

**Meeting:** Environment Sub-committee

**Date:** 5 July 2017

**Title:** Work Programme 2017/18

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**Service:** Law and Governance

**Wards affected:** All

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To invite Members to identify topics for potential inclusion in the 2017/18 Environment Sub-committee work programme.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Sub-committee is recommended to identify topics relevant to the remit of the Sub-committee that could be included in the 2017/18 work programme.

## **3. Details**

3.1 The process of establishing the 2017/18 overview and scrutiny work programme began in February 2017 with an email to all Elected Members and Tier 1, 2 and 3 managers, seeking ideas for topics scrutiny could usefully look at. It was explained with this request that, as in previous years, the focus of overview and scrutiny would be on contributing to policy development.

3.2 A press release was issued on 7 February 2017 seeking the views of members of the public as to what services would be important for scrutiny to focus on. An article was also placed on the Authority web site and communication platforms inviting members of the public to raise issues that they thought would be suitable for scrutiny to investigate.

3.3 The Senior Leadership Team also discussed the work programme and identified key policy areas for scrutiny to focus on. The work programme process and suggestions received to date were also discussed at a meeting of scrutiny chairs and deputy chairs.

3.4 Members of the Sub-committee are invited to put forward any topic suggestions that they have for inclusion in the work programme. The remit of the Environment sub-committee covers the environment, energy use, climate change, flood risk management and waste management.

3.5 These suggested topics raised by members of the Sub-committee, will be scheduled accordingly across the year, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair and relevant officers.

3.6 As has been practice in previous years, it is recommended that sub groups (of around 4/5 members) be established to carry out the scrutiny of the topics that have been

selected for in-depth investigation. These sub groups operate in a more informal way and can consult with a wide range of witnesses in various settings, often over a shorter period of time. When dealing with a specific topic, this focused way of working is often more productive than trying to achieve the same in a formal committee setting. Whilst more than one topic can be prioritised across the municipal year, only one sub group per committee/sub-committee can be established at any one time due to resourcing restraints.

3.8 In determining if any topics should be selected for in-depth investigation, the following criteria should be considered when prioritising:

- Is it timely?
- Will it duplicate any other work ongoing within the Council or the North East Combined Authority scrutiny work programme?
- Will it add value/contribute to policy development?