

**Safer and Stronger Communities  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**9 July 2021**



**Refresh of the Work Programme 2021/22  
for the Safer and Stronger Communities  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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**Report of Paul Darby Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSC OSC) with an updated work programme for 2021/2022.

**Executive summary**

- 2 SSC OSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and Safe Durham Partnership Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed SSC OSC work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 based on the three strategic ambitions of 'more and better jobs', 'long and independent lives' and 'connected communities'.
- 4 Overview and scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we make our way along the government's roadmap out of lockdown. We will consider how best to enable the scrutiny function to respond in these times of continuing uncertainty.

**Recommendations**

- 5 SSC OSC is recommended to:
  - a) Receive and comment on the proposed SSC OSC work programme for 2021/22
  - b) Agree the SSC OSC work programme for 2021/2022 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.

## Background

- 6 Scrutiny committee meetings have recently returned to meeting in person following the use of remote arrangements under COVID-19 emergency regulations. During the lockdown period work programmes were reviewed to enable remote meetings to focus on matters of the highest priority. As a result, regular overview reports were circulated to members via email for comment.
- 7 The number of meetings in the corporate calendar available to overview and scrutiny were also been substantially reduced in 2020/21 due to staff capacity to support virtual meetings. At this point we are unsure how many meetings we will be allocated for 2021/22 and will reprioritise work programmes if circumstances change. Any review of work programmes will take place with the chair and vice chair and in consultation with the committee.
- 8 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
  - Council Plan
  - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
  - County Durham Vision for 2035
  - Partnership plans and strategies
  - Performance and budgetary control data
  - Changes in government legislation
  - Local priorities
- 9 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 based on a strategic assessment of need using our intelligence platform Durham Insight and developed following extensive consultation with the public. This sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:
  - More and better jobs
  - People live long and independent lives
  - Connected communities

- 10 These remain the strategic ambitions in our response to the COVID-19 crisis, where key impacts relate to employment, health and wellbeing, and communities. They will also remain key as restrictions ease and we move along the roadmap from national lockdown and we continue with our restoration and recovery.
- 11 Scrutiny work programmes also focus on the four priorities of the Council's transformational projects:
- Redesign our services to better meet the customer's needs at reduced cost to the Council
  - Help communities become more resilient and self-reliant
  - To move our partnership working from good to great
  - To become renowned for our skilled and flexible workforce and our employee engagement.

### **Council Plan 2020 - 2023**

- 12 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the county council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 13 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions which are mentioned above. An additional ambition of an excellent council has been developed for the Council Plan to capture the corporate initiatives that the council has identified and wants to undertake to transform its operations and enable achievement of the ambitions within the vision.
- a) Connected Communities
- (i) All children and young people will have a safe childhood
  - (ii) Victims of crime will have access to the right level of support, with services available to address their needs
  - (iii) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe.
  - (iv) Communities will come together and support each other

## Safer and Stronger Communities OSC

- 14 In addition to providing a scrutiny role for activity of the council, SSC OSC is the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of Part 3 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. The Committee is therefore responsible for scrutinising the work of the Safe Durham Partnership.
- 15 At its meeting in March 2021, the Committee considered and provided comment on the draft Safe Durham Partnership Plan. It is to note that within its response, the Committee suggested arson and deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour caused by off road motorcycles and quads be included as specific areas of focus and were subsequently agreed by the SDP Board and included within the plan. Following publication of the plan, the Committee's work programme is closely linked to priority areas and associated actions within the plan.
- 16 During 2020/2021, SSC OSC prioritised items to be considered at a reduced number of formal meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. However, although there was a reduced number of formal meetings the committee has undertaken review activity, responded to consultations, undertaken performance monitoring and considered overview presentations and reports in relation to the following areas:
  - a) Scrutiny Review
    - (i) Road Safety Strategy
  - b) Overview activity
    - (i) Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
    - (ii) Safe Durham Partnership Board – Impact of COVID19
    - (iii) Community Protection Services
    - (iv) Public Protection Services
    - (v) County Durham Youth Justice Service Annual Performance Report 2019/20 and Service Improvement Plan 2020/21
    - (vi) County Durham & Darlington Hate Crime Action Group
    - (vii) Probation Programme 'Plans for future model
    - (viii) Bonfire period and arson
  - c) Briefing reports
    - (i) Open Water Safety
    - (ii) Off Road Bikes
    - (iii) Alcohol and Substance Misuse Harm Reduction
    - (iv) Reducing Re- Offending

- d) Consultations
  - (i) County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services Community Risk Management Plan – Three Year Consultation
  - (ii) Draft Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25

## **Police and Crime Panel**

- 17 The Committee has a joint working arrangement with the Durham Police and Crime Panel (PCP) that is crucial to provide a communication between the PCP and the Committee. This arrangement includes receiving update reports from the PCP at each Committee meeting and prior to undertaking an in-depth study into a crime and disorder issue, discussion takes place between both the Chairs of the PCP and Committee and Secretariat to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

## **Areas for Consideration in the SSC OSC Work Programme**

- 18 Paragraph 16 of this report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21. The committee is asked to consider areas for further progress updates and review topics to be included in the work programme for 2021/2022 in light of the current Council Plan, Safe Durham Partnership Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035.
- 19 At its meeting in March 2021, the committee considered a report titled 'Refresh of the Work Programme 2021/22' and requested that the work programme includes ASB linked to off-road vehicles and post-meeting a suggestion was received for the inclusion of Alcohol and Substance Misuse harm reduction. These areas are listed within Appendix 2. In addition, a suggestion was received to revisit previous work by the committee to review the partnership approach to tackle arson within the East Durham area.
- 20 Members of the SSC OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2021/22 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix two. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.

## **Main implications**

### *Crime and Disorder*

- 21 Information with this report aims to contribute to activity to reducing crime and disorder within the county.

## Conclusion

- 22 The work programme report identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of SSC OSC

## Background papers

- [Council Plan 2020 - 2023](#)
- [A Vision for County Durham 2035](#)
- [Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25](#)

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

None

### **Consultation**

None

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None

### **Climate Change**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

Information with this report aims to contribute to activity to reducing crime and disorder within County Durham.

### **Staffing**

None

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Risk**

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is an important element of the Council's governance and risk management arrangements.

### **Procurement**

None