

30 June 2014

Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2014/15

Ward(s) All

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor C. Towe - Environment
Councillor A. Harris – Leisure and Culture
Councillor I. Shires – Community Engagement & Voluntary Sector

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 2014/15.

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 2014/15 along with any potential working groups and their membership;

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 2014/15. 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 agreed by Council at its meeting on 18 June 2014. For information the Panels remit in Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution reads as:

Community Services & Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel

All aspects and general services related to (1) serving the community, for example community safety, leisure and culture, the local strategic partnership, third sector co-ordination and to review or scrutinise decisions made or other actions taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions (not less than twice in every 12 months) as required by the Police and Justice Act, 2006, within the functions set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and (2) the environment such as waste management, highways maintenance, grounds maintenance and traffic management, and to review and scrutinise the exercise of flood risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 within the functions set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (as amended).

Work Programme

In agreeing its work programme for 2014/15 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, and Partners.

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 number of Panel's in this year's municipal diary, it is suggested that each Panel should look to operate one working group at any

one time. Panels that wish to operate more than working group during the year should 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.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

The Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel is the Councils designated crime and disorder panel and has the power to review or scrutinise decisions taken by the responsible authorities crime and disorder functions. The responsible authorities are:

- Local authority
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Police force
- NHS
- Probation service
- Fire and rescue service

The Panel has the power to consider any crime and disorder related issue, invite witness to attend meetings and make recommendations on policy and future action. The Councils Constitution requires the Panel to consider crime and disorder issues at least twice a year.

Flood Risk Management Scrutiny

The Panel is also has responsibility for scrutinising the Councils flood risk management functions as created by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The Council is a designated flood risk management authority and as such is required to develop a strategy to tackle flooding of any kind.

The Panel is responsible for monitoring the strategy, its implementation and future development.

Suggested Items

After reviewing last year's work programme there are a number of items that Members have identified the wish to roll forward into 2013/14. They are:-

Petition for picture of Archie Warren Hobbs
Anti-social behaviour and Crime Act 2013
Recycling and contamination
Litter working group recommendation monitoring
Play strategy
Active living
Food Law Enforcement Plan
Environment enforcement annual report
Willenhall Lawn Cemetery
Rehabilitation and Probation Services

In addition to the above at the meeting with the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) will give a presentation about the service area and provide further potential areas for the Panel to consider.

The items highlighted above are not an exhaustive list, but are those that have been identified 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.

Once agreed, the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Director, shall produce the work programme to ensure that each item is considered at the appropriate time before circulating a copy of the work programme to all members of the Panel.

Appendix One is a copy of the latest forward plan.