

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

**Agenda
Item No.
6b**

DATE: 22 JUNE 2006

**CURRENT POSITION OF THE PANEL AND A PROPOSED WORK
PROGRAMME FOR 2006/7**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor O'Hare - Resources
 Councillor Longhi - Transformation and performance management

Summary of report:

The report summarises the current position of the work of the panel and its working groups during the 2005/6 municipal year. Further to agree a work programme for 2006/7 municipal year.

Background papers:

None.

Reason for scrutiny:

To agree a work programme for the panel for the 2006/07 municipal year.

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 (SPP).

Environmental impact:

Successful scrutiny can assist in shaping policy to make environmental improvements and assist the council in meeting statutory performance targets.

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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Scrutiny Officer

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1. Revised Remit of Panel

- 1.1 Council, at its meeting on 24 April 2006, agreed as part of the review of the council's constitution to include the remit and terms of reference of each scrutiny and performance panel (SPP) so that members and citizens can have in one location all the relevant information for each panel. The revised remits align the work of each panel with that of the directorates. The names of some of the panels have also been changed to reflect the title of the appropriate directorate. This panel is now known as Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel.
- 1.2 The revised remits, whilst removing some of the work streams from panels on which scrutiny has already commenced, have nevertheless led to a more balanced workload for each panel and have brought across work streams from other SPPs.
- 1.3 The revised remit for this panel is attached (**appendix1**) to assist members in scoping the work programme for 2006/7.

2. Scoping Criteria

- 2.1 In line with the revised remits, members are encouraged to use the selection criteria attached (**appendix 2**) to ensure that potential scrutiny items are given fair and consistent consideration against a framework that highlights and focuses the reason for scrutiny.
- 2.2 Members have agreed, that the selection of what to scrutinise aided the development of a robust, focussed work programme and was the key to ensuring scrutiny was successful. By applying the selection criteria, the panel are therefore actively taking action aimed at ensuring efficient and effective scrutiny.

3. Using the selection criteria

- 3.1 The criteria for selection have been developed to explain the reasoning behind each criterion. When assessing a potential scrutiny item, each match against the criteria scores one. The sum of the scores for matching criteria gives Score A.
- 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 one year and, therefore, the panel should consider whether work streams 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.
- 3.3 The importance of the potential scrutiny item to delivering the Council's Vision and achieving excellence by 2008, provides Score C.

3.4 Multiplying Scores A, B and C provides the overall score for the particular potential scrutiny item.

4. Work Programme 2005/6

4.1 During the first meeting of 2005/6 municipal year the panel established its work programme. The key issues which had been identified for inclusion into the work programme for the year are as follows:-

Items	Comments
1) Budget Consultation	The panel were involved in budget consultation at budget decision conferencing events and made recommendations on the draft capital programme 2006/07 – 2010/11 and the draft corporate revenue budget 2006/07 – 2010/11.
2) CPA Use of Resources	<p>A work group was established to discuss the CPA 2005 and the impact of the new CPA methodology. This work group focused on the value for money requirements within the CPA framework as the use of resources element had fundamentally changed with an added emphasis on value for money (vfm). In addition this included examination of efficiency savings and benchmarking.</p> <p>Following discussion regarding the changes under 'CPA 2005 The Harder Test' the panel decided to establish a work group to consider the requirements of the value for money (vfm) element of the use of resources assessment. In completing this work the work group have considered the corporate benchmarking strategy and the 2006 service plan template. Members were keen to see how both benchmarking and the revised service plan template were received by services and how effective they were in assisting services to demonstrate vfm.</p>
3) Local Area Agreement	Recognising the importance of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to the town the panel established a work group to consider the process used for developing the agreement and the performance management arrangements for the LAA. Members discussed at length the role of Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) and also attended regional and national seminars about LAA. Having concluded that the process used in drafting the LAA was inclusive and fit for purpose the panel also considered and feedback on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) consultation regarding Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the role of scrutiny.
4) Beacon Index	In addition to receiving performance reports for monitoring the panel considered the format of

	<p>performance monitoring reports, particularly the Beacon Index. They considered whether the presentation of information was clear and concise, and whether the information included represented the Council vision and priorities. The panel concluded that the format of the Beacon Index report was fit for purpose providing the content, in terms of performance indicators, continued to reflect Council priorities.</p>
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5. Items for consideration for the 2006/7 work programme

5.1 Summarised below are work streams that have commenced but have not yet completed. The panel may wish to include them into the work programme for 2006/7.

Items	Comments
1) Budget Consultation	<p>The panel were involved in budget consultation and made recommendations on the draft capital programme 2006/07 – 2010/11 and the draft corporate revenue budget 2006/07 – 2010/11.</p> <p>This annual exercise will aid the panel to ensure maximum effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in policy-led budgeting.</p>
2) CPA Use of Resources	<p>Members of the work group have met without officers to conduct research. Having considered vfm key lines of enquiry and audit commission profiling information, members worked to develop a vfm assessment framework.</p> <p>In April the CPA use of resources working group recommended to the panel the adoption of a vfm assessment framework and that all panels are encouraged to conduct a vfm assessment as part of their work programme on a continuous basis. Members felt such work was vital for the council to deliver the efficiency agenda and in demonstrating member involvement in vfm in the widest sense.</p>
3) BV 12 The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE	<p>Members of the community organisation leisure and culture SPP considered at a special meeting a number of performance measures from which one could be selected to scrutinise in more detail. The panel decided to review BV12 relating to the number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence.</p> <p>As a result of the information provided to the panel, further information has been requested relating to additional sickness service breakdown within directorates; figures for sickness above 20 days;</p>

	<p>breakdown of sicknesses over 6 months duration into service areas and age groups and details of reasons for absence of those employees dismissed as a result of long-term absences.</p> <p>The information was requested for the first meeting of this municipal year. This area of work now falls within the remit of this panel and members are requested to consider incorporating it into its work programme.</p>
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5.2 Summarised below are additional work streams, highlighted as priorities for the directorate, which the panel may wish to include them into the work programme for 2006/7.

	Items	Comments
1)	Revenues and benefits transformation	<p>A review of the service is currently underway looking at strategic future of the service and is due to report to cabinet in mid-summer.</p> <p>The aim is to re-invigorate the service and bring performance in-line with best practice.</p>
2)	Libraries transformation	<p>This project aims to develop a modern, locally based, customer focussed service that will increase active membership and opening hours, improve satisfaction and performance and offer greater efficiency and effectiveness. Modernisation proposals will deliver 3 new library buildings with the potential for 3 more as part of regeneration projects . All libraries will be refurbished to provide a more attractive and welcoming environment which offers a wider choice of books, services and activities tailored to the local community, enhanced learning opportunities and more community based information. The modernisation offers an opportunity to investigate the role of these libraries as local access points for council services and information.</p>
3)	Corporate assessment framework	<p>The council aims to pro-actively address the requirements of the CPA framework and raise the understanding of the actions needed to be taken in preparation for the CPA inspection, to ensure that the council achieves 'excellent' by 2008.</p> <p>A pre-inspection action plan is currently being drafted which will identify, and help manage, issues arising from the key lines of enquiry within the assessment framework.</p>
4)	Role of members in performance management	<p>Performance management information is a key tool for both senior officers and members to assess how the council is performing. In order to optimise the use of this data, this work stream would assess how members can best access and utilise performance management</p>

	information to help drive service improvement.
5) Project management	In response to: an identified strategic risk, in relation to the management of capital projects; and to ongoing improvements within our performance management framework, a project office has been established to embed a robust and consistent project management approach; and to provide excellent project management advice, support, and guidance.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The panel will need to note the information set out in this report and agree a work programme for the municipal year 2006/7 based within the remit of the panel, set out in **appendix 1**. Members may also wish to utilise the selection criteria attached at **appendix 2** to ensure that the above listed, and any other potential, scrutiny items are given fair and consistent consideration.

Additionally, the panel may wish to re-establish the CPA Use of Resources Working Group working group to lead on:

- consultation with other scrutiny panels, on this draft framework and its proposed use, and then following their feedback refresh the draft framework as appropriate.
- piloting the use of this draft framework to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- continuing to work with officers in consulting on the draft framework with services across the council to ensure the proposed use of the framework adds value for all services and supports the identification and delivery of vfm and efficiency savings.

The previous membership of the working group is set out in **appendix 3**.

Appendix 1

CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL	
Scrutiny Panel Remit	Directorate
<p>Chair: Councillor Griffiths Vice Chair: Councillor Sarohi</p> <p>Scrutiny Officer: Stuart Bentley</p>	<p>Executive Director: Carole Evans ☎ 2910</p> <p>Cabinet Portfolios: Resources Transformation and performance management</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accountancy, financial planning, funding, • financial systems • local taxation (council tax & business rates) • housing and welfare benefits, anti poverty • insurance and treasury management • payrolls and pensions • debtors and creditors <p style="text-align: center;">Corporate Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beacon index, performance reporting • performance analysis and review • CPA inspections • overview and scrutiny function • best value (BVPP, reviews, policy etc) <p style="text-align: center;">Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal services (including monitoring officer) – contracts, non-contentious, conveyancing, advice, litigation, social services team. • Democratic services (including constitutional and member support services). <p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Transformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources and Organisational Development • Process re-engineering • Improving customer experience 	<p>Comments / explanations</p>

Scoping of Work Programme - Criteria for Selection

Appendix 2

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 2006
Scope review / identify leaders/ process / visits/ witnesses / resources etc	August 2006
In depth Scrutiny / identify problems and solutions	September 2006
Commence planning of review document	January 2007
Complete review document	February 2007
Submit review document to parent body	March 2007

Scoping of Work Programme - Criteria for Selection 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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CPA use of resources working group 2005/6

Councillors

Councillor D. Shires

Councillor Micklewright

Councillor Griffiths

Councillor Sarohi

Officers

Rob Flinter

Vicky Crowshaw