

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 July 2020

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/042	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	21 July 2020
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Ian Shipp Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07368 134769 Email: ian.shipp@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is not included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: **It is recommended that Report No: CAB/WS/20/042, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted.**

1. Background / Context

1.1 On 9 July 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its first virtual TeamsLive meeting, and considered the following items:

1. Council Response to COVID-19;
2. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 July 2020 to 31 May 2021; and
3. Scrutiny Work Programme 2020-2021.

1.2. Council Response to COVID-19 (Verbal Briefing)

1.2.1 In June 2020, the Committee met informally to talk about its future work programme, and the general feeling was that the impact of COVID-19 will feature strongly. As a Committee, it recognised that it needed to gain further insight from the Leader and Chief Executive about the Council's response, and how the crisis was impacting on the Council, businesses and our communities so that it could understand where it could add value by looking in depth at specific areas. It was therefore agreed to invite the Leader and the Chief Executive to its next scheduled meeting to discuss the Council and community response to the COVID-19 crisis.

1.2.2 The Leader and the Chief Executive thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the Committee on their perspective on how COVID-19 was impacting the Council and its communities and in doing so, covered the 10 core topics identified by the Committee, as set out on the Agenda.

1.2.3 Arising from the discussion a number of areas were highlighted which the Council would need to consider as it moves into learning from the pandemic, as follows:

- There had been an outstanding response by the Families and Communities team, its partners and the local community to the pandemic, demonstrating the value of the investment the Council had made in the Families and Communities Strategy. It was acknowledged that there was a need to ensure the benefits of initiatives such as the "Home but Not Alone" service are not lost but are built upon and remodelled to continue to support people in a new way.
- The way the Council had worked closely with town and parish councils through the pandemic. There is the potential to examine those areas where the response from the community, including parish and town councils, had been strongest and learn why this was the case.
- How local Members and community leaders had worked differently during the pandemic, and what this may mean for the future.
- The impact that the pandemic had on the health and wellbeing of residents across West Suffolk, and what steps could be taken to support residents in future.

- How have other partners, housing associations, town/parish councils found working with the Council during the pandemic over the short term and how do they see this continuing over the medium to long-term as part of the recovery process.
- The resilience of council staff stepping out of their comfort zones and being deployed to other parts of the Council to provide much needed help and support; reviewing lessons learnt; building on flexibility and managing the welfare of staff.
- Ensuring the Council retains the legacy and the momentum which has come out of the pandemic by working even closer together with partners, agencies, volunteers etc.

1.2.4 As highlighted above, following the discussion, the Committee were seeking to identify those areas where it may wish to undertake further review to support the Council and its Communities. However, as the Chair recognised in summarising the debate, the breadth of the issues covered meant that further reflection would be required before determining the specific future Committee work (as was reflected in the work programme discussions as below). What had been prominent in the discussion was the outstanding work carried out throughout West Suffolk during these unprecedented times.

1.2.5 The Committee **noted** the briefing provided by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on the Council's response to COVID-19 and thanked them for their attendance and time.

1.3 Decisions Plan: 1 July 2020 to 31 May 2021 (Report No: OAS/WS/20/010)

1.3.1 The Committee considered and **noted** the latest version of the Cabinet Decisions Plan, covering the period 1 July 2020 to 31 May 2021. New decisions which had been included since the Decisions Plan was last published had been highlighted.

1.3.2 Members reviewed the Decisions Plan and asked questions relating to Public Space Protection Orders, confirming that due to the need to conclude the review before September 2020, this would not be subject to scrutiny review, and the review of the West Suffolk Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conditions Policy Handbook, to which it was confirmed that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee had acted as a consultee in the review.

1.4 Scrutiny Work Programme 2020-2021 (Report No: OAS/WS/20/011)

1.4.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/20/011, which set out the current position of its work programme and items currently agreed but had yet to be programmed for 2020-2021 as attached at Appendix 1.



- 1.4.2 The report also referred to the Committee’s informal scrutiny workshop held on 11 June 2020, where members identified potential new topics of work. In addition to the Covid-19 topics identified (see above), members had also suggested other topics they may wish to consider over the forthcoming year.
- 1.4.3 Reflecting on the discussions earlier in the meeting, the Committee agreed with the principle of the Chair and Vice-Chair working with officers to develop proposals on which aspects of the COVID-19 response to consider through the scrutiny process in detail; how they should be reviewed, and when. These would then be subject to consultation with members of the Committee, before inclusion on the formal work programme.
- 1.4.4 The Committee also agreed to reschedule the Community Safety Monitoring Annual Report for its September 2020 meeting given it is a statutory requirement and many aspects of the Community Safety Partnership’s priorities crossed over with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on communities including domestic violence and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.4.5 Members discussed the four topics identified at its informal meeting held in June 2020 and agreed to invite the Anglia Revenues Partnership to a future meeting to discuss Council Tax and Business Rates collections.
- 1.4.6 At its conclusion, the Committee, **noted** the current status of topics currently scheduled in its rolling work programme for 2020-2021 (Appendix 1) and also **resolved** to agree to develop the work programme based on the principles discussed in the Committee meeting.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Please see background documents.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Please see background documents.

5. Risks

- 5.1 Please see background documents.

6. Implications arising from the proposal

6.1 Financial

Please see background documents.

6.2 Equalities

Please see background documents.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Please see background documents.



8. Background documents

- 8.1 Report No: [OAS/WS/20/010](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cabinet Decisions Plan (1 July 2020 to 31 May 2021)
- 8.2 Report No: [OAS/WS/20/011](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update 2020-2021

