
FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Report by Clerk to the Council

SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE

20 April 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides 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.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 12 January 2023, the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee considered a briefing note which gave details of the proposed process for future Scrutiny reviews and the criteria for assessment of subjects submitted for review. In keeping with the remit of the Committee, Members need to focus on their strategic role, so it would not be appropriate for reviews to look at the detailed implementation of individual projects, which is an operational matter, but it would be appropriate for reviews to scrutinise delivery against a plan, or benefit realisation against a target.
- 1.3 To date, eleven subjects have been submitted for possible inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme, and these are detailed in the Appendix to this report. Members are now asked to consider which subjects they wish to take forward into the Committee's Review Programme. It is further recommended that the Council's Management Team provides some outcomes/guidance for the subjects chosen prior to the Committee recommending its Review Programme for approval by Scottish Borders Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee agrees:-**
 - (a) which subjects it wishes to take forward for inclusion in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme; and**
 - (b) that the Council's Management Team is asked to provide further details, including outcomes for such reviews, for consideration by the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee prior to it**

**recommending its Review Work Programme for approval by
Scottish Borders Council.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 12 January 2023, the Scrutiny and Petitions Committee considered a briefing note which gave details of the proposed process for future Scrutiny reviews and the criteria for assessment of subjects submitted for review. The two threshold criteria were:

- Is the proposed review within the scope of the Council and its objectives?
- Is the scope of the review clear and concise?

3.2 If the threshold criteria are met, then further points could then be taken into consideration:

- Is an improvement in service expected as a result of the review?
- To what extent could a review lead to a reduction in the costs of a service?
- To what extent could a review lead to an increase in income for the Council?
- How much budget is involved?
- How important to the public is the topic being proposed for review?
- Does the scope of the review take into account equalities for minority and other groups or particular sections of the Borders community?
- Is there any current performance deficit associated with the topic proposed for review?
- Is the review business critical to the Council's strategic objectives?

3.3 Members may also wish to take account of any other factors, such as the potential scale of the 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.

3.4 In keeping with the remit of the Committee, Members are reminded of the need to focus on their strategic role, so it would not be appropriate for reviews to look at the detailed implementation of individual projects, which is an operational matter, but it would be appropriate for reviews to scrutinise delivery against a plan, or benefit realisation against a target.

4 PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEWS

4.1 To date, eleven subjects (see Appendix for further details) have been submitted for consideration for inclusion in a Scrutiny Review Programme:

1. Public Toilet Provision
2. Closure of Public Toilet in Stow
3. Employability Service Public Engagement

4. Private Sector Housing Grants and Assessment Process (OT)
5. Unused Trading Estate, Lennel Road, Coldstream
6. Scottish Government Covid Grant Funding
7. Covid Recovery Fund
8. Community Access to Schools out-with school hours
9. Shared Lives
10. E-Fleet
11. See Hear Funding 2013/14

4.2 Members are now asked to consider which subjects they wish to take forward into the Committee's Review Programme. It is further recommended that the Council's Management Team provides some outcomes/guidance for the subjects chosen prior to the Committee recommending its Review Programme for approval by Scottish Borders Council.

4.3 Members should also 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 subject reviews 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 considering what 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

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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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