



Overview & Scrutiny Committee 11th December 2007

Report from the Director of Policy & Regeneration

For Action

Wards Affected:
None

Work Programme and Tracking Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee last updated its work programme at the meeting on 30th of May 2007. The appointment of a new chair has provided an opportunity to revisit the work programme, develop options for inclusion and discuss how the committee could track its recommendations through to implementation and impact.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees new items for inclusion on the work programme including two new task groups to be started when resources allow.
- 2.2 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees the process for tracking recommendations through to their implementation and impact.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Introduction

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee's work programme was last updated at its meeting on 30th of May 2007. The appointment of a new chair has provided an opportunity to revisit the work programme, develop options for inclusion and discuss how the committee could operate in future.

- 3.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a wide and cross-cutting remit which includes all council services (except those in relation to Children and Families), the activities of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the operation of the Local Area Agreement (LAA).
- 3.3 The new Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act aims to further strengthen the role of Overview & Scrutiny in championing the interests of local people and developing a greater role in place shaping and policy development. A Member development seminar was recently held to outline some of the new powers which include:
- A duty on the authority or executive to respond to Overview & Scrutiny committees
 - The ability to require certain information from LAA partners
 - Overview & Scrutiny committees will be able to require a partner organisation to have regard to a report when exercising their function
 - 'Councillor Call for Action' enables any Member of the council to refer to a Overview & Scrutiny Committee any local government matter that falls within its remit

Further information about this will be brought to this committee once guidance relating to the Act is published.

Work Programme

- 3.4 A programme of carefully selected topics should constructively challenge the Executive, engage the public by connecting with community concerns, connect with the council's priorities and have the potential to add value to the work of the council.
- 3.5 The committee can choose different subject areas in different ways depending on the subject size and the depth of investigation required. This can be done through task group, issue specific themed meetings, or short discrete agenda items. In all cases the Overview & Scrutiny committee has the ability to request information and call witnesses.
- 3.6 A menu of proposed task groups is attached at appendix A. Members of the committee may wish to choose two new task groups to be started when resources allow.
- 3.7 When considering what to include on the work programme the committee may wish to consider the following criteria:
- Whether or not Overview & Scrutiny can develop an effective outcome / impact
 - Degree of fit with corporate or community strategy priorities
 - Public concern
 - Stakeholder or partner concern
 - Scope for efficiency gains

- Duplication with other work
- Timing & resources

A copy of the current work programme is attached at appendix B
Tracking Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations

- 3.8 The Committee is reminded that they also have the power to ask members of the Executive to attend meetings to provide evidence and be questioned on particular areas of concern or when particular issues relating to their lead area are being discussed
- 3.9 One of the main roles of Overview & Scrutiny is to help to shape and improve the services received by local communities. To this end the committee undertakes in depth reviews in the form of task groups and shorter pieces of work within the main committee. To be able to identify the impact of the its work the committee needs to be able to identify the implementation and impact of its recommendations.
- 3.10 When task group reports are agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee they are forwarded to the Executive with a covering report. This report not only outlines the financial and legal implications it also details the response to the recommendations of the services or services responsible for that particular area of work.
- 3.11 For a number of reasons including the need to look at resources across the organisation the Executive has traditionally noted the task group recommendations, while frequently asking services to develop action plans or service plans taking the recommendations into account.
- 3.12 For Overview & Scrutiny to be able to identify the outcomes and impacts of its recommendations it needs to be able to identify which of its recommendations have been implemented. It is therefore important that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives appropriate feedback.
- 3.13 To obtain appropriate feedback it is proposed that the relevant service officer and lead Executive member are asked to respond to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on two occasions. The first of these should be six months after the task group report was discussed at the Executive and the second should be six months later.
- 3.14 A template for the first feedback session is attached at appendix C and should include information on which recommendations have been implemented, which have not and why, who the lead officers are and the timescales involved. The lead service officer and the lead Executive member would then be asked to attend the meeting to discuss the feedback.
- 3.15 The second feedback session should focus on whether or not implementation has happened and what impact the recommendations have had. Again the relevant service lead officer and lead Executive member should be invited to the meeting.

4.0 Financial Implications

None

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

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