

**Committee:** Scrutiny

**Date:**

**Title:** Scrutiny Work Plan 2022/23

21 March 2022

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## Summary

1. The Scrutiny Committee needs to establish its work programme for its final year of the current four-year cycle.
2. This report presents the work programme as it stands and the Committee is invited to consider how it wishes to complete the plan, taking on board the advice outlined in this report.

## Recommendations

3. The committee establishes its approach to completing the 22/23 work programme as per paragraphs 14 to 17 below.

## Financial Implications

4. None.

## Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

## Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Committee members are encouraged to collaborate with each other and with officers to complete the 22/23 work programme
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

## Situation

7. In 2019/20, the first year of the current Scrutiny Committee, the work programme comprised in large part topics relating to Planning, which were of the utmost importance among many members, both of the committee and outside it. Due to this, it was not necessary to undertake a formal work planning process as the committee's work programme was quickly filled with these items.
8. The Scrutiny Committee did not have a formal work programme in place for 2020/21 due mainly to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on resources as the council had to deal with the emergency response and maintain normal council business as far as possible. The committee managed its business well during this very difficult time, although unsurprisingly several work streams were slow to progress.
9. For 2021/22 a two-stage work planning process was put in place, which followed advice from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. All members of the committee were asked to take part in this process which involved developing topic ideas and then assessing them on relative importance. However, engagement from committee was limited so it is not proposed to run this process again.
10. The committee is about enter its final year of the four-year cycle and it would be beneficial to ensure workstreams are as far as possible neatly tied up by the end of the 2022/23 year. A new Scrutiny Committee will have its own ideas and priorities and experience has shown that outstanding work from the previous committee is often not carried forward.
11. Therefore committee members are asked to carefully consider what they wish to achieve in the forthcoming year, ensuring a proportionate approach given the pressures on the council and the one-year timescale.
12. Excluding Local Plan-specific meetings, which as per the previous years will be timetabled separately, the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to meet six times in 2022/23. It is likely the committee may wish to continue its monitoring of certain existing workstreams during 2022/23 and these have therefore been included in the draft timetable at Appendix A. As in previous years, the first meeting of the next calendar year (usually beginning of February, this time end of January) is reserved for corporate plan and budget matters.
13. Members will be aware that a report on the Stansted Airport appeal review is due to be presented to the committee during the year. This has not been timetabled yet because of the on-going cost negotiations. At the appropriate

time it will either be added to one of the existing meetings or an extraordinary meeting will be held to consider it.

14. It is important to leave some degree of flexibility in the programme for matters that may arise during the year, although it must be remembered that Scrutiny should not, and does not have the capacity to, take on every request it receives.
15. The draft work programme therefore currently only includes existing topics. Although it is up to the committee to set its own work plan, it must do so with appropriate guidance and advice from senior officers, and the committee needs to decide how to achieve this.
16. The committee can either discuss and agree at this 21 March meeting or delegate responsibility to a smaller number of committee members, which should include the Chair, to work with the Assistant Director of Corporate Services and other senior officers to complete the work programme outside the meeting and bring the results back to the next meeting of the committee in May.
17. This latter approach is the one recommended to the committee. The committee should be aware that, taking all of the above into account, it is only looking to develop probably only one or two additional topics for 2022/23 and may even decide that it does not for now wish to add anything further to the programme in order to see how matters such as the Blueprint Uttlesford transformation programme develop in the coming few months.

## Risk Analysis

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The committee does not develop an effective work programme	1 – the committee will be offered appropriate advice and guidance	3 – the committee would not bring added value to the council's work	Discussions between members and officers on an appropriate work programme for the final year of the cycle are being offered

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.