

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL	Agenda Item No.
DATE: 30 JUNE 2005	7
SCOPING WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/6	
Ward(s) All	
Portfolios: Councillor Hughes – Children's Services	
Summary of report: <p>The report summarises the current position of the work of the panel, and its working groups during the 2004/5 municipal year. Further it outlines the process recommended for identifying and prioritising items for scrutiny in 2005/6.</p>	
Background papers: None	
Reason for scrutiny: <p>To agree a work programme for the panel for the 2005/6 municipal year, and re-establish the working groups which have not yet completed their review.</p>	
Signed: Executive Director: David McNulty Date: 22 June	

Resource and legal considerations:

In accordance with the constitution the panel may ask persons to attend to address them on matters under consideration and may pay to any advisors, assessors and other persons a reasonable fee and expenses for doing so.

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 overview and 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 and improvements.

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:

Consultation with panel members will be required regarding their views on specific issues to be considered for scrutiny.

Vision 2008:

Identification of issues for scrutiny is aimed at achieving the council's vision.

Contact Officer:

Pat Warner
Scrutiny Officer
Tel. 01922 652951
warnerpa@walsall.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of the current position of the work of the panel during the 2004/5 municipal year and provide members with background information to enable them to make a decision regarding the re-establishment of the working groups which have not yet completed their reviews. It outlines the process recommended for identifying and prioritising items for scrutiny in 2005/6.

2. Background

- 2.1 The panel has considered a variety of issues from the work programme agreed at the start of the year. The key areas of work were: -

- State of school buildings.

- 2.2 The panel discussed the state of school buildings and recommended that cabinet consider information submitted to them on the condition and suitability of school buildings in Walsall. Following cabinet's increase in funds to carry out high priority repairs in primary schools to remedy the backlog the panel established a working group with the following remit: -

- That the remit of the group be to use the findings of the school buildings review in conjunction with the DDA access audit to formulate a strategy that will respond to identified needs.
- To resolve the issue of surplus school places in the borough based on those findings,
- That the membership be Councillor Bird (lead member), Councillor Rowley, Councillor Cassidy and Mr Alan Butterworth.

- 2.3 The working group has held two meetings which has culminated in the selection of a list of priority 1 backlog repair schemes being commenced this summer.

- 2.4 The working group has also concurred with proposals for bids for target capital funds and have commenced preparations for a site visit to the site relating to one of the proposed bids.

- 2.5 The working group has not yet concluded the review within its remit. The panel will therefore need to consider re-establishing it to enable the work to be concluded.

- Social Inclusion Agenda.

- 2.6 Presentations and information relating to Looked After Children, development of 'Every Child Matters' and the outcomes framework have culminated in the setting up of a working group in spring 2005.

- 2.7 The membership of the working group was agreed by the panel as set out below and it had been agreed also that the working group would scope its remit:

Membership: Councillor Arif, Councillor Khan and Councillor Withnall.

Senior management representation from: Social Services
Education Walsall
Leisure and Culture
Crime and Disorder Partnership
Health Partnership

- 2.8 The working group has not yet held its first meeting; however, officers have met to gather information towards the scoping of the group. It is intended that the first meeting will take place at the beginning of this municipal year if the panel wishes to re-establish the working group.

- Bichard Report

The Bichard report relates to the appointment process in schools and the panel has received information about governor training and discussed a progress report about arrangements at Walsall since the report. The panel have invited a police representative to discuss police arrangements at a future meeting.

- Tackling obesity in schools

The panel identified this as a key area in the work programme and are involved in a joint work group with the Health Panel.

- Free school meal uptake

A recommendation was made to cabinet relating to the importance of registration of eligibility when it considers recommendations from the Resource and Performance Scrutiny Panel Benefits Services working group. This was taken into account by cabinet.

- Teenage pregnancy

Councillor Martin, as lead member of the Children and Young Person Strategic Partnership Group, has played a key role in co-ordinating the work in this area and communicating between the panel and the strategic group. Members have received regular reports and detailed information about the issues in Walsall and attended multi-agency workshop to meet service providers and users to find further evidence of the key issues and to request more information. The work will continue into next municipal year.

- Progress and attainment in schools

A presentation to the progress and attainment figures was received and it was recognised the Walsall Education Board (WEB) have an established task and finish group to consider the Progress and Attainment Report 2004. It has been identified that more work to look in depth at education issues should be programmed into work programme for 2005/6.

- In addition, the panel has:
 - a) Received regularly monitored performance issues.
 - b) Received information about the Ofsted inspection at a special meeting.

- c) Held a special meeting to consider the budget and made comments and recommendations to cabinet.
- d) Held a special meeting to consider and pass comment on the report of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance panels relating to a call-in of the Putting the Citizen First Project – preferred bidder decision.

3. Proposed Work Programme 2005/6

3.1 The panel may wish to extend the work programme set out below: -

- a) School buildings (commenced via working group) / surplus school places.
- b) Social inclusion (to be commenced July 2005).
- c) Obesity - commenced via joint working group with Health Panel.
- d) Teenage pregnancy – commenced via lead member (Councillor Martin).
- e) Progress and attainment in schools – to begin via seminar in June.
- f) Children's Services
- g) Looked after Children

In scoping the work programme the panel may wish to consider the criteria document referred to below.

4. Scoping Criteria

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The report "Considerations for effective scrutiny 2004/5", presented to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning 21 July 2004, outlined an approach to scrutiny derived from consultation with chairs and vice-chairs.
- 4.1.2 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.

4.2 Aim of the Selection Criteria

- 4.2.1 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.
- 4.2.2. By applying the selection criteria, the panel are actively taking action aimed at ensuring efficient and effective scrutiny.

4.3 Using the selection criteria

- 4.3.1 The criteria for selection (appendix 1) 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.

- 4.3.2 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 year one 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*.
- 4.3.3 The importance of the potential scrutiny item to delivering the Council's Vision and achieving excellence by 2008, provides *Score C*.
- 4.3.4 Multiplying *Scores A, B and C* provides the overall score for the particular potential scrutiny item.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel:
- a) Note the information regarding the activities of the panel to date.
 - b) Re-establish the School Buildings and Social Inclusion working groups for the municipal year 2005/6.
 - c) Requests both working groups to present their review documents to the panel prior to the end of this municipal year.
 - d) Considers nominations from this panel to sit on the Obesity Working Group to be re-established by the Health and Social Care Scrutiny and Performance Panel. The previous nominations have been: -
 - 1 Councillor representative
 - 1 Social Services senior officer representative
 - 1 Leisure and Culture Service senior officer representative
 - e) Use the selection criteria to scope the work programme for 2005/6.

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

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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