

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 07 February 2023

Report Title

Work Programme

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

To provide an update on the Work Programme of the Improving Places Select Commission.

Recommendations

1. That the report and proposed schedule of work be noted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Governance Advisor in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair to make changes to the schedule of work as appropriate between meetings, reporting any changes back to the next meeting for endorsement.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Work Programme – Improving Places Select Commission 2022/23

Background Papers

Minutes of Improving Places Select Commission meetings 2021/22

Minutes of Improving Lives Select Commission meetings 2021/22

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings 2021/22

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

IPSC – Work Programme 2022/23

1. Background

- 1.1 The remit of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) is to undertake scrutiny activity in respect of all matters pertaining to the borough of Rotherham as a place. In broad terms, this remit relates to business and economic development, employment, emergency planning, environment, housing, climate change, leisure, culture and tourism, transport and highways, as well as regulatory services such as trading standards and environmental health. The breadth of functions and services that fall within the Commission's remit is significant.
- 1.2 The way in which the Commission discharges its scrutiny activity is a matter for itself, having regard to the provisions of the Constitution and any direction from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The IPSC has chosen to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work.
- 1.3 The IPSC has eight scheduled meetings over the course of 2022/23, representing a maximum of 20 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 2.5 hours per meeting. Members therefore must be selective in their choice of items for the work programme. The following key principles of effective scrutiny are considered in determining the work programme:
 - Selection – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.
 - Value-added – Items had to have the potential to 'add value' to the work of the council and its partners.
 - Ambition – the Programme does not shy away from scrutinising issues that are of greatest concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account.
 - Flexibility – The Work Programme maintains a degree of flexibility as required to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration during the year and to accommodate any further work that falls within the remit of this Commission.
 - Timing – The Programme has been designed to ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, its findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. The Work Programme also helps safeguard against duplication of work undertaken elsewhere.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Members are required to review their work programme at each meeting during the 2022/23 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of the borough.
- 2.2 A proposed outline work programme for Improving Places Select Commission is appended to this report.

2.3 Selective Licensing Review

The Review of Selective Licensing concluded its follow-up with the South Yorkshire Police in December. The report of findings and recommendations is being compiled and is on the 21 March 2023 agenda for endorsement. The findings will be subject to current engagement activity with landlords and tenants of selective licensing areas. This activity is being undertaken by the service during February, with outcomes available for consideration by April 2023. It is understood that the results of the engagement work will inform the formal response of Cabinet to the recommendations of the review.

2.4 Nature Crisis Review

Following the agreement of the 25 May 2022 Council motion on Nature Crisis, this review was subsequently added to the IPSC work programme as of September 2022, scheduled for Spring 2023, having been referred by OSMB.

2.5 The aim of the review will be to explore how the Council can support improvements to ensure a more natural environment is enhanced. Angles of interest will be

- preserving and improving biodiversity throughout the Borough including animal, plant, and fungi species;
- assessing how air and water pollution may be affecting the natural environment;
- assessing the implications of climate change on biodiversity in the borough;
- determining steps that can be taken to help preserve and improve wildlife habitat and ecosystems.

2.6 Preliminary scoping for the review includes considerations of which Cabinet portfolio this work intersects. The review touches on aspects of transport and environment as well as social inclusion, jobs and the local economy, and public health. Therefore, consideration will be given to coordinate, and simplify where possible, the approach to information gathering and formulation of recommendations that involve multiple service areas.

2.7 The review will incorporate a strong element of consultation with partner and community organisations, such as the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Nature Recovery Rotherham, Yorkshire Water, etc. Stakeholders will be approached to comment and collaborate on innovative solutions.

2.8 The review builds on conversations around the impact of climate change in the Borough, following on from the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Since then, additional scrutiny work by the Rotherham Youth Cabinet and IPSC has supported the Council Plan 2022-25 objectives for a cleaner, greener local environment. The Council Plan also includes a theme that people are safe, healthy and live well. It is acknowledged that access to the natural environment is a key resource for promoting wellbeing.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Members are recommended to discuss potential areas of scrutiny work to be added to the work programme.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The work programme is subject to consultation with the Chair and Members of the IPSC. Regular discussions take place with Cabinet Members and officers in respect of the content and timeliness of items set out on the work programme.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The decision to develop a work programme is a matter reserved to the Commission and will be effective immediately after consideration of this report.
- 5.2 The Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Head of Democratic Services) is accountable for the implementation of any decision in respect of the Commission's work programme. The Governance Advisor supporting the Commission is responsible on a day-to-day basis for the Commission's work programme. Members are recommended to delegate authority to the Governance Advisor to make amendments to the programme between meetings.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
- 7.2 The authority of the Select Commission to determine its work programme is detailed within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Responsibility for Functions parts of the Constitution. The proposal to review the work programme is consistent with those provisions.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people or vulnerable adults arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Whilst there are no specific equalities implications arising from this report, equalities and diversity are key considerations when developing and reviewing scrutiny work programmes. One of the key principles of scrutiny is to provide a voice for communities, and the work programme for this Commission has been prepared following feedback from Members representing those communities.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no implications for CO2 emissions or climate change directly arising from this report. Members will have regard to the Climate Emergency when selecting potential items for scrutiny and in developing recommendations.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The membership of the Commission includes co-opted members from RotherFed who contribute to the development and review of the work programme. Where other matters are being considered for inclusion on the work programme, relevant partners or external organisations are consulted on the proposed activity and its timeliness.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no risks directly arising from this report.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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