

Introduction to the Economic Development & Planning Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 4 July 2023



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Support for the Committee

- Lead Officer:

- Dean Piper, Head of Economic Development & Planning

Supporting Officers:

- Michelle Smith, Economic Growth & Strategic Projects Manager
- John Holmes, Development Manager
- Alex Yendole, Strategic Planning & Placemaking Manager

Purpose of Scrutiny

- Hold local decision-makers to account for the decisions they make
- Consider and challenge the performance and delivery of services
- Identify and investigate areas of service delivery which appear to be problematic
- Identify options for improving services
- Listen to local people's views on life in Stafford Borough

Effective Scrutiny

- Needs to be seen as a ‘critical friend’
- Identify where decisions could be improved and how to prevent mistakes being made or repeated.
- Focus should be on forward thinking and making positive changes, rather than apportioning blame and focusing on the negatives.

The Committee's Role

In summary, 4 key aspects to the role:

- Policy Development and Review;
- Holding the Executive to Account;
- Performance Management Review
- External Scrutiny of Partners

Scrutiny's principal power is that of influence. Whilst it cannot make a decision, it can advise & make recommendations to Cabinet, Council or other Committees as appropriate.

Role - Policy Development & Review

- Review and scrutinise current Council policies and consider future policy development.
- Review of existing policies – is the policy delivering the intended outcomes?
- Development of new policies – influencing policy decisions before they are implemented

Role - Holding the Executive to Account

- Review and scrutinise decisions made by the Executive:
 - “call-in” before implementation; or
 - review after implementation
- Review of forward plan and Cabinet Agendas

Role - Performance Management & Review

- Monitor, review and/or scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to the discharge of the Council's functions
- Performance management Framework:
 - 3 year Corporate Plan (2021-24)
 - Corporate Business Objective 1 - *“To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs”*
 - Delivery Plans – annual projects, targets & delivery of strategic objectives
- Performance is reported on quarterly basis to Cabinet & Scrutiny

Role - External Scrutiny of Partners

- To scrutinise the work and impact of partners on the Council's community
- Council works with many different partners to deliver its Economic Growth Strategy i.e. Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group

The Committee's Remit

- Corporate Plan Priority for Corporate Business Objective 1 and supporting delivery plans
- Services/functions:
 - Economic Growth & Strategic Projects
 - Development Management
 - Strategic Planning & Placemaking
 - Housing Strategy
- Corporate Issues
- Budget Consultation

Scrutiny Work Programme

- Developing the work programme:
 - Determine at the start of the year and review at intervals
 - Small number of in-depth reviews – start small and learn what works well
- Consider:
 - **P**ublic Interest
 - **A**bility to change / influence
 - **P**erformance
 - **E**xtent
 - **R**eplication

Scrutiny's Work - Examples

- The Centre for Public Scrutiny identifies use of Committee meetings **and** Task & Finish Groups to deliver work programme
- Can use Scrutiny reviews to analyse projects & delivery
- Organise public meetings or invite local opinion
- Site visits & discussions with relevant experts
- Invite representatives from external organisations to attend & discuss priorities

Work Programme 2023 / 24

- Corporate Plan 2021 – 2024
- Corporate Business Objective 1
“To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs”
- Specific topics to be selected / agreed
- Agree whether to set up a Task & Finish group
- Standing items
 - Projects update
 - Performance update

Suggested topics & timings

- (1) Review of planning performance & measures to address backlog – *Thursday 24 August meeting*
- (2) Stafford Town Centre Transformation programme / Future High Streets Fund – *Tuesday 14 November meeting*
- (3) Update on Section 106 monitoring – *Tuesday 14 November meeting*

Suggested topics & timings (2)

(4) Garden Community proposals at Meecebrook – *Thursday 11 January meeting*

(5) Council's approach to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) duty - *Tuesday 5 March meeting*

Task & Finish Group

Potential Task & Finish Group

Review of events and activities in Stafford town centre and parks

Questions for Committee

- (1) Does the Committee agree with the proposed list of topics and timings, or are there alternative topics to consider?
- (2) Does the Committee wish to set up a Task & Finish review and does it agree with the proposed topic or wish to suggest an alternative?

Discussion