

Item:

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

26 June 2023



**Work Programme 2023/24 for
the Safer and Stronger
Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

Report of Paul Darby Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSC OSC) with a work programme for 2023/2024.

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'. The SSC OSC work programme also reflects the six strategic priorities of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan.
- 4 This year the Council Plan has been refreshed to reflect the political changes in the Council since May 2021 and new initiatives on the environment and climate change. In addition, overview and scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year.

Recommendations

- 5 SSC OSC is recommended to:
 - a) Receive and comment on the proposed SSC OSC work programme for 2023/24
 - b) Agree the SSC OSC work programme for 2023/2024 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.

Background

- 6 SSC OSC has a focus on community safety and service improvement and this will continue in 2023/24. The Committee will also contribute to policy development where it can add value and insight.
- 7 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
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve by this date. The Vision was developed with partner organisations and the public and is structured around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham.
 - More and better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Communities are well connected and supportive of each other
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. Following the refresh of the Council Plan in April 2022, it is now structured around five objectives which capture the three ambitions:
 - Our Economy
 - Our People
 - Our Communities
 - Our Environment
 - Our Council

Council Plan 2023 - 2027

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the county council. It details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own ambitious agenda. It provides a summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake to help achieve these priorities. The Plan will now be refreshed each year to reflect the integration of corporate and financial planning.
- 11 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. Within this context, the ambition of Connected Communities is linked to the remit of the SSC OSC and includes the following:
 - a) Connected Communities
 - (i) All children and young people will have a safe childhood.
 - (ii) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe.
 - (iii) Communities will come together and support each other.

Safer and Stronger Communities OSC

- 12 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.
- 13 During 2022/2023, SSC OSC held six scheduled meetings, two special meetings and five informal sessions. Within this period the committee has provided consultation responses to the Safe Durham Partnership Board in respect of the draft Anti-social Behaviour Strategy and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan. The committee also considered quarterly performance reports and presentations and reports in relation to the following areas:
 - a) Overview activity

- (i) County Durham Youth Justice Service
- (ii) Open Water Safety
- (iii) Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Group
- (iv) Home Fire Safety
- (v) Horden Together Initiative
- (vi) Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) and Safer Streets Programme
- (vii) Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group Annual Report
- (viii) Community Protection Service
- (ix) Public Protection Service
- (x) Road Safety
- (xi) Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Group
- (xii) Probation Service
- (xiii) Civil contingency planning and Storm Arwen review

b) Consultation

- (i) Safe Durham Partnership ASB Strategy
- (ii) County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan

c) Informal Briefing Sessions

- (i) Arson Suppression Group
- (ii) Anti-Social Behaviour Powers and Interventions
- (iii) Exploitation
- (iv) Empty Properties and ASB
- (v) ASB Performance Dashboard

Areas for Consideration in the SSC OSC Work Programme

- 14 Paragraph 13 of this report identifies activity undertaken by the committee during 2022/23. The committee is asked to consider areas for further progress updates and review topics to be included in the work programme for 2023/2024 in light of the current Council Plan, Safe Durham Partnership Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035.
- 15 Within this context, Members of the SSC OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2023/24 that 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 to accommodate emerging issues throughout the municipal year.

Main implications

Crime and Disorder

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

Conclusion

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

Background papers

- [Council Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27](#)
- [A Vision for County Durham 2035](#)
- [Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

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

Appendix 2: Draft SSCOSC Work Programme

Attached as a separate document.