
SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Report by Service Director Customer & Communities

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 February 2020

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents an update on subjects for Scrutiny review and information as part of the future Scrutiny work programme, to be approved by Council.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 22 August 2019, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered potential subjects for inclusion in a new Scrutiny Work Programme, to be approved by Council. In total, 13 subjects were to be taken forward and the Appendix to this report gives further details of the scope of the proposed reviews/information briefings.
- 1.3 In addition, at the Council meeting held on 19 December 2019, Members agreed that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee would undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of the Best Value Action Plan which had been drafted in response to the findings of the Best Value assurance audit of the Council. This work would be taken forward separately from the Scrutiny Work Programme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee agrees to recommend to Council the subjects to be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme, as detailed in the Appendix to this report, and prioritise those subjects it wishes to deal with in 2020/21.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 22 August 2019, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered potential subjects for inclusion in a new Scrutiny Work Programme, to be approved by Council.
- 3.2 Two reviews had been suggested by Community Councils: a review of the Community Councillors Code of Conduct and a review of the status of the conservation area in Newcastleton. Neither of these reviews subjects were accepted for the Scrutiny work programme as they would be taken forward by other means. The review of the Community Councillors Code of Conduct would be carried out as part of the wider review of the Council's Scheme for Community Councils; and the review of the status of the conservation area in Newcastleton was contained in the Main Issues Report as part of the Local Development Plan.
- 3.3 The Council's Corporate Management Team had suggested 3 subjects for review, and at the meeting on 22 August a number of other subjects were circulated for consideration. Of these, Members agreed that the following would not be taken forward at this point:
- The role of SBC Economic Development in light of the new South of Scotland Agency – discussions were still at an early stage so this was premature.
 - EV Car and Charging Points Policy – the industry was changing rapidly and any policy would need to tie in to a national framework.
 - The roll out and use of iPads in schools – this would need to be assessed once all schools had received iPads and they were integrated into the curriculum.

4 SCRUTINY REVIEW/INFORMATION SUBJECTS

- 4.1 The following reviews/information briefings were considered by Members for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme, with further details of the scope of these reviews and approach included in the Appendix to this report.
- (1) Income Management Policy
 - (2) In-kind support for Common Ridings and Festivals
 - (3) Responsible Dog Ownership Policy
 - (4) Grass cutting regime
 - (5) Police Community Action Team
 - (6) Child Poverty
 - (7) Balance between 20mph speed limits and street architecture
 - (8) Council resources on Roads including White Lining
 - (9) Public transport and communities
 - (10) Rural Proofing Policy
 - (11) Recycling and Waste Policy
 - (12) Community contribution to the management and maintenance of public halls
 - (13) Following the Public Pound – grant evaluations
 - (14) Welfare Fund
- 4.2 In addition, at the Council meeting held on 19 December 2019, Members considered the findings of the 2019 Best Value assurance audit of Scottish Borders Council. In response to these findings, an Action Plan had been

developed, and as part of their consideration of the report, Members agreed that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee would undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan. This work would be taken forward separately from the Scrutiny Work Programme.

- 4.3 With the publication of the information from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2018/19 at the end of January 2020, the Chairman has also suggested that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee carry out a follow-up scrutiny of the Council's performance after 6 months of those areas where performance had slipped. However, there are quarterly performance reports provided to the Executive Committee which over a year cover the indicators. The format of these performance reports is evolving but the Q3 performance report being presented to the Executive Committee on 11 February now identifies which are LGBF indicators and on what frequency they are being reported.
- 4.4 It is intended that any Scrutiny review is carried out using the following method of approach: identifying the key issues on the matter; examining relevant documentation; consulting with stakeholders as appropriate; benchmarking as appropriate; and analysing the information collected to reach robust conclusions, examining options and putting forward recommendations where appropriate. It is assumed that the information required for any review will be available timeously and people will be available to attend meetings. The proposed timeline for the reviews may require to be altered should that not be the case.
- 4.5 Given the number of subjects for review, it is unlikely that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee will have time over the coming year to deal with every subject. It is therefore suggested that these are placed in priority order. When identifying that list, Members should also bear in mind the Services which are being covered so that there is an even spread.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

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

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The Scrutiny work programme underpins effective corporate governance and ensures that appropriate oversight is given to areas of the Council deemed suitable for further examination. It is critical that the areas chosen to undergo further scrutiny are relevant, with measurable benefit deriving from this work. Outcomes from this scrutiny should help to mitigate potential risks to the organisation, including the protection of the public pound, in addition to organisational reputation.

5.3 Equalities

If required, an equality impact assessment (EIA) will be carried out during the review of any particular subject.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

Any economic, social or environmental effects will be taken into account during the review of any particular subject.

5.5 Carbon Management

Any impact on the Council’s carbon emissions will be taken into account during the review of any particular subject.

5.6 Rural Proofing

Rural proofing will be taken into account during the review of any particular subject.

5.7 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 Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and Corporate Communications, are being consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.*

Approved by

Name Jenni Craig Signature
Title Service Director Customer & Communities

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 22 August 2019

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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PROPOSED SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

	SUBJECT	SCOPE & APPROACH	LEAD OFFICER
1	Income Management Policy	<p>Scope: Review the Income Management Policy established in 2012 and benchmark current charges against other areas of Scotland.</p> <p>Approach: Initial Scrutiny hearing to determine best methodology and reporting</p>	David Robertson, Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory)
2	Common Ridings and Festivals In-kind support	<p>Scope: Review the in-kind support provided to Common Ridings and Festivals by SBC services. (Note: funding of Common Ridings and Festivals is part of the current review of the Community Fund)</p> <p>Approach: Initial Scrutiny hearing to determine best methodology and reporting</p>	Martin Joyce, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure
3	Responsible Dog Ownership Policy	<p>Scope: Review the implementation of the policy and establish its level of success</p> <p>Approach: Scrutiny hearing</p>	David Robertson, Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory)
4	Grass Cutting Regime	<p>Scope: Receive information on the existing grass cutting regime and plans for the future</p> <p>Approach: Scrutiny information briefing</p>	Martin Joyce, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure
5	Police Community Action Teams	<p>Scope: Receive information on the current arrangements for the Police Community Action Teams – governance, management, community engagement.</p> <p>Approach: Scrutiny information briefing</p>	Stuart Easingwood, Chief Social Work & Public Protection Officer
6	Child Poverty	<p>Scope: An evaluation of the actions the Council is taking to tackle Child Poverty including Pupil Equity Fund, free school meals, etc.</p> <p>Approach: Initial Scrutiny hearing to determine best methodology and reporting</p>	Stuart Easingwood, Interim Service Director Children & Young People
7	Balance between 20mph speed	<p>Scope: An evaluation of the current situation and future plans</p>	Martin Joyce, Service Director

	limits and street architecture	Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Assets & Infrastructure
8	Council resources on Roads, including white lining	Scope: A review of the effectiveness of the application of Council resources to the roads network to provide a benchmark for future years for the national Roads Condition Index. Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Martin Joyce, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure
9	Public transport and communities	Scope: An evaluation of the current situation and future plans Approach: : Initial Scrutiny hearing to determine best methodology and reporting	Rob Dickson, Executive Director
10	Rural Proofing Policy	Scope: Review of the effectiveness of the current Rural Proofing Policy. Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Rob Dickson, Executive Director
11	Recycling and Waste Policy	Scope: An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Recycling and Waste Policy Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Martin Joyce, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure
12	Management and Maintenance of Public Halls	Scope: An evaluation of the community contribution to the management and maintenance of public halls, including those managed by Live Borders. Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Rob Dickson, Executive Director
13	Following the Public Pound – grant evaluations	Scope: An evaluation of the process for grant monitoring and evaluation Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer & Communities
14	Welfare Fund	Scope: An evaluation of how SBC manages applications alongside other funds Approach: Scrutiny hearing	Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer & Communities