

TITLE OF REPORT:	Work Programme 2020-21 and Development of Work Programme for 2021-22
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Summary

This report is set out in two parts. The first part sets out the current work programme for Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2020-21 and the second part details the current position / next steps in the development of the work programme for this OSC for the municipal year 2021-22.

2020-21 Work Programme

1. As a result of the uncertainties arising in relation to the Covid -19 pandemic, along with the pressures on services that this brought and having regard to the Council's approach to the development of a new performance framework, a more flexible approach was adopted for scrutiny during 2020-21.
2. This approach recognised the demands on services and the Council as a whole but, at the same time, has ensured that we have been meeting our statutory obligations to provide an effective scrutiny function and scrutiny has concentrated on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider Council.
3. The work of this OSC was refocused on the current Covid-19 related priorities and the impacts of that alongside a couple of other priority issues for the Council / partners which are already being progressed elsewhere to avoid placing any additional burdens on service areas and a reduced programme of meetings was agreed.
4. The Committee's current work programme is set out at Appendix 1 and any changes to the programme have been highlighted in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Development of 2021-22 OSC Work Programmes

Background

5. At its December 2020 meeting the OSC acknowledged that the ongoing uncertainties relating to the Covid 19 pandemic, the lack of clarity on the outlook for local government finance alongside the strong possibility that OSC meetings will continue to need to be held remotely for some time to come, meant that the approach to developing the OSC work programmes for 2021-22 was likely to have to be similarly flexible and proposals were likely to be indicative.

6. It was also noted that a continued focus on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in some form or another would be likely to be a major area of focus for the OSCs at key points during 2021-22.

Current Position

7. With this in mind, an initial consultation with OSC Chairs and other elected members and officers on the proposed priority issues for the new work programmes for 2021-22 was carried out between 1 and 15 February 2021.
8. It was highlighted that any suggestions for the work programmes should focus on priority issues that would support the Council's Thrive agenda and add value, taking account of the five priority areas outlined in the budget consultation; the development of the Council's new Performance Framework; the Gateshead Strategic Needs Assessment and the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
9. At this OSC meeting on 4 March 2021 there will be an opportunity for the OSC to comment on / discuss emerging issues for this OSC / put forward additional issues for consideration.

Next Steps

10. Subsequently, in line with usual practice, partner organisations will be consulted on the emerging issues for each OSC for 2021-22 with a view to OSCs considering any feedback/ additional suggestions / endorsing their respective work programmes at their June 2021 OSC meetings and referring them to Council for agreement.

Recommendations

11. The Committee is asked to:-
 - a) Note the work programme for 2020-21;
 - b) Comment on the emerging issues for this OSC's 2021-22 work programme / highlight any additional issues for consideration.