

Housing Select Committee		
Title	Select Committee work programme 2017/18	
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item 5
Class	Part 1 (open)	18 April 2017

1. Purpose

To ask Members to agree an annual work programme for the Committee.

2. Summary

This report:

1. Informs Members of the meeting dates for this municipal year.
2. Invites Members to agree the Committee's priorities for the 2017-18 municipal year.
3. Informs Members of the process for Business Panel approval of the work programme.
4. Outlines how the work programme can be monitored, managed and developed.

3. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

- Note the meeting dates for the Housing Select Committee in 2017/18
- Note the Terms of Reference for the Housing Select Committee at **Appendix A**
- Consider the provisional work programme at **Appendix B**
- Note the key decision plan, attached at **Appendix C**, and consider any key decisions for further scrutiny
- Agree a work programme for the municipal year 2017/18
- Review how the work programme can be developed, managed and monitored over the coming year.

4. Meeting dates

The following Committee meeting dates for the next municipal year were agreed at the Council AGM on 27 March 2017:

2017:

- 18 April
- 6 June
- 5 July
- 6 September
- 9 November
- 14 December

2018:

- 31 January
- 14 March

5. Context

- 5.1. The Committee has a responsibility for scrutinising the Council's strategic housing functions as well as the work of Lewisham Homes and the Brockley Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The strategic housing division is responsible for delivering housing objectives based on the borough's sustainable communities strategy and delivered through the borough's housing strategy. The Committee's terms of reference are set out in appendix A.
- 5.2. The Committee regularly scrutinises the work of Lewisham's strategic housing team and its service areas. The Council is responsible for a stock of approximately 18,000 homes. These are managed by the Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation, Lewisham Homes and the Brockley Private Finance Initiative. In previous years, the Committee has scrutinised the Lewisham Homes and Brockley PFI annual reports and business plans. Members of the Committee have also resolved to receive six monthly updates from these organisations. The Committee's terms of reference also give it the remit to establish links with social housing providers in the borough.

6. Provisional 2017/18 work programme

- 6.1. At the last meeting of the previous municipal year, on 7 March 2017, the Committee considered a number of items for inclusion in the work programme. The Scrutiny Manager has incorporated the comments of the Committee into a provisional work programme for the Committee to consider, which is attached at Appendix B.
- 6.2. The work programme includes:
- suggestions from the Committee in the previous year;
 - suggestions from officers;
 - issues arising as a result of previous scrutiny;
 - issues that the Committee is required to consider by virtue of its terms of reference;
 - items requiring follow up from Committee reviews and recommendations;
 - standard reviews of policy implementation or performance, which is based on a regular schedule.

Deciding on items for the work programme

- 6.3. When deciding on items to include in the work programme, the Committee should have regard to:
- priority areas for the council;
 - budget pressures;
 - items the Committee is required to consider by virtue of its terms of reference;
 - the criteria for selecting and prioritising topics;
 - the capacity for adding items;
 - the context for setting the work programme and advice from officers;
 - Issues of importance for local assemblies.
- 6.4. On 28 March 2017, the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel resolved to remind committees that as this is the last year of the administration they may want to consider work done to date and focus their attention on key policy areas going into a

new administration in 2017/18. The Business Panel also suggested that the Committee monitor developments with the Lewisham Central opportunity site.

Council finances

6.5. The Council has already made savings of £138.4m to meet its revenue budget requirements since May 2010 and is proposing further savings of £23.2m in 2017/18. It is expected that the Council will need to identify further savings of circa £32.6m for the following two years, 2018/19 to 2019/20. This will bring the total savings in cash terms made by the Council in the decade to 2020 to just short of £200m. Monitoring the impact of savings on service delivery and performance will continue to be of importance to scrutiny committees. Lessons learnt from this process can be used to help shape the scrutiny of future savings proposals as and when they are put forward.

Budgetary issues of particular relevance to the work of the Committee

6.6. In March 2016 the Government legislated for a 1% reduction in social rents to be applied for four years from 2016/17. This is expected to reduce rental income by £2.62m in 2017/18. The expected cumulative rent reduction over the four years is £25.0m, with £374.0m being lost over the life of the 30 year business plan. It's not yet clear what rent regime will be in place after the four years – it's assumed that rent charges will be increased in line with prior Government guidance of CPI + 1%.

6.7. The budgeted expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account for 2017/18 is £149.9m (£93.9m operational and £56m capital and new build costs). No direct savings have been identified so far for 2017/18.

6.8. The HRA is budgeted to spend over £100.0m in 2016/17. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is currently projecting a surplus of £1.1m, but this will be reinvested to maintain a balanced budget position.

6.9. As at the end of November 2016, the forecast overspend for the Customer Services directorate as a whole is £3.3m. The strategic housing service is projecting an overspend of £0.7m. This relates to the action taken to manage the demand for temporary accommodation in the borough.

Decisions due to be made by Mayor and Cabinet

6.10. Members are asked to review the most recent notice of key decisions at Appendix B and, if appropriate, suggest any additional items for further scrutiny.

7. Different types of scrutiny

7.1. It is important to agree how each work programme item will be scrutinised. Some items may only require an information report to be presented to the Committee and others will require performance monitoring data or analysis to be presented. Typically, the majority of items take the form of single meeting items, where members:

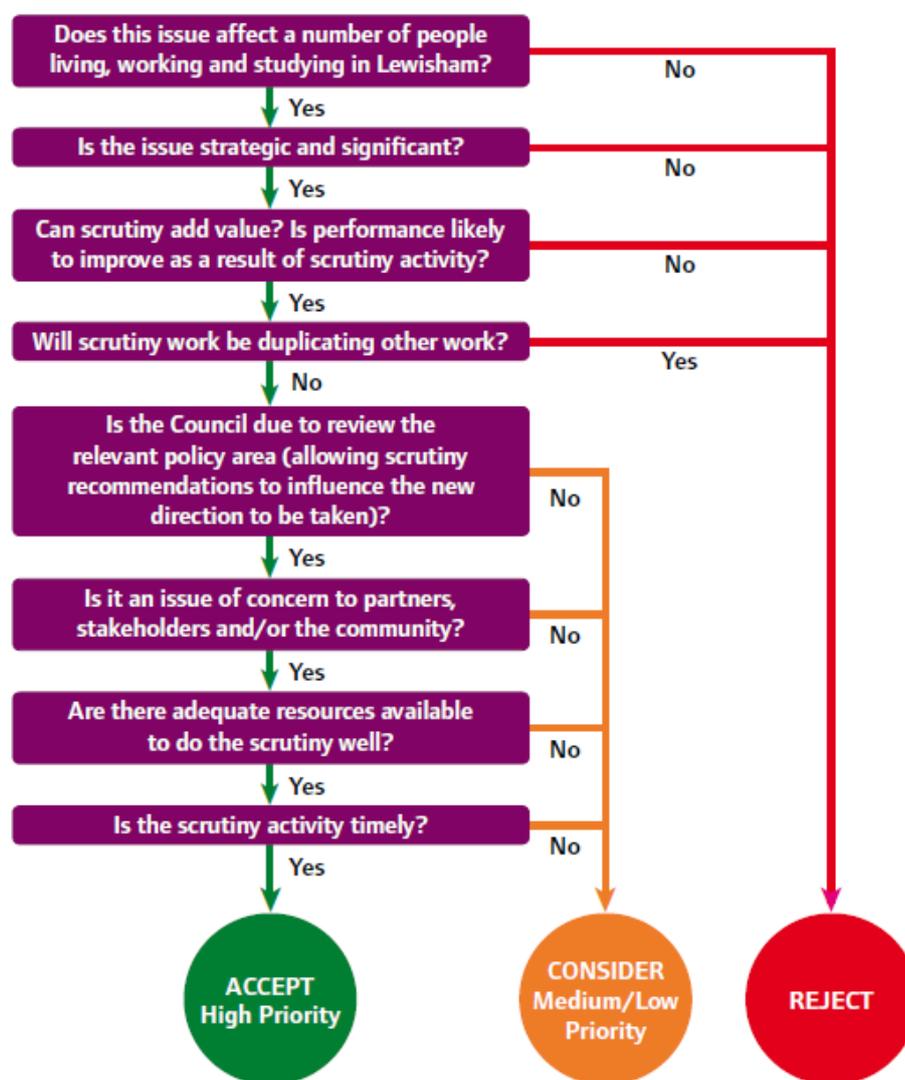
- (a) agree what information and analysis they wish to receive in order to achieve their desired outcomes;
- (b) receive a report presenting that information and analysis;
- (c) ask questions of the presenting officer or guest;

(d) agree, following discussion of the report, whether the Committee will make recommendations or receive further information or analysis before summarising its views.

7.2. For each item, the Committee should consider what type of scrutiny is required and whether the item is high or medium/low priority (using the prioritisation process). Allocating priority to work programme items will enable the Committee to decide which low and medium priority items it should remove from its work programme, when it decides to add high priority issues in the course of the year.

7.3. The below flow chart, based on the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) advice for prioritising topics is designed to help Members decide which items should be added to the work programme.

Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process



8. Approving, monitoring and managing the work programme

- 8.1. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules outlined in the Council's constitution, each select committee is required to submit its annual work programme to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel. The Business Panel will meet in May to consider provisional work programmes and agree a co-ordinated Overview and Scrutiny work programme, which avoids duplication of effort and which facilitates the effective conduct of business.
- 8.2. The work programme will be reviewed at each meeting of the Committee. This allows urgent items to be added and items which are no longer a priority to be removed. Each additional item added should first be considered against the criteria outlined above. If the Committee agrees to add additional items because they are high priority, it must then consider which medium/low priority items should be removed in order to create sufficient capacity. The Committee has eight scheduled meetings this municipal year and its work programme needs to be achievable in terms of the amount of meeting time available.
- 8.3. At each meeting of the Committee, there will be an item on the work programme presented by the Scrutiny Manager. When discussing this item, the Committee will be asked to consider the items programmed for the next meeting. Members will be asked to outline what information and analysis they would like in the report for each item, based on the outcomes they would like to achieve, so that officers are clear on what they need to provide.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. There are no financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must devise and submit a work programme to the Business Panel at the start of each municipal year.

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 11.2. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 11.3. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and

those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed at 12.2 above.

11.4. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

11.5. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

11.6. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
- Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
- Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities

11.7. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

Background documents

Lewisham Council’s Constitution

Centre for Public Scrutiny: The Good Scrutiny Guide

Appendices

Appendix A – Committee’s terms of reference

Appendix B – Provisional work programme

Appendix B – Key decision plan

Appendix A

Housing Select Committee terms of reference

The Council's constitution sets out the Committee's powers, as defined by the terms of reference. These are included at appendix A. The Committee should familiarise itself with the terms of reference and consider its remit when selecting items for scrutiny.

As set out in the constitution, the Committee has a responsibility for scrutinising the Council's strategic housing functions as well as the work of Lewisham Homes and the Brockley Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The strategic housing division is responsible for delivering housing objectives based on the borough's sustainable communities strategy and delivered through the borough's housing strategy.

The Council is responsible for a stock of approximately 18,000 homes. These are managed by the Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation, Lewisham Homes and the Brockley Private Finance Initiative. In previous years, the Committee has scrutinised the Lewisham Homes and Brockley PFI annual reports and business plans. Members of the Committee have also resolved to receive six monthly updates from these organisations. The Committee's terms of reference also give it the remit to establish links with social housing providers in the borough.