

**COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, LEISURE AND CULTURE
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Agenda
Item No.**

DATE: 16TH JUNE, 2005

5

CURRENT POSITION AND PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/06

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr Perry – Culture and Leisure
Cllr Zahid – Local Partnerships

Summary of report:

The report summarises the current position of the work of the panel and its working groups during the 2004/05 municipal year. Further to agree a work programme for 2005/06 municipal year.

Background papers:

None

Reason for scrutiny:

To agree a work programme for the panel for the 2005/06 municipal year.

Signed:

Executive Director: Carole Evans

Date:

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 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:

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.

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1. Current Position

- 1.1 `During the 2004/05 municipal year, the panel has considered a variety of issues from the work programme which had been agreed at the start of the year. The key issues which had been identified for inclusion into the work programme for the year are as follows:-

<u>Dates of Meetings:</u>	<u>Subject:</u>
16 September 2004	Putting the Citizen First – Progress Report: Presentation by David McNulty on cultural and leisure issues
27 October 2004	DDA Property Access Audit; Employment of Disabled People/Employee Survey, (plus any cultural/leisure issues arising from David McNulty's presentation)
9 December 2004	Possible one-off presentation on Civil contingencies/Emergency Planning desktop exercise (Other items for the agenda to be decided)
11 January 2005	LNPs – Review of progress: Look at how LAPs have been selected; Invite Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of LNPs to the meeting
23 February 2005	Freedom of Information Act – Progress report on how many people have requested information since the Act came into force in January 2005
5 April 2005	To be decided

- 1.2. The Panel at its meeting in September 2004 further scoped its work programme to include issues relating to Leisure and Culture as follows:-

- Community association funding.
- Youth service Ofsted inspection.
- Review of the Walsall illuminations.

- Parks and green spaces strategy.
- Libraries review.
- CPA Leisure services inspection action plan.
- Leisure facilities management options.
- New art gallery – current position.

1.3 The areas of work which have already been considered by the Panel are referred to below: -

1.4 Community Association Funding.

1.4.1 A work group was established to discuss the transforming youth services agenda and the proposed delegation of funding and the impact on Community Associations. The group identified a funding gap and made recommendations through the budget consultation process to help fill the gap. The work of the group has, on the whole, achieved its objectives and a report will be considered at the first meeting of the panel in the 2005/6 municipal year.

1.5. Disability Strategy Review

1.5.1 Members of the working group were tasked with two objectives:

1. Physical Access to Services – to identify that the Council and its borough providers are effectively responding to the law in terms of meeting DDA Legislation on Physical Access, and that the level of progress made (in terms of effective action planning) is appropriate and meaningful.
2. Disability in Employment – to ascertain why the council's performance in recruiting employees with a disability, recorded at less than 1%, and to identify what barriers or challenges potential and existing employees are faced with.

1.5.2 Members of the group have been involved in mystery shopper exercises, meeting with the Disabled Employee Network and have conducted site visits to a sample of public facilities. The culmination of the group's work will be a review session where all of the evidence will be collated and will result in the final report to the first meeting of the panel in 2005/6.

1.6 Procurement Gateways.

1.6.1 Members were very keen to follow the procurement process from start to finish, to fully consider the procurement cycle, and review the procedure at each gateway. Members were advised that the forward plan identified that the procurement of leisure management operations is due to commence in Spring 2005. Members felt that the best way to follow the procurement cycle would be to establish a task and finish working group and to scope the review at the first meeting of the group. This work is due to start and will be in the work programme for 2005/06

1.7 Putting the Citizen First

1.7.1 The panel has continued to monitor and receive information about this project. A call-in of the decision of Cabinet relating to the preferred partner resulted in a

special meeting to which all scrutiny members were invited to attend. The consideration resulted in the following resolution:

Following lengthy discussion the Panel resolved that they were greatly reassured by what they had heard and as long as all assurances were honoured and the Council is covered both financially and legally they can only see a benefit for citizens at Walsall. Members also requested that consideration be given for the anti-poverty unit to be taken out of scope.

1.7.2 The panel's report was circulated to all panels for comment. Recommendations were forwarded to Cabinet. Monitoring of the process continues.

1.8 In addition to the agreed work programme the panel have also received information on:

- a) Walsall illuminations.
- b) Parks and green spaces strategy.
- c) Youth Services – Ofsted inspection.
- d) Emergency Planning – Operation Forest - The panel made recommendations to the portfolio holder about funding when considering the budget for 2005/6 and suggested that emergency planning be included in the member development programme event for 2005/6.
- e) One Stop Shop.
- f) Performance information – received on a quarterly basis.
- g) CPA Leisure Services – Implementation action plan.
- h) Libraries Review was monitored and received a very encouraging report the principles of which will underpin the creation of a service improvement plan. This will be developed in consultation with our preferred strategic partner Fujitsu and will be presented to the scrutiny panel on completion.
- i) Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- j) Freedom of information.
- k) A special meeting of the Panel was held to consider the budget and comments and recommendations were made to cabinet.
- l) Citizens panel – One presentation in April 2005 – agreed as subject for further scrutiny.

2 Proposed Work Programme for 2005/06

- 2.1 The Panel may wish to consider the draft programme set out below, which also indicates the areas of work which have commenced but not yet completed:-

Topic	Background
Procurement Gateways	The aim is to follow the procurement from start to finish and review the procedure at each gateway. The agreement by members during a meeting in the last municipal year was to commence this review in line with the commencement of the procurement operations due to commence in spring of 2005.
Citizens Panel	The Panel after receiving a presentation in April 2005, agreed that it was important that the Scrutiny and Performance Panel get a better understanding of the work of the Citizens Panel and take ownership of this project. It was agreed to include that as part of the work programme for 2005/06.
Disability Strategy Review (Commenced 14/10/04)	<p>A working group was established to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Physical access to servicesb) Disability in Employment <p>The final report of the working group is due to be submitted to Panel shortly.</p>
Community Association Funding (commenced 11/10/04)	A working group was established to review the transferring youth service agenda and the proposed delegation of funding and the impact on Community Associations. The work of the group has been completed and the report is due to be submitted to the Panel shortly.
Parks and Green Spaces Strategy	The Panel agreed to revisit this subject in this municipal year. The Panel had been informed of the progress to procure consultants for this project and that strategy work would commence in January 2005 for completion in August 2005.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The Panel is asked to note the work undertaken during the past municipal year.
- 3.2 The Panel will need to agree a work programme for the municipal year 2005/06.