

# Meeting: Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

**Date: 15 June 2016**

**Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17**

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**Service: Law and Governance**

**Wards affected: All**

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the topics received for potential inclusion in the 2016/17 Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee work programme, to set-out the work programme process to date and the next steps for finalising the topics to be included.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The sub-committee is recommended to agree the work programme items that have been evaluated and prioritised so far and identify any further topics relevant to the remit of the sub-committee that could be included in the 2016/17 work programme.

## **3. Details**

- 3.1 The process of establishing the 2016/17 overview and scrutiny work programme began in February 2016 with an email to all 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 The Senior Leadership Team discussed the work programme at a meeting in March 2016, helping to identify some key policy areas for scrutiny to focus on. The work programme process and suggestions received to date was also discussed at a meeting of scrutiny chairs and deputies in March 2016.
- 3.3 In addition to asking senior staff and Members to put forward ideas, an article was also placed in the residents' magazine inviting members of the public to raise any issue that they thought would be suitable for scrutiny to investigate. As a result 2 suggestions were submitted but none fell within the remit of the sub-committee.
- 3.4 In order to ensure that the topics selected will deliver the greatest value in terms of policy development, relevant officers have done some preliminary work to scope and evaluate the topics that have been received. These have been shared and discussed with the Chair and Deputy Chair. A list of suggested topics relevant to Economic Prosperity Sub-

Committee is attached as Appendix A. These have been split into topics that would constitute an in-depth investigation (to be undertaken by a sub-group) and monitoring reports that could be dealt with during committee meetings.

- 3.5 In determining which topics should be prioritised for in-depth investigation, the following criteria have been considered:
- Is it timely?
  - Will it duplicate any other work ongoing within the Council or the NECA scrutiny work programme?
  - Will it add value/contribute to policy development?
- 3.6 Topics which meet all three of the above criteria have been prioritised for in-depth investigation. Subject to approval by the sub-committee for inclusion in the work programme, a scoping document for each in-depth topic will be prepared.
- 3.7 As has been practice in previous years, it is recommended that sub-groups (of around 4/5 members) be established to carry out 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 If there are several in-depth investigation topics identified by the sub-committee that are unlikely to be completed within the municipal year, these can be carried forward to the next municipal year, providing they would still be timely to consider at that time.
- 3.9 During the meeting, Members will have the opportunity to raise any other topics relevant to the remit of the sub-committee that they think should be included in the work programme. Additional topics raised will be scheduled accordingly in consultation with the Chair and the Deputy Chair. In suggesting any topics members should be mindful that the remit of the sub-committee includes:-
- Economic Development
  - Planning
  - Business and Enterprise
  - Transport Network
  - Highways and Road Safety
  - Town Centres
  - Inward Investment
  - Tourism

#### **4. Appendices**

2016/17 work programme suggestions for the Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

#### **5. Background Information**

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author:

- Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee minutes and work programme 2015/16

## Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

### In-depth investigation suggestions

#### - **Business Rates**

To examine the changes that will occur from 2019/20 when local authorities will retain 100% business rates. Council's will be able to decide how to spend the revenue and to lower rates to attract new business, allowing some greater degree of flexibility over finances. A scrutiny study could explore the options available to the Council in implementing this change.

It is proposed that the whole sub-committee receive an overview of the proposed changes to the business rates system at its next meeting on 13 July 2016. This exercise would enable the sub-committee to gain a better understanding of the issues to arise and to scope any in-depth investigation.

#### - **Inward Investment**

To look at targeted sector groups and how the local authority interacts with NECA.

It is proposed that until the future governance arrangements surrounding the NECA become clearer and the outcome of the EU Referendum is known, any such investigation be put on hold.

#### - **Town Centre Parking**

To review the car parking provision in town centres and how this might be improved to support the town centre economies.

The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee has established a Parking Permit Sub-Group to review the current permit system and identify ways to improve and simplify the permit system across the borough. It is proposed that until the sub-group concludes its work, any in-depth investigation into town centre parking should not proceed.

#### - **Transport Management System**

Clarification on this topic is being sought from Councillor Harrison, who suggested it.

### Monitoring Reports

- Tyne & Wear Bus Strategy
- North East Combined Authority Transport Plan
- Apprenticeships
- Economic Profile of the Borough
- Port of Tyne Visit
- Whitley Bay and Wallsend Regeneration
- NECA Public Transport Review