

From: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: **Scrutiny Committee – 7 July 2021**
Subject: Short Focused Inquiries - Work Programme
Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to prioritise the suggestions, put forward by the Scrutiny Committee, for Short Focused Inquiries (SFIs) and to ask the Scrutiny Committee to agree a work programme. The Scrutiny Committee will then revisit the SFI work programme after the summer break.

Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee agree:

- a. an initial work programme for short focused inquiries and set out the priority order; and
- b. delegate to Officers the arrangement of the first inquiry as outlined in the report.

1. Introduction

- a) During 2020, as the Council moved to meeting virtually in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to temporarily suspend the Select Committee work programme in favour of carrying out shorter and more focused pieces of work.
- b) Short Focused Inquiries were carried out into the [Visitor Economy in Kent](#) and [The Farming Economy](#). These resulted in recommendations to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member and required a response within two months of receipt. Responses to both Inquiries have been circulated to the Scrutiny Committee and [published on our website](#).
- c) Three suggestions for Short Focused Inquiries were received and these are included in the list in part 2, below.

2. Suggested Topics

- a) Suggestions within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee:
 - i. Home to School Transport
 - ii. Section 106 contributions – monitoring process
 - iii. Diversionary/Preventative activity for young people

3. Next Steps

- a) Once the Committee has agreed a work programme for short focused inquiries, and assigned an order of priority, work will commence on arranging the inquiry into the first topic.
- b) The proposed process is for a background briefing to be produced for Members by the relevant directorate. Officers in Democratic Services will also scope out the issue and agree with the Chair the people from whom the Committee should hear. A limited number of informal briefings will then be arranged for Members of the Inquiry Group. Subsequent to these briefings having taken place, the Inquiry Group will need to informally discuss and agree a draft report featuring key findings and any recommendations it wishes to make. This report will then need to be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for formal consideration. If the report and recommendations are agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, while meeting formally, the report will be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) for a response within two months.
- c) The work programme will be reviewed after the summer break by the Scrutiny Committee as the first review is concluded.

3. Recommendation:

That the Scrutiny Committee agree:

- a. **an initial work programme for short focused inquiries and set out the priority order; and**
- b. **delegate to Officers the arrangement of the first inquiry as outlined in the report.**

4. Author Contact Details

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