

**Neighbourhoods
Scrutiny and Performance Panel**

**Agenda
Item No.**

DATE: 10 June, 2008

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Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2008/09

Ward(s) All

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Harris – Transport
Councillor Harrison – Leisure and Culture
Councillor Perry – Communities and Partnerships
Councillor Walker - Environment

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 2008/09.

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, if any, performance measures and assessment tools can be utilised to assist Members in completing their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Member's consider the range of items within their remit available to them and agree a work programme for 2008/09 along with any potential working groups.

Background papers:

Scrutiny Annual Report 2007/08
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 2008/09. The boroughs 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 and new Local Area Agreement. As with performance management information consideration of equality issues could form apart of the Panels work programme for 2008/09.

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.

Lead Officer:

Jamie Morris – Executive Director for Neighbourhoods

t. 01922 652070

e. morrisjamie@walsall.gov.uk

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 19 May 2008. For information the Panels remit in Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution now reads as:

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All aspects and general services related to serving the community, for example; community safety, leisure, libraries, heritage, neighbourhood partnership services, services relating to the built environment such as waste management, highways maintenance and traffic management, the management of land and property, public protection within the functions set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

In agreeing its work programme for 2008/09 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.

Carry Over Items

The following items were discussed last year and have the potential to carry over in to this year's work programme.

It is valuable that the suggested carry over items are considered but the Panel need to consider them in light of all suggested work streams.

The items recommended for potential inclusion on the 2008/09 work programme are as follows:

- **Waste Management Working Group**
- **Community Call for Action Working Group**
- **Sustainable Travel to School Policy**

Waste Management

Membership was the entire Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Waste management has become a key issue for Councils because of the need to meet stretching targets for the diversion of waste from landfill sites. This is intended to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and so help combat the problems associated with climate change. Over the next 12 months or so, a number of important decisions will need to be taken by the Council to ensure that it deals effectively with this issue. The completion of a document which can be used as a tool by the health scrutiny panel to

assist public sector employers in Walsall to create opportunities to reduce obesity levels in their work force.

The Working Group has met on a number of occasions and has recently considered the waste implementation plan. The Working Group has requested the opportunity to consider the suite of revised waste management policies before they are considered by Cabinet.

Community Call for Action Working Group

Membership was the entire Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

The work group should consider the impact of the community call for action (CCfA) proposed in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and by the Department for Communities and Local Government White Paper - Strong and Prosperous Communities, in relation to potential overlap and the development of any guidelines.

The Local Government White Paper has since become the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which has made the two proposed calls for action the same after earlier differences.

The Working Group have recently participated in a consultation operated by the Department for Communities and Local Government on CCfA. A report on this consultation is expected on or before 12 June 2008. It would be useful for the working group to consider this report and any further guidance issued to in order to draft proposals on how the CCfA could work at Walsall Council as and when it is introduced.

Members need to decide whether these two items need to be run as working groups for this year, or to be included in the main stream work programme. If they are to be run again as working groups then membership will need to be agreed.

It is 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. Experience has shown that two working groups per Panel with a membership of 4-5 Members is a realistic and achievable commitment.

Suggested Items

Since the last meeting of the Panel each Council Directorate has reviewed their own work plans so that any potential areas that may be of interest to the Panel can be identified at this stage and timetabled into the Panels work programme if Members require.

The following items are currently on the Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration by Cabinet at some point prior to September this year. The Panel may wish to consider if it is appropriate for them to look at any of these items themselves either before or after Cabinet meets.

Issue	Portfolio Holder	Date to be considered by Cabinet
Neighbourhood Management Pilot Study	R. Walker	18 June 2008
Waste and recycling collection service – revised policies and communications plan	R. Walker	18 June 2008
Residual waste treatment facility – approval of Heads of Terms agreement with Staffordshire County Council to secure long term waste disposal capacity	R. Walker	18 June 2008
Residential waste treatment facility at Coventry – procurement of alternatives for waste disposal as an alternative to landfill at locations in Coventry, Wolverhampton, Stoke and Dudley	R. Walker	18 June 2008
Strategic review of Leisure Centres – outline proposals for the Council's major leisure assets	L. Harrison	18 June 2008
Permission to join a Black Country Libraries in partnership consortium to tender for library books and audio visual materials	L. Harrison	18 June 2008
Appointment of framework contractor for major transportation schemes including Darlaston, M6 Junction 10 and Bradford Place	A. Harris/A. Andrew	18 June 2008
Decriminalised parking enforcement operational framework – approval of broad framework for directing enforcement activity across the borough	A. Harris	18 June 2008
Highways repair and maintenance partnered framework – approval of scope	A. Harris	18 June 2008
Review of Licensing Act 2003	R. Walker	7 July 2008

Policy		(Council)
Darlaston Strategic Development Area – authorisation to publish orders and processes	A. Harris	16 July 2008
Approval of sustainable travel to school strategy – response to new duties under the Education and Inspections Act	A. Harris	16 July 2008
Outcome of street trading review – including displays on the highway	R. Walker	8 September 2008

If the panel decides to undertake a service review as part of its work programme then they should consider use of the Value for Money toolkit, which was developed specifically for this purpose and was piloted with the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel, with the work they did on the Revenues and Benefits Service. This tool has received positive feedback from external inspectors, including the value for money assessment by the Audit Commission.

Item	Background	Timescales	Performance Management Information
Amalgamation of the CoCE and Walsall Community College	This is a major change in the delivery of Adult learning in Walsall.	Amalgamation will take place on 1 August 2008 and then there will be a 2 month period to harmonise the functions of the two organisations.	Scrutiny may want an oversight of the harmonisation process to ensure that there are genuine benefits for learners in Walsall.
Local Area Agreement Monitoring	At Council on 21 May, Members approved the indicators for the new LAA, with delegated powers for final negotiations of targets to the chief executive, in consultation with the leader. 26 of the National Indicator set were chosen along with 5 further local indicators, of these 14 are of relevance to the Neighbourhoods SPP.	The LAA will be monitored quarterly and reported to Cabinet, information can be brought at those points to the panel. Members can also access the most up to date information available themselves through the PIMs system which was made available through all group rooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious acquisitive crime • Assaults with injury crime rate • Rate of re-offending by young offenders • Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders • Environment for a thriving third sector • Children travelling to school; mode of transport used • % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality • number of people from different backgrounds who get on well together in their local area • residual household waste per head • % of adult population who participate in sport • Adapting to climate change • Domestic violence • Public perception of anti-social

Item	Background	Timescales	Performance Management Information
			behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area.