

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 16 March 2006

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- **Current programme**
 - (1) **To note the progress made in completing the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005/06;**
 - (2) **That the following Task and Finish Panels be disbanded having completed their respective terms of reference/work programmes:**
 - (a) **Externally Funded Leisure Services and Youth Provision**
 - (b) **Register of Local Development Proposals/ Residential Parking issues**
 - (c) **Member Training**
- **Overview and Scrutiny Programme 2006/07**
 - (2) **To consider and formulate a programme for the forthcoming year and in particular whether resources should be allocated to:**
 - (a) **outstanding current reviews**
 - (b) **new requests (as attached)**
 - (c) **priorities within the draft Council Plan for 2006/2010**
 - (d) **the Forward Plan**
 - (e) **matters arising from recent OS review seminar**

Introduction

1. The Overview and Scrutiny rules state that this Committee shall approve an Overview and Scrutiny work programme prior to the annual Council meeting each year.
2. As this Council year draws to a close, attention now needs to focus on the completion of this task for the forthcoming year.
3. The Committee is requested to give a clear indication at this meeting on the work that they wish to see included in the plan. This will enable officers to compile a programme and bring forward a draft plan with resourcing implications for the next meeting on 6 April 2006.
4. Members will note from the existing plan the progress made in ensuring its completion. During the course of the year, three of the four 'Task and Finish' Panels achieved their respective terms of reference and are recommended for disbanding. As detailed in the Scrutiny Annual Report, the Standing Panels also made progress and finished most of their work for this year.
5. In determining a new programme the Committee may wish to consider the following issues:

(a) Current work

6. Members will be aware that certain items in the current plan have failed to achieve the allocated reporting deadline. Many are awaiting external guidance or due to other demands could not be completed by the end of this year. Contained in the current programme is a list of all outstanding items. Members may wish to consider whether further time should be allocated to these areas to enable completion. Members and officers need to be realistic when considering this process to be sure that the necessary work load can be completed within the timescale of the plan. Similarly Members and officers need also to consider whether items where no progress has been made for a while should be removed from the programme and slotted back at a time when progress is achievable.

8. Most of the residual items relate to the Standing Panels. Some however, cover the work of the Task and Finish Panel on Traveller issues which has yet to complete its terms of reference. The Committee may wish to consider the future of this Panel, in particular whether any aspects of the work should be refocused or reprioritised to ensure progress is made.

9. The Committee may also review the terms of reference of the current Standing Panels with a view to assessing whether they should be continued or restructured in any way to facilitate the new programme.

7. Reviews to be continued will need to be prioritised and allocated an appropriate time limit.

(b) New requests

9. Officers have sought new proposals from both Members and Senior Management through the weekly bulletin. These are attached for consideration.

There are two options for carrying out each review. The Committee may:

- Establish a new Task and Finish Panel – This option is suitable for topics that are issued-based and time limited with clearly defined objectives.
- Add items to the work of the Standing Panels or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself.

(c) The draft Council Plan

10. The Committee will note that one of the main functions of scrutiny is to review the key corporate priorities contained in the Council Plan. This is to identify whether scrutiny can 'add value' and contribute to the realisation of the any of these objectives through review. Members are asked to determine whether time should be allocated in the next year calendar to facilitate any aspects of the emerging plan covering the 2006-2010 period.

(d) Forward Plan

11. The Committee will be aware that scrutiny has expressed a commitment to undertaking a more pro-active role in scrutinising the work of the Executive and in particular developing its pre-scrutiny work. They may wish therefore to allocate provision to reviewing the Forward Plan of the Cabinet. This option should enable scrutiny to identify in advance items and allocate provision accordingly.

(e) OS Review Seminar

12. As part of the current Overview and Scrutiny training programme, a seminar will be held on 11 March 2006 to review the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements and consider improvements. Members may wish to bring forward any ideas about arising from this exercise for inclusion in the new plan.

(f) Other Commitments

13. In determining the future programme, emphasis should be placed on the standard requirements contained in the Overview and Scrutiny Rules. In particular the Committee should ensure that the agreed programme has sufficient officer and member resources to support it, establish a reserve list for any items which do not find a place in the plan, and review all proposals to ensure that they relate to the Councils Policy Framework

14. The Committee should also ensure that future commitments are properly prioritised. A criteria has been produced for this and should be used to rank items in terms of importance.

15. It is anticipated that the programme will be reviewed six months after implementation.