lives with someone who has a disability, they may be entitled to a grant to help adapt their home. Mandatory grants are available to provide structural alterations to help meet the needs of a disabled person. These grants allow for up to 80% funding of the total cost of any alteration and any grant level about 80% is calculated on a means tested basis. All requests for grant assistance are assessed through the Social Work service, and an Occupational Therapist will carry out the assessment to see if the individual is eligible for a grant. A priority system is in operation to ensure those with critical needs receive services first.

3.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The process involved within the Council in applying for a housing grant, the OT assessment and arranging the work
- The budget and resources available each year
- How clients are kept informed

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

3.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information Hearing is held in October 2023.

4. INDUSTRIAL ESTATES IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS (Lead Director(s) – John Curry, Jenni Craig)

4.1 A request for a review of the Unused Trading Estate on Lennel Road, Coldstream, was submitted by Coldstream Community Council. The request advised that this site had no tenants and had stood unused for over 10 years. Understanding was sought from SBC about future plans for the site to ensure the grant monies used to create the site were not wasted and actually generated a return and jobs for the community. After discussing the request at its meeting on 20 April 2023, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee agreed to expand this review to cover current and future use of industrial estates across the Borders.

4.2 A briefing had been provided to the Leaders' Group earlier this year and a report will be coming to Council later this year on Business Parks and Economic Development land that sets out the priorities and provides progress reports on development, demand, occupancy, etc. It is suggested that an information report is provided to the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee detailing what work is being proposed prior to the report being considered at Council.

4.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the information report is brought in October 2023.

5. COVID RECOVERY FUNDS (Lead Officer – Suzy Douglas)

5.1 A request for review of the Scottish Government Grant Funding, including a full analysis of its purpose and use, was submitted by Cllr M. Douglas and a request for a review of the Council's Covid

Recovery Fund purpose and spend to date was also submitted by Cllr Thornton-Nicol. After discussing the requests at its meeting on 20 April 2023, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee agreed to cover both requests in the one review.

5.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The funding which had been received from Scottish Government throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the criteria for its spend, and the actual spend and outcomes achieved
- The funding which the Council had put into its Covid Recovery Fund, the criteria for its spend, and the actual spend and outcomes achieved

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

5.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information Hearing is held in August 2023.

6. COMMUNITY ACCESS TO SCHOOLS OUT-WITH SCHOOL HOURS (Lead Director(s) – Lesley Munro/Jenni Craig)

6.1 A request for review of Community access to school facilities out-with school hours, and the availability of janitorial staff to open/close the premises, was submitted by Cllr M. Douglas. Use of school sports facilities by the community is encouraged, and both indoor and outdoor spaces can be hired e.g. sports halls, artificial/grass pitches, dance studios, etc. Different facilities are available at individual schools.

6.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The availability of school facilities across the region for community use, including availability of janitorial staff to open/close premises
- The cost of hiring school facilities

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

6.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information hearing is held in March 2024.

7. SHARED LIVES (Lead Director – Chris Myers; Lead Officer – Simon Burt)

7.1 A request for review of the costs of the annual contract for Shared Lives, the performance against KPIs and whether savings were being met, was submitted by Cllr Thornton-Nicol. In Shared Lives, an adult or young person who needs long term support is matched with a carefully approved Shared Lives carer. Together, the person needing support and the Shared Lives carer share the carer's family and community life. Half of the people using Shared Lives move in with their chosen Shared Lives carer to live as part of their household; and half visit for day support or overnight breaks. People get safe, personal care and support, in a place which feels like home. They make friends and become more active, with improved social lives and greater involvement in their community.

7.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The services provided by Cornerstone Shared Lives
- Performance of outcomes/KPIs within the contract
- What savings have been achieved

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

7.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information hearing is held in May 2024.

8. E-FLEET IMPACT (Lead Directors – John Curry, Clair Hepburn)

8.1 A request for review of the impact of pool cars on the cost of reimbursing mileage to staff had been submitted by Cllr Thornton-Nicol. The Council has a fleet of electric vehicles for staff to book for site visits, etc. rather than using their own vehicles and claiming back mileage expenses.

8.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The cost of E-fleet vehicles, their locations and usage
- The amount of mileage being paid to staff for use of own vehicles

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

8.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information hearing is held in late summer 2024. This will allow costs from financial year 2023/24 to be analysed prior to the hearing.

9. SEE HEAR GRANT FUNDING (Lead Director – Stuart Easingwood; Lead Officer – Michael Curran)

9.1 A request for review of the impact of the grant funding for “See Hear” and the outcomes which are being achieved from this, had been submitted by Cllr Thornton-Nicol. See Hear is the national, strategic framework for sensory impairment in Scotland which promotes a seamless, multi-agency approach to assessment, care and support to people with a sensory impairment (hearing loss, sight loss, or dual sensory loss).

9.2 It is suggested that an Information Hearing is held which will allow the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee to assess the following:

- The services provided through See Hear
- Performance of outcomes

At the end of the hearing, the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee will then consider whether they are satisfied with the information received, whether they require further information, or whether they wish to make recommendations to either the Director or appropriate Committee. Such recommendations must be in line with current budget and resources.

9.3 Timeline – it is suggested that the Information hearing is held in Autumn 2024.