

**RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Agenda
Item No.**

DATE: 22 JUNE, 2005

7

SCOPING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/6

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr O'Hare Deputy Leader of the Council and Finance
Cllr Longhi Environment and Transport (including: Performance)

Summary of report:

This report outlines the process recommended for identifying and prioritising items for scrutiny in 2005/6 and also provides an outline of the work of the directorate this panel is responsible for scrutinising to inform the establishment of the work programme 2005/06.

Background papers:

Resource And Performance Scrutiny And Performance Panel. 'Review of the panel's work programme 2004/5', 22 June, 2005.
Resource And Performance Scrutiny And Performance Panel. "Considerations for effective scrutiny 2004/5", 2 August 2004.

Reason for scrutiny:

To provide councillors with background information to help them formulate a work programme for the municipal year 2005/6.

Signed:

Executive Director: Carole Evans

Date:

Resource and legal considerations:

Scrutiny and performance panels may carry out its' functions in accordance with Article 6, sub-section 4, of the constitution.

Citizen impact:

All Citizens with a relevant interest in a matter will have the ability to contribute to the deliberations of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Environmental impact:

Successful scrutiny can assist in shaping policy to make environmental improvements.

Performance management:

Scrutiny is an important and integral part of the council's performance management framework and can challenge, review and advise on service delivery, council activity and policy in order to improve performance.

Equality Implications:

All Citizens with a relevant interest in a matter will have the ability to contribute to the deliberations of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Consultation:

Based on previous discussions of the Panel.

Vision 2008:

The work to be undertaken by the work groups will aim to achieve the Council's vision.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to inform councillors of the work of the directorate it is responsible for scrutinising and outlines the process recommended for identifying and prioritising items for scrutiny in 2005/6. A summary of potential scrutiny items has been provided to help inform the setting of the work programme.

2. WORK OF THE DIRECTORATE

- 2.1 The remit of this panel is to consider the work of the Finance, Law and Performance directorate which is responsible for all aspects of finance, law and performance and, from June 2005, the management of the Putting the Citizen First client relationship.
- 2.2 Strategic achievements for the directorate during 2004/05 included:
- Embedding financial stability and policy led medium term financial planning.
 - Successful management of the performance management service through a period of extreme challenge and change and improved its effectiveness with the CPA score rising from 2 to 3.
 - Achieved a maximum score of 4 for the 'use of resources' element of the CPA.
 - Made a major contribution to ensuring the Council achieved a CPA category rating of 'fair'.
 - Provided sound legal advice on a range of challenging and unique issues and made substantial savings through almost completely internalising the legal service.
- 2.3 Key targets for the directorate for 2005/06 include:
- Deliver the two 2005/6 pledges relevant to us, specifically:
 - Pledge 2.10.2 - We will support directorates in identifying efficiency gains of at least 2.5% of the council's budget.
 - Pledge 2.10.3 - We will continue to exercise sound financial management, delivering our targets within budget.
 - Improve all component parts of the use of resources assessment under the new CPA regime, achieving upper quartile performance within the West Midlands.
 - Review and revise the council's budget process to further improve and embed our policy-led and medium term approaches.
 - Deliver an improved 5 year policy led integrated revenue and capital budget and 3-year council tax increase in line with public sector inflation.
 - Support the delivery of an affordable PtCF project and work in partnership to make it a success, including a robust and effective client function.
- 2.4 Responsibility for overseeing law and some finance (internal audit) and performance (risk management) activities falls to the audit committee and for this reason these services are not included within the work of the directorate as scoped in appendix 1. The potential topics for scrutiny were identified by the Chair and Vice Chair at a recent briefing session with staff.
- 2.5 There will be a presentation at the meeting on 22 June to provide further information regarding the work of the directorate. Appendix 1 illustrates various

work streams that have been identified as potential scrutiny items for 2005/06 and further explanation will be provided at the meeting.

- 2.6 It is important that the work of the panel is effective and produces outcomes that positively contribute to our path to excellence. To ensure that the resources available are utilised in the most efficient and productive way it is recommended that, as in previous years, a maximum of two work themes are identified for detailed scrutinising.

3. **SCOPING CRITERIA**

3.1 **Background**

- 3.1.1 The report "Considerations for effective scrutiny 2004/5", presented to the Resource and Scrutiny Panel, 2 August 2004, outlined an approach to scrutiny derived from consultation with Chairs and Vice-Chairs.
- 3.1.2 The report highlighted the view that the selection of what to scrutinise, aiding the development of a robust focussed work programme, was the key to ensuring scrutiny was successful and went on to suggest a checklist to aid Councillors in deciding if a subject required scrutiny.

3.2 **Aim of the Selection Criteria**

- 3.2.1 The use of the selection criteria ensures potential scrutiny items are given fair and consistent consideration against a framework that highlights and focuses the reason from scrutiny.
- 3.2.2 By applying the selection criteria, the Panel are actively taking action aimed at ensuring efficient and effective scrutiny.

3.3 **Using the selection criteria**

- 3.3.1 The criteria for selection (appendix 2) have been developed to explain the reasoning behind each criterion. When assessing a potential scrutiny item, each match against the criteria scores 1. The sum of the scores for matching criteria gives *Score A*.
- 3.3.2 Consideration should now be given to how achievable it would be to complete the work within the municipal year. It is recognised that some work streams are too large to be completed in one year and, therefore, the Panel should consider whether work stream can be sub-divided or re-scoped. By completing the work programme within the municipal year, any possible changes to the Panel membership are less likely to affect the outcome of scrutiny. A score for achievability is *Score B*.
- 3.3.3 The importance of the potential scrutiny item to delivering the Council's Vision and achieving excellence by 2008, provides *Score C*.
- 3.3.4 Multiplying *Scores A, B and C* provides the overall score for the particular potential scrutiny item.

4 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny and Performance Panel:

- Note the information regarding the activities of the directorate.
- Use the selection criteria to scope the work programme for 2005/6.

Long list of potential scrutiny topics / themes

Directorate Work Theme	Proposal for Scrutiny (Topic or Service)	Reasoning (Why might scrutiny add value)	Desired Outcome (What are we seeking to achieve)	Preferred Scrutiny Method (How should it be progressed – e.g. full panel, working group, site visit)
Finance	Budget consultation	To ensure maximum effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in policy-led budgeting.		Decision conferencing. Network with other councils.
Finance	Budget monitoring	To ensure the council delivers on its financial and performance targets.		Independent research by councillors.
Finance	Treasury Management	To ensure we optimise our loans portfolio and use prudential code.		Network with other councils.
Finance	Capital strategy	Ensure value for money in our capital investment.		
Finance	Medium Term Financial Strategy/Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFS/MTFP)	Ensure value for money and financial stability in the medium term.		
Performance and Finance	CPA use of resources theme	Revised CPA methodology raises the bar and the scoring mechanism has been recalibrated. It is imperative that the Council is effective in delivering value for money and efficiencies (Gershon review).	Ensuring Council is responsive to changes and scores are maintained / minimum slippage occurs.	Presentations to Panel followed by working group analysis of the challenge the council faces and the way in which these challenges are being addressed. Learn from others – how are other councils responding to the challenge.

Long list of potential scrutiny topics / themes

Directorate Work Theme	Proposal for Scrutiny (Topic or Service)	Reasoning (Why is Scrutiny needed)	Desired Outcome (What are we seeking to achieve)	Preferred Scrutiny Method (How should it be progressed – e.g. full panel, Working group, site visit)
Performance	CPA new methodology	Imperative to our CPA rating that the Council is pro-active in addressing issues the change in methodology creates.	Maintain / improve current CPA rating on our path to excellence.	Work group to scrutinise how services are responding to embedding new methodology. Learn from others – how are other councils responding to the challenge.
Performance	CPA assessment	Taking action to address the recommendations made following recent inspection is vital to our Vision of excellence by 2008.	To ensure improvement plan is delivered efficiently within timescales set and with desired results.	Monitoring of improvement plan implementation by full Panel. Leader / Chief Executive call-in.
Performance	Performance of specific service (general or concentrating on directorate)	To consider how the selected service is performing and what it is doing to continue to improve or sustain performance.	Service improvement and / or customer satisfaction improved.	Independent research by councillors. Site visits to other councils. Work group. Call-in of Portfolio holders
Performance	Beacon Index	Does the new format suit its needs and audience and enable performance improvement.	Service improvement and / or customer satisfaction improved.	Monitoring of beacon index reports, discussions with officers and cabinet about how well it serves purpose and how can be improved. Critical appraisal of how service improvement has changed, understanding reasons and making recommendations for change.

Long list of potential scrutiny topics / themes

Directorate Work Theme	Proposal for Scrutiny (Topic or Service)	Reasoning (Why is Scrutiny needed)	Desired Outcome (What are we seeking to achieve)	Preferred Scrutiny Method (How should it be progressed – e.g. full panel, Working group, site visit)
Performance and PtCF Client	Monitoring of how contract: a) Works b) Performs c) Delivers efficiencies	The council is entering in to a significant long term strategic partnership that aims to bring improved service delivery and efficiency savings.	To oversee the progression of the partnership once services transfer to ensure delivery is maintained and improved. Determine the effectiveness of the client structure and the connection to the mainstream performance management agenda.	Site visits. Independent research by councillors. Mystery shopper exercises. Work group.

Scoping of Work Programme - Criteria for Selection

No.	Criteria	Reasoning behind criteria	Explanation of Criteria
1	Issue identified by councillors as a key issue for public scrutiny	Issue which adversely affects public services and possibly a matter which will restrict achievement of council's vision.	Councillors have received feedback via LNPs; Member surgeries; personal experience. Issue identified is one which affects local service not being provided or is felt to be ineffective.
2	Issue raised by internal / external audit	Essential to review to achieve effective resolution to concerns raised	Audit investigation identifies a problem in service / behaviour, etc...
3	General public dissatisfaction with service	Complaints received, likely to restrict achievement of vision and CPA rating of service	General public have expressed their dissatisfaction with service and require its improvement
4	Issue raised as important by the Council's partners (i.e. LNP, CEN, WBSP, NHS)	Review likely to strengthen joint working with our partners to deliver the overall community strategy for the Borough.	Council's partners have identified areas or services which are in need of joint attention.
5	Performance indicators and benchmarking has identified service as a poor performing one or where performance has radically declined or improved	Opportunity to review service and improve CPA rating, and learn from and share experience	Performance reviews of current service and investigations of similar services produced elsewhere have identified the need to improve the service we provide.
6	Service has shown pattern of budgetary overspend / under spend	Need to ensure resources are being placed behind clear priorities.	Budget allocation for the service has been exceeded on number of occasions
7	Issue has high risk impact on equality / health and safety	Allows focus on issues that matter to citizens by way of informing policy	Quality of Service \ Policy in question could impinge on level of provision
8	Local media has highlighted issue	Matter of public concern	Media – newspapers, radio. Have created wide public interest in issue.
9	Issue is a central Government priority area and therefore affected by government guidance or legislation	Essential for council to seek local views through public consultation and using its telescopic eye to scrutinise the governments proposals and establish possible joint working with other councils	Issue has been identified via consultation document seeking views of local authority on proposals
10	Issue is critical to securing a successful CPA outcome.	Necessity to review service and steer CPA assessment to a positive result	CPA has graded service to a particular level, which is against the aim set by the authority

No.	Criteria	Reasoning behind criteria	Explanation of Criteria
11	Issue is subject to modernisation / change or is a new area of work to the Council and its' partners	Method of cementing councils duty to review change, particularly for services in health service	Health Service Partner, Government, Executive seek to change service
12	Issue is identified in the Forward Plan for Cabinet decision and identified from list of items to be decided by officer with delegated authority	Opportunity for Panel to review and contribute to discussion making process, policy making and affect CPA rating.	Executive / Officer Forward plan sets out items earmarked for future decisions.

Note:

1. Issues which can be resolved without scrutiny panels intervention and are part of a performance review within the previous or next 12 months need not be scrutinised. Issues which are being scrutinised elsewhere can be reviewed on a joint basis if appropriate.
2. Full consideration should be given to planning timescales for each review identified on the work programme. Timescales play a crucial role in the reviews life cycle; it avoids bottle necks and delays. A project management process known as a "Milestone Calendar" can be adopted. It identifies key stages in the project/review and with the aid of times from the planning process and completion date from the terms of reference; the times by which they are to complete are listed.

Set out below is an example of such a process.

Milestone Calendar

Review: Teenage Pregnancy rates in Walsall.

Milestone	Completion Date
Identify issue for scrutiny	July 2005
Scope review / identify leaders/ process / visits/ witnesses / resources etc	August 2005
In depth Scrutiny / identify problems and solutions	September 2005
Commence planning of review document	January 2006
Complete review document	February 2006
Submit review document to parent body	March 2006

Scoping of Work Programme - Criteria for Selection Prioritising and Weighting

No.	Criteria	Score
1	Issue identified by councillors as a key issue for public scrutiny	
2	Issue raised by internal / external audit	
3	General public dissatisfaction with service	
4	Issue raised as important by the Council's partners (i.e. LNP, CEN, WBSP, NHS)	
5	Performance indicators and benchmarking has identified service as a poor performing one or where performance has radically declined or improved	
6	Service has shown pattern of budgetary overspend / under spend	
7	Issue has high risk impact on equality / health and safety	
8	Local media has highlighted issue	
9	Issue is a central Government priority area and therefore affected by government guidance or legislation	
10	Issue is critical to securing a successful CPA outcome.	
11	Issue is subject to modernisation / change or is a new area of work to the Council and its' partners	
12	Issue is identified in the Forward Plan for Cabinet decision and identified from list of items to be decided by officer with delegated authority	
Score A		

	Weighting factor	
Achievability of review within 12 months	3 Achievable 2 Marginal 1 Unachievable 0 Not Applicable	
Score B		

	Weighting factor	
Impact on Council's Vision	5 Achieves vision 4 High impact 3 Neutral impact 2 Minimum impact 1 Little or no impact	
Score C		

Total	Score A x Score B x Score C	=	
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