

**21 July 2021**



**Refresh of the Work Programme  
2021/22 for Economy and  
Enterprise 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 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (E&E OSC) with an updated draft work programme for 2021/22.

**Executive summary**

- 2 E&E OSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed E&E 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 The E&E OSC is recommended to:
  - a) Receive and comment on the proposed draft work programme for 2021/22 (copy attached at appendix 2).
  - b) Agree the E&E OSC work programme for 2021/22 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 have also been substantially reduced since March 2020 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:
  - County Durham Vision 2035
  - Council Plan
  - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
  - Partnership plans and strategies
  - Performance and budgetary control data
  - Changes in government legislation
  - Key questions for improving performance
  - 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.

## **Council Plan 2020-2023**

- 11 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.
- 12 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.

### **More and Better Jobs**

- a) Delivery of a range of employment sites across the County
- b) A strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to do business
- c) A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- d) Young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- e) Helping all people into rewarding work
- f) Fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the county

### **Connected Communities**

- a) People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- b) Standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's Housing stock
- c) Delivery of new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents
- d) Town and Village centres will be vibrant , well-used, clean, attractive and safe

## Current Work Programme

13 During 2020/21 the E&E 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 budgetary and performance monitoring, responded to consultations and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:

- Consultations
  - Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document and the Parking and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document
- Areas of overview and monitoring activity
  - County Durham Plan
  - Regional and local transport
  - Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV's)
  - Skills Advisory Panel of the NELEP
  - County Durham Economic Partnership
  - DurhamWorks Programme
  - Digital Durham Programme (Support for business sector)
  - Housing Strategy
  - Homelessness Strategy
  - Private rented housing sector in County Durham
  - Housing response to COVID 19
  - Durham County Council's Council Housing Delivery Programme
  - Proposed Selective Licensing Scheme
  - EU and regional funding
  - Strategic sites in the county
  - Town and Village Centres Programme
  - Masterplans for the county
  - Visit County Durham
  - Business Durham
  - Impact of COVID on the Regeneration, Economy and Growth Service Grouping
- Budgetary and performance monitoring:
  - Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Regeneration and Local Services (Regeneration, Economy and Growth) Service Grouping.
  - Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Regeneration and Local Services (Regeneration, Economy and Growth) Service Grouping.

14 In addition, the E&E OSC has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives in the Council Plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees including:

- Response of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change to the pandemic
- Fuel Poverty
- Highways, Footways and bridge maintenance
- Carbon Emergency Response Plan
- Management of DCC Fleet
- Heritage Coast and the tourism offer
- Stockton and Darlington Railway Bicentennial Celebrations
- Gala Theatre
- Leisure Centres Programme

### **Additional areas for inclusion**

15 The committee when considering its future work programme at the March meeting identified the following areas for inclusion in the 2021/22 work programme:

- Skills development in County Durham
- The investment pipeline for the County

### **Areas for Consideration in the E&E OSC Work Programme**

16 Members of the E&E 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.

17 Paragraph 13 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2020/21. The committee is asked to consider areas and review topics for inclusion in the work programme for 2021/22 in light of the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

### **Conclusion**

18 The work programme identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of E&E OSC and is flexible in its delivery.

### **Background papers**

- [Council Plan 2020 -2023](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable

### **Finance**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

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

### **Procurement**

Not applicable