

**TITLE OF REPORT: Review of Annual Work Programme**

**REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive**

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### **Summary**

The report updates and seeks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's views on the current position with regard to the annual work programme.

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### **Background**

1. At its meeting on 18 April 2016, the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme based on the Council's policy framework. This work programme was then agreed by the Council as part of the policy planning process.
2. In line with the process agreed by all OSCs this OSC selected its review topic and case studies using a process designed to help make linkages between potential topics and the Council's policy framework.

### **Proposals**

#### **OSC Review Topics for 2017/18**

3. In advance of the OSC agreeing its review topic for 2017-18, members of the OSC were invited to identify any issues which might potentially be appropriate for a detailed review by 14 December 2016. Any issues put forward by members have been added to the list of potential review topics for consideration by the OSC at the start of the municipal year, unless the issue is already being, or would more appropriately be, dealt with through other processes within the Council. Members have been notified if this has been the case and advised as to how their issue is being dealt with.

### **Monitoring of OSC Reviews**

4. All of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's have received feedback on the outcomes of the specific reviews undertaken by them during 2015-16. This Committee has received a monitoring report on the outcomes generated by its Review of Opportunities to Promote Rural Gateshead on 12 September 2016 and will receive a further monitoring report on 24 April 2017.

## Case Studies

5. Case studies have been included within OSC work programmes to provide an additional means of examining specific issues of concern/carrying out more detailed work on a particular topic/measure the impact of a particular OSC's review recommendations over a specific period of time.
6. The case study for 2016/17 is :-  
**Street Cleanliness – Enforcement, Education and Community Involvement** (31 October 2016 meeting)
7. Each OSC has identified specific issues to be considered through the case study method and it was agreed that in view of the timing of case studies within the 2015-16 work programmes that feedback on their effectiveness be sought during its work programme review in 2016/17.
8. During 2015/16 the OSC considered the following case study :-

### **Estates Management – 14 September 2015 meeting**

The OSC focused on:-

- How services have been reconfigured, public expectations managed and new ways of working developed;
- The scale of the financial reductions for waste services and grounds maintenance;
- The impacts of reduced funding and resources on service provision;
- Plans for the future.

Having examined the issues the OSC :-

- Raised concerns regarding the impact on services in light of budget cuts and the notable visible impact in some areas.
- The OSC queried if the Council was promoting gardening services to target those households who might be interested in buying into services. The OSC received information that although there was the scope to do this there had to be a balance between the cost of service provision and the sustainability of such a service. The Council and the Gateshead Housing Company were looking to create a package of services that could be considered for “ buy in” by developers.
- The OSC also suggested that where there is active tenant involvement / community groups around the borough there may be an opportunity for Grounds Maintenance to pass on skills and have links to events such as Community pride. The OSC was advised that Gateshead Housing Company does have a tenant engagement programme but it could be beneficial to hear from tenant groups which are successful.
- The OSC requested that all councillors be kept informed of any changes in relation to Universal Credit and implications this may have on service delivery.

In light of the above the OSC requested that its comments be noted.

## **Recommendations**

9. The Committee is asked to
- (i) Note that any issues identified by members of the OSC as potential review topics by 14 December 2016 have been included in the list of review topics to be considered by the OSC at the start of the municipal year unless such issues are being or would more appropriately be dealt with via other Council processes.
  - (ii) Give its views on the review monitoring process carried out so far.
  - (iii) Give its views on the effectiveness of the case studies carried out in 2015/16.