

Report

Democratic Services Committee

Part 1

Date: 24th October 2019

Item: 8

Subject Draft Work Programme

Purpose To present a suggested work programme for the Committee.

Author Head of Law and Regulation

Ward All Wards

Summary The purpose of a work programme is to enable the Committee to plan, organise and prioritise its workload.

Previously, reports have been brought to the Committee on an ad hoc basis, as and when work was referred. By adopting the suggested work programme in this report, the Committee will be able to plan out its projects and meetings, be clear on its aims and objectives, and properly assess at the end of the year the extent to which its aims have been achieved.

Proposal To agree the Committee's Work Programme.

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Officers
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

Background

The purpose of a work programme is to enable the Committee to plan, organise and prioritise its workload.

Previously, reports have been brought to the Committee on an ad hoc basis, as and when work was referred. By adopting the suggested priorities in this report, the Committee will be able to plan out its projects and meetings, be clear on its aims and objectives, and properly assess at the end of the year the extent to which its aims have been achieved.

The following priorities are suggested for the next year:

1. Constitution Review

There is a need to continue the work of systematically reviewing the various parts of the Council's Constitution, with a view to changing to the new modular style of document previously agreed by the Committee.

This will start with a review of the officer scheme of delegation in January 2020, to include new powers in relation to Sustainable Development applications, and a general update in the light of operational changes since the last review.

2. Chair of Council/Presiding Officer role

To be considered at the October 2019 Committee meeting. The Committee will consider options for creating a Chair of Council/ Presiding Officer role with a view to making recommendations to Council in November 2019, prior to the nomination of the mayor elect for the forthcoming municipal year.

If agreed, this will require consequential amendments to the Council's Rules of Procedure.

3. WLGA Member Development Charter

Charter accreditation was last discussed 9 November 2017 and the aim was for the Charter to be achieved in two years.

4. Support for Councillors in their ward work

Last discussed 14 February 2019- A Members page on the intranet to support Members was discussed. There is a need to bring forward a report to consider whether to continue with ward meetings in the light of this review and alternative ways of engaging with constituents. To be considered in April 2020, prior to the Council AGM in May

5. Boundary Commission Review of Communities

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is reviewing the electoral arrangements for the City of Newport with a view to considering and formulating proposals for future arrangements. This is part of the Commission's Programme to review all principal councils in Wales, in time for new arrangements to be introduced for the next local government elections in 2022. Newport is the 17th council to be reviewed.

The Commission has published initial consultation documents, showing the current elector to Councillor ratios in the City and how these compare to their Council Size Policy and ideal ratios. The Commission is inviting comments on these documents and the potential changes required to future electoral arrangements in Newport.

The final report from the cross party working group was presented to Council on the 30 April 2019 and the preferred options were submitted to the Boundary Commission for consideration. The Commission will now prepare its draft proposals for Newport's electoral arrangements, followed by a further statutory period of consultation before the Commission's final recommendations are made to Welsh Government.

There may be a requirement to reconvene the cross-party working group to consider any response the Boundary Commission draft electoral arrangement proposals, when they are published. This may be considered by Committee in January 2020, subject to the consultation timetable.

6. Democratic Services Annual Reports

Both the Committee and the Head of Democratic Services are required to produce an annual report to Council each year, so this will be built into the programme for the autumn of 2020. As part of the reporting process, the Committee will keep under review the adequacy of resources to meet any changing statutory duties.

7. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report

The IRPW's draft annual report will be submitted to Committee for consideration, subject to the timetable for any consultation responses. The final report will be to Council in April/May together with the Draft Schedule of Remuneration for approval for 2020/21.

Once the Committee's priorities are agreed and adopted, the support team will plan the reports and meetings for the rest of the year.

Financial Summary

There is no direct cost to adopting a programme of work.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
No action taken	M	L	Work programming arrangements are in place to ensure they are timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up.	Head of Democratic Services
The process is not embraced by report authors and members	M	M	If there is proliferation of unplanned or late items, the opportunity to ensure work programming is timely, meaningful, informative, and transparent, balanced, monitored, and joined up will diminish	Head of Democratic Services

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

These proposals will help the Council provide the best possible service to members and will provide information to the public and elected members.

Proposal

To agree the Committee's Work Programme.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications in adopting a programme of work.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications in adopting a programme of work.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no specific staffing implications in adopting a programme of work.

Background Papers

None.

Dated: 17th October 2019