

Barrow Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 24 March, 2022
Work Programme for 2022/2023

Report from: Democratic Services Manager

Report Author: Paula Westwood

Wards: All Wards

1.0 Summary and Conclusions

1.1 Following the consultation exercise and Work Planning meeting with the Chair and Senior Management Team, the Committee are requested to determine relevant items for the Work Programme for 2022/2023 from those detailed at 3.4 of the report.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree items for the Work Programme for 2022/2023 and their order of priority as suggested at 3.4 of the report.

3.0 Background and Proposals

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for setting their own Work Programme. They are expected to review at least one major policy issue during the municipal year and must give serious consideration to the number of issues to be reviewed during the year, to ensure that they are able to allocate resources sufficient to facilitate a thorough review of the issues selected.

3.2 An efficient and effective Overview and Scrutiny Committee work planning process ensures that the maximum value can be made of the Council's resources and that the outcome of the work will be linked to the Council Plan priorities. To that end, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have adopted the following agreed procedure for work programming (Minute No. 35 of 16th December, 2021 refers):-

- Annual public consultation exercise to bring forward potential items for consideration;

- Preliminary prioritisation of submissions conducted by the Chair and Vice Chair and the Council's Senior Management Team using the agreed Work Planning Aid;
- A Work Planning Workshop involving the Committee members to allow discussion of the topics in an informal setting; and
- The proposed Work Programme to be agreed by the Committee.

3.3 Submissions for topics had been invited from the public, all Borough Councillors, Senior Officers within the Council, Parish and Town Council Clerks and partner organisations via a survey link on the Council's website.

The consultation exercise brought forward two suggestions as follows:-

- 1) The Council's ongoing policy to prevent public access to the Town Hall; and
- 2) Transparency.

Further details are provided at **Appendix 1**.

The Council's Senior Management Team had also considered that the following policies/strategies should pass through Scrutiny for consideration:-

- 1) Equality Strategy and Action Plan;
- 2) Customer Strategy and Action Plan;
- 3) Growing Forward Report and Action Plan; and
- 4) Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

3.4 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met with the Council's Senior Management Team on 23rd February to conduct an initial prioritisation of the topics submitted. It was considered that the two submissions received from the consultation exercise could be amalgamated and the aspects of these (including public access to the Town Hall, transparency and internal (Member/Officer) and external communications) could be considered as part of the review of the Customer Strategy and Action Plan.

It is therefore recommended that the following new items be included in the Work Programme for 2022/2023 in the following order of priority:-

- Review of Customer Strategy and Action Plan;
- Review of the Growing Forward Report and Action Plan;
- Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy; and
- Review of Equality Strategy and Action Plan.

3.5 The Committee are requested to note that the following items from the 2021/2022 Work Programme are still ongoing/paused and will be carried forward into 2022/2023:-

- Crellin Street (Ongoing)
- Flooding on Walney Promenade (Paused)
- Discretionary Housing Payments (Paused)

- Impact of Covid-19 Going Forward (Ongoing)

3.6 The Committee may have the capacity to undertake additional reviews throughout the year should the need arise. Any additional items for consideration will be considered in conjunction with the Work Planning Aid agreed by the Committee at their meeting on 16th December, 2021 (Minute No. 35 refers) – See **Appendix 2**.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 In arriving at the list of potential items for inclusion in the Work Programme, a public consultation exercise has been undertaken as well as consultation with Senior Management Team and Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed in consultation with the Chair that the proposed Workshop involving all Members of the Committee to prioritise the items for the Work Programme would not be necessary on this occasion, as only a few items had been suggested for consideration.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 The Committee could choose not to add additional items to the Work Programme for 2022/2023 and to focus on those brought forward from 2021/2022 to obtain closure prior to the dissolution of Barrow Borough Council on 1st April, 2023.

6.0 Contribution to Council Plan Priorities

6.1 The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should link to all of the priorities set out within the Council Plan.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial, Resources and Procurement

7.1.1 There are no financial, or procurement issues arising from this report. There is a need to ensure that there are sufficient resources to allow the agreed Work Programme to be supported through the year.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The Committee needs to be effective in its role. By preparing a planned Work Programme, the Committee can ensure that it has adequate time to properly consider those key areas where it can add greatest value. In turn, this will enable the Council to demonstrate that it has effective scrutiny arrangements in place.

7.3 Local Government Reorganisation

7.3.1 It is important that all of the reviews are concluded during the municipal year as under the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation, Barrow Borough Council will cease to exist from 1 April, 2023.

7.4 Equality and Diversity

7.4.1 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis?

No – There are no implications arising from this report.

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The Work Programme does not add value.	Resources not used to their maximum.	Keep under review and ensure a planned Work Programme that aligns with Council Plan priorities.

Contact Officers

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Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Consultation Responses on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/2023
2	Work Planning Aid

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
Previous Work Programme	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda – 3rd June, 2021
Previous Work Programme	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda – 8th July, 2021