

Meeting: Housing Sub-committee

Date: 27 June 2016

Title: Work Programme 2016/17

Author: Emma Fagan

Service: Law and Governance

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** To inform Members of the topics received for potential inclusion in the 2016/17 Housing 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 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: one in relation to Alzheimer's support and one in relation to pedestrian routes.
- 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 been received. These have been shared and discussed with the Chair and Deputy Chair at a pre-agenda meeting. A full list of the suggestions received

relevant to Housing 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 should be 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 should be prioritised for in-depth investigation. In the previous municipal year, the sub-committee identified some work around sustainable tenancies as an in-depth investigation for completion in 2016/17. The main focus of this would be to consider the outcomes of changes made to officer structures and working practices, the aim of which was to identify and offer greater support to vulnerable tenants, in order to improve the sustainability of tenancies. The Chair and Deputy Chair have discussed this work with relevant officers at a pre-agenda meeting and it was agreed that this work would best be completed towards the end of the municipal year (February/March 2017) to allow enough time for changes to be fully implemented. An update on this topic has been scheduled for July 2016.
- 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 available resources. A report will be brought to a future meeting seeking the establishment of a sub-group to carry out the sustainable tenancies work.
- 3.8** If there are several in-depth investigation topics identified by a committee/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.

4. Appendices

2016/17 work programme suggestions for Housing 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.

Housing Sub-committee

In-depth investigation:

- **Sustaining tenancies**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the new tenancy sustainment process. To see if the intended outcomes have been met, identify any areas that haven't worked and explore any improvements that could be made to the process. This could involve discussions with tenant groups to receive some first hand experiences.

It is anticipated that this work will begin in February/March 2017 and an interim update will be presented to the sub-committee in July 2016.

Monitoring reports/Committee reports

- **Housing Strategy**

To contribute to the development of the Housing Strategy 2016-2021.

- **Affordable Homes**

To receive update reports on the delivery of the programme and information relating to the completion of developments and the number of units granted through planning permissions, including how many are to be affordable.

- **Kier North Tyneside**

To examine the latest performance information relating to housing repairs and housing investment work delivered through Kier North Tyneside.

- **Police and Safer Estates Team**

As part of the sub-committee's role as the designated crime and disorder committee, to look at the joint work undertaken by the police and the Council's Safer Estates Team to tackle anti-social behaviour. This would be to focus on operational issues.

- **Police and Crime Commissioner**

To invite the Police and Crime Commissioner, Vera Baird, to discuss the current strategic priorities and the success of new initiatives brought in to generate efficiencies.

- **Lettings Policy**

To examine the impact of changes made to the Lettings Policy as a result of the 2016 review.

- **Housing Bill**

Brief on the impact to North Tyneside tenants and residents following changes brought about by the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

- **Universal Credit**

To look at how far Universal Credit has been rolled out in North Tyneside, the impact that this has had on residents and the support that is being offered to those affected.