



Report to Governance Committee

11th July 2024

Report of: Head of Policy and Partnerships

Subject: Committee Work Programme

Author of Report: Alice Nicholson, Policy & Improvement Officer

Summary:

The Committee's Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This is the first one for 2024/25 municipal year, over time it aims to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

This version shows a Work Programme based on activity known to date, there are two items which need ongoing intensive work, these will have an impact on capacity and implications for prioritisation of remaining items and/or additions to the Governance Committee's forward workplan. There are 3 items that were on the workplan 2023/24 but were not progressed, and 1 that will be included in the remits review work. The document is always considered at the regular pre-meetings of the Committee.

Where applicable the following potential sources of new items are included in this report, on this occasion there aren't any from these sources:

- Questions and petitions from the public, including those referred from Council
- References from Council or other committees (statements formally sent for this committee's attention)
- A list of issues, each with a short summary, which have been identified by the Committee or officers as potential items but which have not yet been scheduled (See Appendix 1)

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee’s work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments or items to be confirmed identified in Part 1.
2. Note the indications of items which need more intensive work (eg. Reviewing our Committee Remits, and Community Engagement) and consider impact on capacity and implications for prioritisation of remaining items and/or additions to the Governance Committee’s forward workplan.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Update on the Committee workplan for Governance Committee

- 1.1 This is the first workplan of the new municipal year 2024/25. There are two areas of work that require intensive work to progress, these are Reviewing our Committee Remits and Community Engagement. In addition to these two, there are 3 items that were on the workplan 2023/24 but were not progressed. As part of the discussion, Members to consider impact on capacity and implications for prioritisation of remaining items and/or additions to the Governance Committee’s forward workplan.
1. The Governance Committee’s work is an essential part of the Council’s commitment to continuously improve our committee system and how we work within it as Members, officers and with citizens and partners. However, there are significant constraints on Member and officer capacity and therefore, prioritising the items on the workplan to focus on the things Members most want to achieve in the municipal year is essential.
2. It is recommended that Members consider the current workplan and discuss items to prioritise over the coming months, particularly where there is policy development and involvement activity needed.

References from Council or other Committees

2.1 Any references sent to this Committee by Council, including any public questions, petitions and motions, or other committees since the last meeting are listed here, with commentary and a proposed course of action, as appropriate:

Issue	N/A
Referred from	
<i>Details</i>	
<i>Commentary/ Action Proposed</i>	

Member engagement, learning and policy development outside of Committee

3.1 Subject to the capacity and availability of councillors and officers, there are a range of ways in which Members can explore subjects, monitor information and develop their ideas about forthcoming decisions outside of formal meetings.

Appendix 2 is an example 'menu' of some of the ways this could be done. It is entirely appropriate that member development, exploration and policy development should in many cases take place in a private setting, to allow members to learn and formulate a position in a neutral space before bringing the issue into the public domain at a formal meeting.

2.2 Training & Skills Development - Induction programme for this committee.

Title	Description & Format	Date
N/A		

Appendix 1 – Work Programme

Part 1: Proposed additions and amendments to the work programme since the last meeting:

Item	Proposed Date	Note	Suggested approach
Community Engagement (Governance Committee Public Involvement Working Group)	July 2024	See item 10 of agenda 11 th July 2024.	A long-term project. Will need dedicated Member and officer time outside of Gov Committee meetings.
Reviewing our Policy Committee Remits	July 2024	See item 9 of agenda 11 th July 2024.	Will need significant Task and Finish work to look at Policy Committee remits and the interaction between LACs and city level committees.
Urgent Decisions	Annual report on activity – TBD when	To review the use of urgent decisions to date, understand whether the process is working as intended, and whether changes are required.	Policy review work – agreed annual reporting
Charity Sub Committee and SCC role as a charitable trustee.	To be included in Remits work	To consider, and recommend to Full Council, the most appropriate way for the Council to discharge its role as Charitable Trustee	
Measuring the health of the Committee System	TBC	To develop and agree a performance framework and set of metrics to enable us to measure progress as the Committee System develops.	Should be developed and designed with citizens, officers and Members. Small number of workshops.
Changes to delegations	TBC	To consider, and recommend to Full Council, changes to delegations (including grants – initially discussed by the Committee in December 2022).	
Update on GRIP	TBC		

Part 2: List of other potential items not yet included in the work programme

Issues that have recently been identified by the Committee, its Chair or officers as potential items but have not yet been added to the proposed work programme. If a Councillor raises an idea in a meeting and the committee agrees under recommendation 3 that this should be explored, it will appear either in the work programme or in this section of the report at the committee’s next meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.

Topic	
Description	
Lead Officer/s	
Item suggested by	<i>Officer, Member, Committee, partners, public question, petition etc</i>
Type of item	<i>Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>
Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 2)</i>	
Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	
Lead Officer Commentary/Proposed Action(s)	

Part 3: Agenda Items for Forthcoming Meetings

Meeting 1	11 th July 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer

<p>Member Role Profiles</p>	<p>This report presents the profiles for the roles of a Policy Sub-Committee Chair, Health Scrutiny Chair, Local Area Committee Chair and Committee Chair for Member’s consideration and adoption.</p>					
<p>Review of Finance Committee Remit</p>	<p>This report presents the outcome of the Task and Finish Group’s work concerning Finance Committee and presents proposals for amendments to its remit which Governance Committee is asked to consider, comment on and agree changes to the Constitution to be recommended to Full Council.</p>					
<p>Reviewing our Policy Committee Remits</p>	<p>This update report sets out the progress of the review process and seeks agreement to the proposed work plan, see Appendix 1 slidepack.</p>					
<p>Community Engagement</p>	<p>This report summarises progress to date and provides an update to</p>					

(Governance Committee Public Involvement Working Group)	Governance Committee on the next steps in 2024, including the need to refresh the membership of our Public Involvement Working Group following the May local elections.					
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Questions/ Petitions Work Programme 					

Meeting 2	5 th September 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Questions/ Petitions Work Programme 					

Meeting 3	7 th November 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer

Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Questions/ Petitions Work Programme 					
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Meeting 4	16 th January 2025	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) <i>This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer</i>
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Questions/ Petitions Work Programme 					

Meeting 5	13 th March 2025	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) <i>This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer</i>
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Questions/ Petitions Work Programme 					

Appendix 2 – Menu of options for member engagement, learning and development prior to formal Committee consideration

Members should give early consideration to the degree of pre-work needed before an item appears on a formal agenda.

All agenda items will anyway be supported by the following:

- Discussion well in advance as part of the work programme item at Pre-agenda meetings. These take place in advance of each formal meeting, before the agenda is published and they consider the full work programme, not just the immediate forthcoming meeting. They include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers
- Discussion and, where required, briefing by officers at pre-committee meetings in advance of each formal meeting, after the agenda is published. These include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers.
- Work Programming items on each formal agenda, as part of an annual and ongoing work programming exercise
- Full officer report on a public agenda, with time for a public discussion in committee
- Officer meetings with Chair & VC as representatives of the committee, to consider addition to the draft work programme, and later to inform the overall development of the issue and report, for the committee's consideration.

The following are examples of some of the optional ways in which the committee may wish to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged and informed prior to taking a public decision on a matter. In all cases the presumption is that these will take place in private, however some meetings could happen in public or eg be reported to the public committee at a later date.

These options are presented in approximately ascending order of the amount of resources needed to deliver them. Members must prioritise carefully, in consultation with officers, which items require what degree of involvement and information in advance of committee meetings, in order that this can be delivered within the officer capacity available.

The majority of items cannot be subject to the more involved options on this list, for reasons of officer capacity.

- Written briefing for the committee or all members (email)
- All-member newsletter (email)
- Requests for information from specific outside bodies etc.
- All-committee briefings (private or, in exceptional cases, in-committee)
- All-member briefing (virtual meeting)
- Facilitated policy development workshop (potential to invite external experts / public, see appendix 3)
- Site visits (including to services of the council)
- Task and Finish group (one at a time, one per cttee)

Furthermore, a range of public participation and engagement options are available to inform Councillors, see appendix 3.

Appendix 3 – Public engagement and participation toolkit

Public Engagement Toolkit

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its ‘menu of options’ for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what’s worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop. The toolkit includes (but is not be limited to):

- a. Public calls for evidence
- b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as ‘hackathons’) led by committees
- c. Creative use of online engagement channels
- d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities
- e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development
- f. Citizens assembly style activities
- g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)
- h. Committee / small group visits to services
- i. Formal and informal discussion groups
- j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)
- k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.

This public engagement toolkit is intended to be a quick ‘how-to’ guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

There is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee’s work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.

Governance Review Implementation Plan update (November 2023)

1. In the Six Month Review of Governance, Full Council approved the Governance Review Implementation Plan (GRIP) which predominantly comprises of practical, officer-led actions to improve the function of our committee system. Along with practical actions, there are a number of items which are work in progress as they are part of the Governance Committee's workplan for this year (eg. democratic participation).
2. Governance Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the delivery of the actions in the GRIP and where appropriate, to receive and consider draft content (eg. draft guidance to support the committee system).
3. To help bring to life the material in the GRIP itself, the below summarises the key achievements from the GRIP to date along with actions we still need to complete.

Improving how we explain the system

This was a critical part of the Governance Review and focused on how we better enable Members, citizens and officers in SCC to navigate the system and support committees to be effective in their role.

What we've done

- Rebranded and reformatted the democracy area of the SCC website to make it cleaner and easier to navigate for anyone trying to find dates or content for Committee meetings.
See: <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>
- Carrying on work to improve citizen involvement in our committees through a deep dive into public questions and petitions with citizens and stakeholders; and the proposal at Governance Committee December 2023 for a cross-party community involvement Working Group.
- Re-instated the Member Development Working Group to support Member learning and development. This has included work to improve the role profiles of Members within the Committee System.

What we still need to do

- Develop solutions and implement improvement to our approach to Public Questions with citizens and officers, an update report is on agenda for Governance Committee December 2023, with a report of recommendations to Governance Committee anticipated early 2024.
- Continue to improve the accessibility of our Committee meetings both in terms of physical and online access, working with the Sheffield Equality Partnership network. This includes further testing hybrid technology for meetings and using less formal places in the Town Hall for committee meetings.

Improving the support we provide to those working in the system

What we've done

- Provided support and signposting to wellbeing advice and support for Members through the internal Member Newsletters

- Updated internal approaches to Policy Committee workplans so that the overall set of workplans are regularly discussed by Committee Chairs and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure we better manage cross-cutting issues and support cross-committee working.
- Improved briefing guidance available to officers, particularly to support clearer work planning and support better committee system oversight by the S&R Committee
- Created a SharePoint portal to support officers to better navigate the Committee System. This includes access to guidance on work planning, briefings, decision and policy report templates, and guidance on key impact assessments (EIAs, CIAs).
- Achieved a consistent increase in the number of EIAs being completed and published with reports, ensuring we are evidencing any implications for people in Sheffield and appropriate mitigations.

What we still need to do

- We need to develop the skills of our officers to improve the quality and consistency of reports being presented to committees. We are working with our HR Team to develop the learning and development needed.
- Make it easier for officers to develop and get reports completed and published on time using the Mod.Gov app.
- Finalise a new policy toolkit to support officers engaging Committees in policy development.

Supporting development of our governance beyond the Six Month Review

What we've done

- Implemented Member Questions at Policy Committees, building on the established approach used at Full Council
- Introduced a proactive work planning approach for Full Council meetings, working cross-party with Whips
- Introduced new word limits on Notices of Motion at ordinary meetings of Full Council

What we still need to do

- Review the remits of Policy Committees and the associated relationship with Local Area Committees (part of the Governance Committee's work plan for this year)
- Support the improvement of democratic participation in the Committee System, complementing the work in the Future Sheffield programme to transform our approach to citizen engagement at SCC.