

## **Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel**

**16 June 2009**

**Agenda  
Item No. 6**

### **Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2009/10**

**Ward(s)**                      All

#### **Portfolio Holders:**

#### **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 2009/10.

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 2009/10 along with any potential working groups and their membership.**

#### **Background papers:**

Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09  
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 Local Area Agreement 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.

**Lead Officer:**

Tim Johnson  
Executive Director, Regeneration

## **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 18 and 20 May 2009. For information the Panels remit in Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution now reads as:

All aspects and general services related to regeneration for example; economic, environmental and physical regeneration, planning, land and property and partnership working within the functions set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

The key change from 2008/09 is the inclusion of land and property within the Regeneration Remit.

In agreeing its work programme for 2009/10 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.

## **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 increased number of Panel's in this years municipal diary, it is suggested that each Panel should look to run only one working group at any one time. Panels that wish to operate more than working group during the year could 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.

## **Welfare Advice Working Group**

Following a referral from Council last year the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel resolved to undertake a holistic review of welfare advice provision within the borough involving the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. Details of the proposed investigation are contained within Appendix 1 to this report.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel recognise that this review will cut across the remits of other scrutiny and performance panels. The Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel is responsible for looking at worklessness so with this in mind the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel are offering the opportunity for a Member (or a maximum of two members) from the Panel to sit on the working group as a representative. Further representatives are being sought from the Community Services and Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panels due to cross over with their remits.

## **Value for Money Service Reviews**

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel has developed a value for money (vfm) toolkit to assist Members if it is decided to complete a service review. Last year the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel used the value for money toolkit to review the Councils Communication and Payroll and Pensions services. The two reviews were well received by both Members and Officers and resulted in positive recommendations for both services. The Corporate Panel recommended that other Panel's also look to use this toolkit and this recommendation was endorsed by the scrutiny working group of Chair's and Vice-Chairs.

The vfm assessment tool provides a framework for members in partnership with services to work through and is divided into 3 broad themes:

1. What does it cost to provide this service? (economy)
2. How is this service performing? (efficiency)
3. What quality is the service being provided? (effectiveness)

For each of these themes there is the opportunity/potential for scrutiny panels with the service being assessed to benchmark with other service providers to give a clearer picture of relative performance.

The aim is that on completing this assessment scrutiny members will be able to make a judgement regarding the vfm provided by the service and identify and recommend any potential further action.

The vfm toolkit can be used to support the investigations of working groups or independently. When used independently the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel appointed a lead member who liaised with the service area whilst the toolkit is completed and then reports back their findings to the Panel for agreement of recommendations and any other further action that may be necessary.

## Suggested Items

**Appendix One** contains a number of suggested items completed on a standard template to assist Members with deciding what they wish to include on their work programme. This template requires the following points to be considered-

- o **What the Issue Is**
- o **Where it has come from-** for example it could be a carry over item from last year's panel, a suggestion from a Councillor or member of the public or it could be a new item officers are aware of that is coming up this year,
- o **Why it is important-** with limited time available to Members they need to be able to prioritise their work and concentrate on those things that really matter.
- o **Who it affects-** Does it impact on any particular ward or user group? Does it concern partner agencies or staff groups? Any potential equalities issues may be highlighted here if the item is likely to have a disproportionate affect on any particular group.
- o **How can scrutiny add value-** What specifically can Scrutiny do? E.g. provide feedback and recommendations ahead of a Cabinet (or partner executive) decision, support the development of policy, service review, public engagement etc. Suggestions have also been made here for if the item is particularly suited to a particular method of scrutiny such as a working group or value for money review.
- o **Timings-** This will highlight any critical timings that would need to be taken into consideration such as statutory deadlines which would dictate when scrutiny would need to have considered the item by if they are to have any valuable input
- o **Performance Information-** This includes any relevant performance indicators that can provide Members with a guide on current levels of performance and also give a benchmark to measure future improvement.

The items highlighted at appendix one are not an exhaustive list, but only those that it is possible to provide 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.

<b>Issue</b>	Building Schools for the Future					
<b>Who from</b>	<b>Previous years panel</b>	Individual Member	Officers	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
<b>Why is it important?</b>	<p>The Building Schools for the Future programme is a £100m investment in six of the boroughs schools during the current wave of funding. The Council intends to bid for further funding in the near future to fund larger scale redevelopment of schools.</p> <p>This once in a generation opportunity is being used to facilitate wider regeneration aims and create schools as a community focal point in terms of wider uses including leisure.</p>					
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	Local residents School pupils and staff					
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	Residents Leisure Centre Staff and Members Community Organisations Building Schools for the Future project team					
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	<p>Scrutiny will be able to contribute to the development of the building schools for the future programme and have an influence and oversight on important regeneration issues across the borough.</p> <p>Due to the cross cutting nature of this work with the Children's and Young Peoples, Community and Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panels there will be a need to consider the best approach to scrutiny of this issue.</p>					
<b>Timings</b>						
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>					
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target	
	n/a					

<b>Issue</b>	Economic Well-Being Programme				
<b>Who from</b>	Previous years panel				
<b>Why is it important?</b>	Economic well-being has particular resonance in the current economic climate where job opportunities are limited combined with difficult trading conditions for businesses.				
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	All residents and business				
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	Council and Partners Local businesses Chamber of Commerce				
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	<p>Value can be added by the Panel investigating opportunities for job creation amongst itself, local partners and local businesses. Whilst the economy maybe contracting Members may be able to identify opportunities by bringing people together to discuss a means of creating employment in Walsall.</p> <p>The Panel have previously been informed of the Target Action Plans (TAPs) for workless and enterprise By considering these key delivery plans Members can maintain an overview of the programmes and projects that are being delivered to assist in these key areas and make recommendations for improvement or help in prioritisation for this key area in the Local Area Agreement.</p>				
<b>Timings</b>					
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>				
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target
	7	Environment for a thriving third sector	16.8%	<b>G</b>	Next measure in 10/11
	117	Percentage of 16-18 years olds who are NEET	8.3%	<b>G</b>	Achieved 2008 reduction target
	152	Working age population on out of work benefits	15.92% (May 2008)	<b>A</b>	15.7%

	172	VAT registered business in the area showing growth	Nov/ Dec 09		10.25%
	174	Skills gap in the workforce reported by employers	Data in Feb 10	A	Biennial
	163	Working age population qualified to at least level 2 or higher	55.1% (2006) baseline	R	+4% on baseline
	183	Levels of support to new and existing business	1.5 estimate		N/A

#### NI 7

Measures the % of third sector organisations who answer positively to the following question '...how do the local statutory bodies in your local area influence your organisation's success'. Out-turn was published on 28/01/09. Walsall scores 16.8%, and this performs above national average of 16.2%. Hence we rag this indicator Green. The indicator will be measured again in 2010. This is an LAA indicator and targets can now be confirmed with GOWM; our indicative target percentage point increase is 5.6, hence our indicative target score by 2010 is 22.4% (this would represent a statistically significant improvement on baseline). Walsall had a 45% response rate to the survey (234 respondents).

#### NI 117

Reducing NEETs if an LAA priority and performance is on track; having exceeded the 2008/9 LAA target.

#### NI 152

On face value this indicator is green as the percentage of people on out of work benefits is roughly 0.3% below the target. But as this information is time lagged by about 8 months it does not accurately reflect the current changes to the economic climate. The indicator is measured quarterly, by calendar year, and there has already been an increase between May 08 and the August 08 data 15.92% to 16.02%. To back up this increase there has been an increase in JSA claimants from 5,580 in May 08 to 7,460 in November 08, a huge increase. This will affect this indicator as the main change in flow in the number of claimants is people on JSA with the other proportion of the claimants remaining fairly stable. The indicator has been rated Amber to take account of factors already in the pipeline.

#### NI 172

The figure sat at 12.69% in 2007, with 11.08% targeted in 2008/09. Due to the time lag on the data this is not available until late November / early December in 2009.

#### NI 174



Measures the % of establishments reporting any gaps in the current workforce based on a results of the biennial National Employers Skills Survey (NESS). Skills gaps are identified as occurring when employers report having employees who are not fully proficient at their job. Results from the latest survey (April - July 2007) form the baseline for this NI. Given the sample size; data is reported at Black Country level only; hence no Walsall specific out-turn. The sample of WM based employers was 8047 (with 1411 of these being in the Black Country). The % skills gap as reported through the survey reduced slightly in the BC from 15% (2005) to 13% (2007) continuing a downward trend and was slightly lower than for the west midlands 14% and nationally 15%. Based on data submitted to 'the Hub' the Black Country ranks 1st out of 36 mets, 6th out of 148 LAs nationally. There is strong evidence through other intelligence of skill deficiencies in Walsall and improving skills is important to tackling worklessness. Though the NIS out-turn performs relatively well based on wider information we rag this NI Amber.

#### NI 163

Measures the proportion of working age popn (19 years to RA) qualified to at least level 2 or higher. ie Qualified to level 2 and above; at least either 5 GCSEs grades A\*-C (or equivalent, i.e., O levels, CSE Grade 1s), two A/S levels, or any equivalent or higher qualification in the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Good performance is typified by higher percentages. Data published to 'the Hub' shows relatively consistent annual out-turn; 53.6% (2001), 54.8% (2002), 56% (2003), 59.3% (2004), 59.3% (2005), 55.3% (2006), 55.9% (2007). Despite recent improvement Walsall performs below WMids Mets (65.4%) and All Eng (68.9%) average; indeed lies within worst quartile all Eng and Mets. No targets have been set; so tentatively rag outcome Red pending tracking against agreed targets. This next calendar year data 01.01.08 - 31.12.08 will be available on the hub late July 09.

#### NI 183

Measures the number of significant issues that an LA Trading Standards Service is called upon to deal with; less the number that it is actually able to deal with; scaled against a measure of the extent of trading activity within the Local Authority area. "The number of primary complaints of unfair trading practices recorded by Consumer Direct (CD) against businesses in each Local Authority (this includes notifications and referrals), where no judicial disposal or onward formal referral is achieved. For the purpose of this indicator unfair trading practices constitute any complaint recorded by CD. This is then scaled against the number of businesses registered for VAT or PAYE in the area". The reporting period is the financial year (1 April – 31 March). The component data sets that make up the out-turn will be provided to the LA in order to submit a return at the year end. As no baseline exists or targets we are unable to rag this indicator at the moment.

<b>Issue</b>	New Deal for Communities – Exit Strategy					
<b>Who from</b>	<b>Previous years panel</b>	Individual Member	Officers	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
<b>Why is it important?</b>	The New Deal for Communities scheme has seen significant levels of investment into the Blakenall area of Walsall. New Deal funding ends in 2011 and Members are keen to ensure that an appropriate exit strategy is being developed to sustain the benefits of the new deal once funding has come to an end.					
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	Blakenall residents New Deal employees					
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	New Deal Chief Executive and Board Members					
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	By overseeing the development of an appropriate exit strategy for the New Deal scheme Members will be able to ensure that sufficient plans are being put in place to ensure the long term sustainability of the programmes aims to ensure the benefit of the New Deal scheme continues after Government funding has ceased. By looking at this issue now and over the coming year Members will be able to identify any weaknesses in the exit strategy and suggest areas for improvement.					
<b>Timings</b>	An exit strategy will need to fully developed and operational by 2011.					
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>					
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target	
	n/a					

<b>Issue</b>	Property Matters, Corporate Asset Management and Adaptive Working				
<b>Who from</b>	Officers				
<b>Why is it important?</b>	<p>The Corporate Asset Management plan sets the Councils policy and strategy for its property assets. Property is one of the key resources managed by local authorities</p> <p>New ways of working can potentially release significant efficiency savings by new ways of using office accommodation whether it be hot desking, home working, mobile working etc. The office estate requirement could be rationalised as part of this process.</p>				
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	All staff and residents of Walsall				
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	All Directorates				
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	By contributing to the development of the vision, policy and strategy for Property assets and exploring new ways of working.				
<b>Timings</b>	To go to cabinet in October 2009, input from Scrutiny will be required before that				
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>				
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target
	n/a				

<b>Issue</b>	St Matthews Quarter				
<b>Who from</b>	Last years Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel				
<b>Why is it important?</b>	<p>The regeneration of Walsall town centre, in particular the St. Matthews Quarter area, is an important and high profile scheme. The St Matthews Quarter scheme will see the development of new shops and accommodation as well as the relocation of a new town centre market.</p> <p>The success of the scheme is essential for the long term security of Walsall town centre and market. Last years Panel expressed a desire to be involved at all stages of the development including design and development agreements.</p>				
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	Residents Retailers Marker Traders				
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	Walsall Market Traders Association Retailers affected by the scheme Norton and Proffit Developers Regeneration Officers				
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	By considering and making recommendations on the key stages of the regeneration of the St Matthews Quarter the Panel can play a key role in testing the options for development and make recommendations on preferred courses of action.				
<b>Timings</b>	The Panel will need to allow adequate time to consider issues within the development timetable.				
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>				
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target
	n/a				

<b>Issue</b>	Review of Walsall Regeneration Company					
<b>Who from</b>	<b>Previous years panel</b>	Individual Member	Officers	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
<b>Why is it important?</b>	The Walsall Regeneration Company is a key organisation in planning, attracting and securing the wider redevelopment and regeneration of the local area. The Council invests £250k a year into this company.					
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	All residents and business					
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	Peter Cromar – Chief Executive, Walsall Regeneration Company					
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	A 5 year review of the WRC will take place this year and Scrutiny will be able to input into that review, ensuring that the organisation is delivering against what it set out to do and that it is equipped to continue meeting those objectives in the future.					
<b>Timings</b>						
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>					
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	Current Rag	09/10 Target	
	n/a					

<b>Issue</b>	Welfare Advice Provision
<b>Who from</b>	Last years Corporate SPP (based on original referral from Council)
<b>Why is it important?</b>	<p>It is anticipated that in the current economic downturn there will be an upsurge in demand for welfare advice and the provision of this advice can play a valuable role in supporting vulnerable citizens in Walsall as well as helping stimulate the local economy.</p> <p>Whilst the Corporate Panel have previously taken an interest in the work of the Council's own welfare rights service and of a possible amalgamation with the fairer charging team, February's full Council meeting resulted in a referral to look at the level of funding given to the Citizens advice bureau. With this in mind, and in the knowledge that there are also other organisations in the borough providing similar advice it was recommended that a holistic review of welfare advice provision within the borough was undertaken, incorporating the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.</p>
<b>Who does it affect?</b>	<p>Welfare advice provision impacts on all communities across the borough, traditionally those in more deprived areas but increasingly in the current climate on other households as well.</p> <p>In carrying out the work it is likely the Panel will wish to see more detailed information on how different communities access welfare advice which may identify some equalities gaps.</p> <p>The item will require close partnership working with other organisations, notable the CAB, but also other voluntary and community groups providing welfare advice.</p>
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	<p>The item cuts across the remit of a number of Panels so whilst Corporate Scrutiny should act as lead panel for the work, invites to other panels to nominate representatives should also be considered.</p> <p>As mentioned above active involvement will also be required from the CAB, other organisations operating in this field and internal officers working in the welfare rights and fairer charging teams.</p> <p>Members may also wish to consider how to get public engagement in the working group.</p>
<b>How can scrutiny add value?</b>	In taking a holistic view of welfare advice provision in the borough the working group will be able to develop recommendations as to gaps in service provision and areas of duplication.

<b>Timings</b>	The CAB Service Level Agreement has been extended on current terms for additional 12 months, any working group findings before 31 March 2010 will help inform a new SLA and funding levels.				
<b>Performance Information</b>	<i>Include any relevant performance information that will inform members of current performance levels and provide baseline for future monitoring.</i>				
	PI Number	Description	Current Position	08/09 target	RAG
	NI152	Working-age population on out-of-work- benefit	16.30%	16.20%	Red
	<p>Figures show that within the last year unemployment in the borough has risen by 84% and we have been identified regionally as being one of the hardest hit areas from the recession. We have seen job losses from a significant number of key manufacturers in the area particularly those who support the car industry and construction which are sectors that have been very badly hit by the recession. The target is due to be re-negotiated with GOWM (Government Office for the West Midlands) as part of the possible MAA (Multi Area Agreement) and in light of the affects from the recession.</p>				