
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)

| Name | Designation and Contact Number |
|-----------------|---|
| Jenny Wilkinson | Clerk to the Council, Tel: 01835 825004 |

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.

Contact us at Jenny Wilkinson, Clerk to the Council, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA. Tel: 01835 825004 Email: jjwilkinson@scotborders.gov.uk