

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Overview And Scrutiny Coordinating Group

Date of Committee 20 March 2007

Report Title Developing the Core Work Programme

Summary This report advises members of the feedback on the elements to be included within a core work programme for overview and scrutiny.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees Leaders Liaison Group 1 March 2007; Cabinet 8 March 2007
- Local Member(s) N/A
- Other Elected Members
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Sarah Duxbury
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION No

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

To Council *Council for approval of Core Work Programme 15 May 2007*

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Agenda No

Overview And Scrutiny Coordinating Group - 20 March 2007.

Developing the Core Work Programme

Report of the Strategic Director Performance & Development

Recommendation

That the Group agrees the elements to be included in the Core Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny 2007/08

Recommends that Council approves the Core Work Programme

That the Core Work Programme is reviewed on an annual basis

Introduction

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group agreed at its meeting on 17 January 2007 that the following matters should be included in a core work programme-
 - Directorate Report Cards
 - Medium Term Financial Planning
 - Joint Scrutiny relating to the Local Area Agreement
2. It also decided to seek the views of the Cabinet, Leaders Liaison Group and the views of the members of overview and scrutiny committees on the issues which should form part of any core work programme and which need to be planned for during 2007/08.
3. The number of items included in a core work programme should be small to enable Committees to retain some flexibility and accommodate issues that may arise during the course of the year. It should reflect the key issues that must be addressed by Overview and Scrutiny over the next financial year whatever else it does.
4. The general criteria that the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group have adopted for the selection of topics are attached as Appendix 2.

Feedback

5. The Leaders Liaison Group considered the matter on 1 March 2007 and the Cabinet on 8 March 2007. Their views were

- The Core Work Programme should include areas which are likely to have a significant impact on the Council's CPA assessment in 18 months time, where a scrutiny review would be helpful preparation for inspection – the specific example given was preparation for the Children's Services Joint Area Review
- Partnerships and Area/Locality working was considered a particular priority given the emphasis on neighbourhood governance, enhanced two tier working and local area agreements.

6. The Cabinet considered the matter on 8 March 2007 and during the discussion the following views were expressed

- Care must be taken to comply with the delegation of responsibilities under the Constitution and to ensure that the best possible use was made of the expertise of overview and scrutiny committees when routing items.
- Members "substituting" on overview and scrutiny committees often gained wider experience in the operations of the Council thereby enabling a more rounded approach to scrutiny.
- Future legislation could possibly increase the workload of councillors and might require further consideration of the scrutiny function.
- The Constitution provided for members of an overview and scrutiny committee and other members, in groups of five, to require items to be included on the agendas for future meetings of the committee.
- Notification of items for future consideration from individual members could be given at committee meetings or at members briefing meetings.
- Consideration should be given to arrangements for joint scrutiny by the County and District/Borough Councils. Members noted that the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to receive input on a particular issue from a portfolio holder of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.
- Workloads were prioritised and if necessary the frequency of meetings could be increased on a temporary basis to deal with increased work programme.

7. The Cabinet resolved

- (1) That the Cabinet agrees the issues suggested for the Overview and Scrutiny Core work Programme for 2007/08
- (2) However the Cabinet would encourage Overview and Scrutiny Chairs to consider the following:
 - (a) Flexibility of items to be considered between committees to balance the work load
 - (b) Emphasis to be placed on directorate report cards, performance management related items and LAA targets
 - (c) Making sufficient space in their work programmes for issue and concerns raised by elected members

Recommendations

- 8. The Group is asked to consider the Draft Core Work Programme attached as Appendix and amend/approve for submission to Council

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director
Performance & Development

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01 March 2007

Issue	Lead Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Comments (Timing or other issues)
Directorate Report Cards	All	Six monthly basis
Medium Term Financial Planning	Resources Performance & Development	After publication of Corporate Business Plan and before November.
Joint Scrutiny relating to the Local Area Agreement, Partnerships and Localities	Joint OSC bodies	
Children's Services – preparation for JAR/CPA	Children, Young People and Families	Completion by March 2008

Selecting Topics for Overview and Scrutiny

- 1 Whether or not any particular issue will be addressed is determined using the following criteria.
 - Does this issue have a potential impact for significant section(s) of the population?
 - Is it a matter of general public concern?
 - Is the issue to be reviewed a key deliverable of a strategic and/or partnership plan?
 - Is it a key performance area where the Council needs to improve?
 - Is there a legislative requirement to undertake the review?

- 2 Secondly to ensure that reviews add value/ make a difference consideration will be given to whether it is practicable to undertake the review by asking the following questions-
 - Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?
 - Is the overview and scrutiny activity timely?
 - Is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?
 - Is there evidence to support the need for overview and scrutiny?
 - What are the likely benefits to the council and its customers?
 - Are we likely to achieve a desired outcome?
 - What are the potential risks?

Reasons to Reject Items for Overview and Scrutiny

- 3 There will sometimes be very compelling reasons why an item should not be subject to overview and scrutiny. Most commonly this arises where
 - An issue is being examined elsewhere - e.g. by the cabinet, working group, officer group, other body
 - An issue was dealt with less than 2 years ago
 - New legislation or guidance is expected within the next year
 - There is no scope for overview and scrutiny to add value/ make a difference