



Report to Children's and Education Select Committee

Date: 9th September 2021

Title: Select Committee Work Programme

Relevant councillor(s): All

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Recommendations:

- i. That the Children's and Education Select Committee agrees the draft work programme for the 2021/2022 municipal year.
- ii. That the Select Committee identifies a subject for a more focussed and in-depth piece of work.

Introduction

- 1.1 Every municipal year, each of Buckinghamshire Council's Select Committees will draft and agree a work programme for the ensuing year. The work programme will detail the subject of reports to be presented at each committee meeting during the year. The work programme will come back to each committee and may be amended or developed during the year.
- 1.2 The work programme may also include suggested topics for in-depth pieces of scrutiny work, which can be undertaken outside of the formal webcast committee meetings.

Options for In-Depth Scrutiny Work

- 1.3 The Select Committee may identify a particular issue which they would like to investigate in more depth than a committee item allows. The Select Committee can commission an in-depth piece of work which will be undertaken by a smaller group of members, supported by the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

- 1.4 **Rapid Review** - This is ideal for a focussed review with fairly narrow parameters, that can be conducted in a relatively short time scale. For example, you may hold three or four meetings as a review group – one to establish and understand what the key issues are, one or two to gather evidence from service users or other authorities to gain insight into best practice and a final meeting to discuss what members have heard and identify any useful recommendations. A rapid review format will be useful when considering less complex issues and may be helpful in delivering ‘quick wins’ for the Council’s service users and residents.
- 1.5 **In-depth Inquiry** – An in-depth inquiry is more suitable when the topic identified for investigation is more complex or there are a number of different lines of enquiry that the Select Committee wish to consider. An Inquiry group will still consist of a smaller group of members, but a significant number of evidence gathering meetings may be undertaken, perhaps including visits to partner agencies or other local authorities or discussions with subject matter experts, over a longer period of time.
- 1.6 With either of the two approaches outlined above, a scope for the piece of work will be agreed by the Select Committee and members who wish to participate will be drawn from the Select Committee, ensuring cross party representation. As a guideline, a maximum of 6-8 members would be ideal.
- 1.7 The Select Committee Chairman may chair a Rapid Review or an In-depth Inquiry, but they can also choose to appoint another committee member to act as Chairman if they wish.
- 1.8 The outcome of either a Rapid Review or an In-depth Inquiry will be a report, which will outline members’ findings and include recommendations for Cabinet and partner agencies to consider. Once the final report has been agreed at Select Committee it will then be presented at Cabinet and Cabinet will provide a response to the recommendations.
- 1.9 When considering undertaking a Rapid Review or In-depth Inquiry, members are asked to be mindful of the resource implications for both the Scrutiny team and other Council officers who will support these pieces of work. The Select Committee Chairmen meet regularly, which will enable co-ordination of in-depth pieces of work and consideration of timeliness, possible areas of duplication and cross-cutting issues.



Next steps and review

- 2.0 The work programme will be included on the agenda of each Select Committee meeting and any necessary amendments can be discussed.

Once the Select Committee have identified a topic for a more in-depth piece of work, the most appropriate approach and timing for the work can be discussed and agreed and a scope will be developed by the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Background papers

Children's and Education Select Committee draft work programme.

