

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	10 January 2023
Subject:	Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2022/23, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; to seek a course of action on the operation of the Corporation Communications and Covid-19 Working Group; to update on issues associated with the reporting on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Digital Inclusion Working Group; and to update on the "Tool Kit" for Armed Forces Covenant.

Recommendation:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the Air Quality update report be deferred and considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 28 February 2023;
- (3) consideration be given to whether the Committee would like to select a further topic for a Working Group review;
- (4) consideration be given to the future of the Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group and whether the topic would be better dealt with at an informal meeting of the Committee rather than via Working Group meetings;
- (5) consideration be given to items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the

Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above;

- (6) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (7) to be consistent with a decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) no further updates be provided on the implementation of recommendations arising from Digital Inclusion Working Group; and
- (8) the update on the “Tool Kit” for Armed Forces Covenant be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2022/23 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny ‘adds value’ to the Council.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None	
Legal Implications: None	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for	Yes

report authors	
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There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the approval of, and monitoring of recommendations contained in Digital inclusion Working Group Final Report will help with the aim of ensuring that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them on a day-to-day basis - whether they be individuals, businesses or other entities e.g. the voluntary sector; and aim to reduce digital exclusion and the digital divide that can exist within society for a variety of reasons.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report. The aim of the Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group is to assess the changes instigated by in communicating with residents during the Covid-19 pandemic; the impact the changes have had; and how such changes shape the future of the Council communicating with its communities.
See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.

Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the presentation on the update on the Commissioning and the Procurement Policy will raise awareness of associated issues with Members. The Working Group established by the Committee to review the Council's Ethical Business Practices will look into ethical procurement.
See also reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.

Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report.

Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report. See reference to the Digital Inclusion Working Group referred to above.

Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report.

Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to the submission of the report on Air Quality Monitoring will raise awareness of associated issues with Members.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

This report is not subject to LD and FD comments. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)
Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)

(B) External Consultations

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Sefton CVS

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2022/23
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review
- Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group Scoping Document
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

- 1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2022/23 was approved by the Committee on 14 June 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.
- 1.3 **Air Quality Monitoring**

The Work Programme indicates that a report would be submitted to this meeting of the Committee on the topic of Air Quality Monitoring. The Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) has advised that the report cannot be submitted to this meeting because one of the key priority work streams to be reported on as part of the Air Quality Update is in relation to Sefton's Outline Business Case (OBC) for a Clean Air Plan, which specifically focuses on a HGV Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Following completion of the OBC, a report on the key outcomes and possible CAZ / non-CAZ options was presented to Cabinet for their consideration. Following this, to help inform the decision-making process, Cabinet requested detailed engagement takes place with key stakeholders –

including National Highways, Defra's Joint Air Quality Unit, Peel Ports and Liverpool CC.

This critical stakeholder engagement is currently underway and as such it is requested that the Air Quality update report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 28 February 2023. This will enable the outcome of any completed engagement to be included appropriately within the report, for the benefit of the Members.

- 1.4 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2022/23 and updated, as appropriate.

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2022/23

- 2.1 It is usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 2.2 At its last meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group.
- 2.3 The Committee is requested to consider whether a further Working Group should be selected.
- 2.4 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.

2.5 Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group

As referred to above, at its meeting held on 14 June 2022 the Committee agreed to establish a Corporate Communications and Covid-19 Working Group. The aim of the Working Group was to assess the changes instigated by Corporate Communications in communicating with residents during the Covid-19 pandemic; the impact the changes have had; and how such changes shaped the future of the Council communicating with its communities.

Councillors Bradshaw, Byrom, Carlin and Robinson had agreed to serve on the Working Group.

2.6 Problems Arranging Working Group Meetings

Four attempts have been made to arrange the first meeting of the Working Group. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find a mutually agreeable date between Members.

Following consultation with the Chair of the Committee it has been agreed that the Committee consider holding an informal meeting to review the topic of Corporate Communications and Covid-19; rather than via Working Group meetings.

If agreed, the informal meeting would adhere to the Working Group scoping document and would consider appropriate reports submitted by officers. A copy of the scoping document is attached as Appendix 3.

The views of the Committee are sought on this matter.

3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

- 3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.
- 3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 4 for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 4.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.
- 4.4 **Role**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by the Combined

Authority in May 2017 in accordance with the Combined Authorities Order 2017.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

4.5 **Membership**

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Hansen, Howard and Waterfield. Councillor Howard is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

4.6 **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be Members of the majority group. Councillor Steve Radford, a Liberal Party and Independent Group Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year; and Councillor Pat Moloney, a Liberal Democrat Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Vice-Chair.

4.7 **Quoracy Issues**

In the past a high number of meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been inquorate.

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

4.8 **Meetings**

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

4.9 The last meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 1 December 2022. The Committee considered the following items:

- Development of the Next Local Transport Plan for the Liverpool City Region
- Work Programme Update

- 4.10 The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 19 January 2023.
- 4.11 The Committee is requested to note the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

- 5.1 In June 2017 the Committee established a joint working Group with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) to review the topic of Digital Inclusion. The final report of the Working Group was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet in late 2018.
- 5.2 As is the usual practice reports have been submitted to Overview and Scrutiny setting out progress made against each of the recommendations contained in the final report. The last of 4 update reports was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the November 2022 committee cycle.
- 5.3 When such report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) on 8 November 2022, it was agreed that “no further update reports be submitted to the Committee subject to assurances that the actions identified in the report are continued and become “business as usual” operational matters”.
- 5.4 Contact has been made with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Sefton CVS and the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) who have responsibility for implementing the recommendations. All have confirmed that the actions identified in the report are continued and have become “business as usual” operational matters.
- 5.5 Sefton CVS have advised that in the areas of work that are relevant to them they will continue to deliver as “business as usual” in the context of the following information:

Recommendation	Update
Using the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic” data, areas of high unemployment be targeted to enable those Sefton residents excluded from the labour market to develop their ICT skills to improve their opportunities for gaining future employment	<p>Our Include-IT Mersey (Building Better Opportunities) D.I. project is in the process of being extended post-ESF/Lottery funding, through the UK-SPF from April 2023.</p> <p>Annual funding and volumes are lower than the current equivalent annual amount through BBO (59% in 2023/24, rising to 76.5% in 2024/25); and funding/volumes have to be split across boroughs in line with UK-SPF funding allocations (Sefton 16.79% of LCR). Therefore volumes are proportionally lower compared to previously and, importantly, are relatively low in relation to the continuing scale of the issue.</p>

Current approximate targets (TBC with the

LCR CA) are for only 35 Sefton participants in 2023/24 and 45 in 2024/25. We will, however, endeavour to exceed these by as much as possible within the funding constraints.

We also plan to continue the volunteer-led digital surgeries (drop-ins) currently in operation across the borough through the current BBO project (again, subject to agreement by the LCR CA), which will assist many more Sefton residents with basic digital skills and knowledge over the coming two years; providing a place that people can go to get support with using their digital devices.

Given the modest volumes our funding is likely to be able to support, additional basic digital skills provision through, for example, Sefton Adult Learning Service would be beneficial.

If further opportunities arise for a roll out of the IncludeIT project and to support the objectives of recommendation 2 then Sefton CVS be requested to consider such roll out to the priority areas identified within the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document Digital Inclusion research

We will continue to target/ deliver in the priority wards in the Bootle, Netherton and Southport areas. We will explore potential for delivery in the Ravenmeols ward, subject to the fit of the population demographics in terms of digital exclusion with UK-SPF delivery priorities.

VOLA recently undertook a research project for the LCR CA to map community-based DI provision across the LCR, including Sefton. We liaised with relevant Sefton MBC Officers:

- As part of the planning process to ensure the fitness for purpose of the survey/ proposed data to be captured, to ensure that it met Sefton MBC needs, in addition to those of the LCR CA;
- And in undertaking the research itself, capturing Sefton Library Services and Adult Learning Service DI provision, as well as sense-checking the responses in terms of respondents.

Prior to this LCR research commission by the CA, Sefton MBC was intending to

Digital connectivity in community-based facilities

undertake its own, similar research into the same subject. Through our liaison, the relevant council officer was happy to use the results/info/ data from our research rather than duplicate effort.

The final report and online map of DI services is soon to be published by the LCR CA, which we will share with Sefton MBC, along with the background data.

VOLA will be running a grants programme through the UK-SPF aimed at improving and/or creating community (VCFSE sector) facilities where people can go to 'get online'.

The aim of the programme will be to provide funding and support to:

1. Upgrade outdated and poor quality digital kit and/or improve broadband connectivity where current connections are poor;
2. Increase capacity, by providing funding to purchase more devices, where current facilities are insufficient to meet demand; and
3. Target neighbourhoods where there is currently a lack of community based digital facilities to help local community-based organisations to set up new drop-ins.

Priorities and investment decision will be driven and informed, in part, by the recent DI research that VOLA undertook for the LCR CA. CVS Funding Officers will be involved in the assessment of applications and a LA Officer will be asked to sit on the Steering Group along with the Sefton CVS' CEO.

The same % borough splits will apply as for Include-IT Mersey project above (Sefton 16.79% - as set by UK-SPF). £219k will be distributed in grants over the funding period.

The first grant application round will run from January to March 2023 to meet UK-SPF year 1 spend targets, with 4 further

rounds over 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

The LCR CA has requested that the maximum grant amount will initially be set at £10k for round 1 (can/will be reviewed for future rounds).

Assuming an average grant award of £10k, this will result in 22 grants being distributed across Sefton. Ultimately, more than 22 may be achieved if the average grant award is lower than £10k. Equally, if the maximum grant level is increased in years 2 or 3, it could possibly be slightly lower.

I hope you and Sefton MBC agree that this is very much welcomed investment into community-based DI facilities in the borough.

- 5.6 To be consistent with a decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills); and taking into account the assurances of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Sefton CVS and the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) no further updates be provided on the implementation of recommendations arising from Digital Inclusion Working Group.

6. "TOOL KIT" FOR ARMED FORCES COVENANT

- 6.1 The Work Programme indicates that an update on the "Tool Kit" for Armed Forces Covenant be submitted to this meeting.
- 6.2 At present there is not much to report since the last update in respect of the Armed Forces Covenant Toolkit Document. However, following the introduction of legislation (the Armed Forces Act 2021) which came into force in November 2022 local authorities are now legally required to provide support to the Armed Forces Community in terms of housing, healthcare and education. Accordingly, Sefton will be looking to re-sign its Armed Forces Covenant document in 2023 and this will be the subject of a re-launch. Further updates will be provided following the re-launch of the Covenant.