

14 June 2011

Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2011/12

Ward(s) All

Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Mike Bird	Leader
	Councillor Mohammed Arif	Business Support Services
	Councillor Chris Towe	Finance and Personnel

Summary of report:

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant background information for Members so that the Panels work programme can be agreed for 2011/12.

It is important for Members to consider the wide range of potential issues within their remits that they could consider during the year which could range from council specific to completely external issues.

When agreeing items it is important that consideration is given to what, value the Panel can add and what tools and performance measures are available to support them in their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Member's consider the range of items within their remit available to them and agree a work programme for 2011/12 along with any potential working groups and their membership.

Background papers:

Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11
Minutes of previous meetings

Resource and legal considerations:

In terms of resources it is important that the right balance and number of items and working groups are selected so that the work programme can be completed during the year without placing undue pressure on Member capacity.

Legal considerations for specific items will need to be addressed as and when necessary based on the items that are selected for inclusion on the work programme.

Citizen impact:

An effective work programme will enable the Panel to focus its work on the most important issues within its remit. Consideration of these issues and subsequent recommendations, if accepted, could improve the quality of services delivered to local residents.

Environmental impact:

The level of environmental impact will be dependant on which issues are selected to become a part of the panels work programme for 2011/12. The borough's Sustainable Community Strategy places an importance on considering the impact of present decisions on future generations which includes environmental issues.

Performance management:

The report asks Members to consider performance management information when deciding on their work programme, and also to consider how they wish to use performance management information and tools in assisting them with their work over the course of the year.

Equality Implications:

Ensuring equality for all is a key theme in the boroughs Sustainable Community Strategy as well as being one of the Council's core values. Members are advised to consider what, if any, equality implications there are for any items on their work programme.

Consultation:

Members may wish to consider the results of any formal or informal consultation exercises, including that with the public and partners, when considering what items they wish to include in their work programme. Whilst Council officers carry out a range of consultation activity on behalf of the Council, Members themselves engage with the public on a much more frequent basis and it is valuable to consider feedback from these sources as well.

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Introduction

At the start of each municipal year it is good practice for scrutiny and performance panels to spend some time discussing and agreeing its work programme for the year ahead for issues within its remit.

As Members will already be aware scrutiny and performance panel remits were amended by Council at its meeting on 23 and 25 May 2011. For information the Panels remit in Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution reads as:

Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel

All aspects and general services related to the Councils corporate centre for example; financial services including the annual budget process and the Council wide financial position, corporate performance management, legal and constitutional services, services falling within the Councils transformation agenda within the functions set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act, 2000.

Work Programme

In agreeing its work programme for 2011/12 the Panel will be informed from a range of sources, including all 60 Members, last years Panel work streams and suggested carry over items , Council Officers, Partners and the Public.

When agreeing the items to be included in its work programme focus should be given to the range of performance management information available that could assist the Panel with each particular issue. A whole host of performance information is available on a range of subjects that Members could utilise to measure success or otherwise.

Working Groups

Members need to decide whether they want to operate any working groups for this year. Working Groups are at their most effective when they are considering broad policy areas that require detailed investigation time that cannot be completed at Panel level. The Panel will set the working group remit, its membership and once a working group has completed its investigations it will report its findings and recommendations to the Panel for consideration and adoption.

It is very important that Member capacity is considered when deciding on what working groups are formed as many members sit on more than one panel and their respective working groups. As such getting suitable dates in the municipal diary and getting suitable attendance at those meetings is difficult if too many working groups are formed. In previous years experience and given the increased number of Panel's in this years municipal diary, it is suggested that each Panel should look to run only one working group at any one time. Panels that wish to operate more than working group during the year could timetable the second to start as the first finishes.

A copy of the councils working group toolkit has been despatched separately to Members and is available to members of the public by request. Member's are asked to familiarise themselves with this toolkit ahead of deciding what, if any, working groups they wish to run.

Value for Money Service Reviews

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel has developed a value for money (vfm) toolkit to assist Members if it is decided to complete a service review. Last year the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel used the value for money toolkit to review the Councils Communication and Payroll and Pensions services. The two reviews were well received by both Members and Officers and resulted in positive recommendations for both services. The Corporate Panel recommended that other Panel's also look to use this toolkit and this recommendation was endorsed by the scrutiny working group of Chair's and Vice-Chairs.

The vfm assessment tool provides a framework for members in partnership with services to work through and is divided into 3 broad themes:

1. What does it cost to provide this service? (economy)
2. How is this service performing? (efficiency)
3. What quality is the service being provided? (effectiveness)

For each of these themes there is the opportunity/potential for scrutiny panels with the service being assessed to benchmark with other service providers to give a clearer picture of relative performance.

The aim is that on completing this assessment scrutiny members will be able to make a judgement regarding the vfm provided by the service and identify and recommend any potential further action.

The vfm toolkit can be used to support the investigations of working groups or independently. When used independently the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel appointed a lead member who liaised with the service area whilst the toolkit is completed and then reports back their findings to the Panel for agreement of recommendations and any other further action that may be necessary.

Appendices

Suggested Items

Appendix one contains a number of suggested items completed on a standard template to assist Members with deciding what they wish to include on their work programme. This template requires the following points to be considered-

- o **What the Issue Is**
- o **Where it has come from-** for example it could be a carry over item from last year's panel, a suggestion from a Councillor or member of the public or it could be a new item officers are aware of that is coming up this year,
- o **Why it is important-** with limited time available to Members they need to be able to prioritise their work and concentrate on those things that really matter.
- o **Who it affects-** Does it impact on any particular ward or user group? Does it concern partner agencies or staff groups? Any potential equalities issues may be highlighted here if the item is likely to have a disproportionate affect on any particular group.

- ø **How can scrutiny add value-** What specifically can Scrutiny do? E.g. provide feedback and recommendations ahead of a Cabinet (or partner executive) decision, support the development of policy, service review, public engagement etc. Suggestions have also been made here for it the item is particular suited to a particular method of scrutiny such as a working group or value for money review.
- ø **Timings-** This will highlight any critical timings that would need to be taking into consideration such as statutory deadlines which would dictate when scrutiny would need to have considered the item by if they are to have any valuable input

The items highlighted at appendix one are not an exhaustive list, but only those that it is possible to provide in advance of the meeting. Members should consider these alongside any items they wish to raise themselves and use them to develop a balanced work programme that concentrates on what is important to them and on where they believe they can make a difference.

Appendix Two is a copy of the forward plan for June to September 2011.

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Implementation of single status					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer ✓	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	Revised pay structure is intended to remove challenge under equal pay legislation and simplify pay related allowances.					
Who does it affect?	It affects all staff in the council except, Directors, Assistant Directors, Teachers, Youth Workers and Craft Workers					
Who needs to be involved?	Jamie Morris – Lead Executive Director for Pay and Grading Bethany Evans – Head of People Services Richard Battams – Pay and Grading Lead Officer					
How can scrutiny add value?	To ensure good practice is captured at the organisational level.					
Timings	Towards the end of the municipal year to allow for implementation to bed down.					
Corporate Priority	Working Smarter					

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Resources Service Redesign - Delivering Right Fast and Simple					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>Involves changing internal processes and ways of working and possible investment in new technology.</p> <p>This is the Resources vehicle for the service redesign aspect of the corporate Working Smarter program.</p> <p>It includes a possible new HR system, a reorganisation of ATAR, changes in procurement processes. Improvements to www.walsall.gov.uk</p>					
Who does it affect?	Some resources staff and some of the core services which use resources services					
Who needs to be involved?	Rory Borealis Paul Gordon					
How can scrutiny add value?	Monitor progress against objectives					
Timings	Throughout the year					
Corporate Priority	Working Smarter					

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	<p><u>Finance Direct</u> (An example of working smarter by delivering right ,fast and simple)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme successfully implemented ahead of time and under budget – all capability delivered by end of March 2011- roll out of functionality to continue as part business as usual; ▪ Review of Benefits delivered and key learning points. 					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer Sharon Tait – Programme Manager	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>The Oracle Financial and iProcurement (iProc) systems are critical to effective financial management within the council and maximising the use and automation derived from these systems was essential in order enable improvements in the quality and efficiency of service delivery whilst reducing costs throughout the council.</p> <p>Issues with the functionality, support and performance of the old system proved a barrier to improvements.</p> <p>The Finance Direct programme addressed these issues by replacing the hardware platform with new technology that enables more efficient and cost effective utilisation of servers and storage, by upgrading the software to a new version enabling new functionality and finally by specifying and developing new modules which enable automatic workflows and self service, removing costly manual paper based processes.</p> <p>The objective of the programme was to maximise the business benefits accruing from the use of these systems.</p> <p>The programme consisted of businesses change and ICT</p>					

	<p>themes which together transformed the way we do business.</p> <p>The programme was delivered in house, under budget and ahead of schedule realising the following benefits:</p> <table> <tr> <td>2009</td><td>£40k</td></tr> <tr> <td>2010</td><td>£310k</td></tr> <tr> <td>2010</td><td>£218 offered up as a budget saving</td></tr> <tr> <td>2011</td><td>£810k (on target)</td></tr> <tr> <td>2011</td><td>£314k offered up a budget saving</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£1,692,000</td></tr> </table> <p>The original business case produced by Deloitte had a delivery cost of £4.1m. An internal review was undertaken and the programme delivered in house for £2.5m resulting in cost avoidance of £1.6m</p> <p>A review of the hardware platform recommended resulted in the adoption of an alternative architecture developed in house which avoided £2.5m unbudgeted for licensing costs. This approach is being adopted corporately generating even more savings which are being captured as part of the server review project.</p> <p>The total of cashable savings and avoidable costs are £5,792,000</p>	2009	£40k	2010	£310k	2010	£218 offered up as a budget saving	2011	£810k (on target)	2011	£314k offered up a budget saving	Total	£1,692,000
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Total	£1,692,000												
Who does it affect?	All budget holders, all Oracle and iProcurement users, all suppliers,												
Who needs to be involved?	Corporate Scrutiny – to receive an update on progress made.												

How can scrutiny add value?	<p>Note the success, savings and benefits realised from the programme.</p> <p>Note the internal delivery approach which focused on knowledge and skill transfer to internal staff removing reliance on costly external consultants.</p> <p>Note a working example of delivering right, fast and simple</p>
Timings	<p>Programme delivery commenced Oct 2009.</p> <p>All capability was delivered March 2011</p> <p>Roll out of functionality continues as part of business as usual and will be completed by August 2011, 7 months ahead of schedule.</p>
Corporate Priority	<p>Working smarter</p> <p>Improving the quality of our environment</p>