

**Neighbourhood
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Agenda
Item No. 7b**

DATE: 13 JUNE, 2006

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

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor Harrison – Leisure and culture
Councillor Perry – Safer stronger communities, partnerships and
Vision 2021
Councillor Walker – Environment and street pride
Councillor O'Hare - Resources

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.

Executive Director: Carole Evans

Date: 5 June 2006

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.

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. 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 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 Neighbourhood 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 also brought across work streams from other SPPs.
- 1.3 The revised remits 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 in the past 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 1. 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
<p>1) Procurement</p> <p>CORPORATE PROCUREMENT HAS MOVED TO CHILDREN'S PANEL.</p> <p>However, procurement of services within Neighbourhood's remit will continue.</p>	<p>This area of work having been deferred was brought forward from the 2004/5 work programme for consideration. It was agreed that procurement of leisure management operations should be the focus for scrutiny.</p> <p>Members having been advised that the procurement process would not commence until early 2006, agreed to delay this work stream to enable the process to be scrutinised from the beginning. This work stream was not however started but was earmarked for consideration during the 2006/7 municipal year.</p> <p>Members will note from the revised remit that corporate procurement is no longer within the remit of this panel and that it now falls within the remit of the Children's and young people's scrutiny panel.</p> <p>The views of this panel have been passed to the children's panel for their consideration.</p>
<p>2) Consultation</p> <p>STRATEGIC CONSULTATION HAS MOVED TO HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION PANEL.</p>	<p>Members had agreed that consultation affected all the services and elements of the panel's workload and that it should be included as an integral element of the review process when looking at subjects to be scrutinised within the panel's remit.</p> <p>Corporate consultation however now falls within the Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel's (HSCISPP) remit as part of the workload of the policy unit. Any issues raised within this work stream have been passed to the HSCI panel for their consideration.</p>
<p>3) Citizens Panel</p> <p>MOVED TO HSC&I PANEL</p>	<p>Members undertook a review of the process of establishing a citizens panel in Walsall and were satisfied with it. During the review members were also able to influence the preparation of the surveys in relation to leisure and culture services.</p> <p>Members will note that corporate support, of which the policy unit is a key element, no longer, falls within this panel's remit. This area of work now falls within the remit of the Health Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny</p>

	Panel.
4) Putting the citizens first project WORK NOW CONCLUDED	The panel concluded the review of this area of work following cabinet's decision not to proceed to contract with Fujitsu.
5) Parks and Green spaces ON GOING WORK FOR PANEL	<p>The panel established a working group in August 2005 to scrutinise the process and development of the strategy being developed by a consultant (appointed by cabinet) to ensure that it is fit for purpose and is in line with the vision 2008 priorities.</p> <p>The input from the working group will be built into the strategy which is near completion and will be submitted as a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>The panel will need to re-establish the working group for this municipal year if it wishes it to continue any further work on the strategy.</p> <p>A separate report on the agenda sets out the details and current membership of the working group.</p>
6) Youth Ofsted Report MOVED TO CHILDREN'S PANEL	<p>The panel undertook this area of work as a task and finish review.</p> <p>Members received the Ofsted plan and details of the number of youth workers being deployed within the borough in direct response to the actions arising from the plan.</p> <p>This area of work is now within the remit of the Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.</p>
7) Walsall Illuminations ON GOING WORK FOR PANEL	<p>The panel were informed that a specialist had been commissioned to review the long-term role of the illuminations.</p> <p>The panel though a series of workshops reviewed some of the findings of the consultant and is awaiting the completion of these findings. Members had expressed at the last meeting the desire to establish a working group to include stakeholders to allow a detailed review of the findings to take place prior to its submission to cabinet.</p>
8) Funding of Voluntary/Community Organisations MOVED TO HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION PANEL	Members had received a presentation from the portfolio holder on the process for grant applications. The panel reviewed this process during a number of special workshops and made a number of suggested changes to the process, in particular, creating 3 categories of applications; a revision of the criteria for successful applications; suggested ring-fenced budgets for each category of application and creation of a timetable for

	<p>decision making during the 2006/7 application period.</p> <p>The panel had agreed to invite to its first meeting of this municipal year representatives from community organisations such as CAB in order to assess the needs of such larger organisations and therefore make a better judgement of their financial needs.</p> <p>This area of work however, falls within the policy unit which is now within the remit of the Health and Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel.</p>
<p>9) Community Associations</p> <p>WORK CONCLUDED</p>	<p>The panel re-established the community association working group to continue their review on the transforming youth services agenda; the proposed delegation of funding and the impact on community associations.</p> <p>The working group concluded its review having identified funding gaps. The findings were submitted to cabinet who were supportive of a number of the recommendations for the future development of community associations. The working group having completed the tasks set has been disbanded.</p>

4.2 Additions to Work Programme 2005/6

During the year the panel added the following issues to the programme: -

<p>10) Performance monitoring information</p> <p>BV12 HAS MOVED TO CORPORATE PANEL.</p> <p>Performance monitoring is on going for this Panel.</p>	<p>Members 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; 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, however no longer falls within the remit of this panel and will therefore be referred to the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel as part of their workload.</p>
<p>11) Budget Consultation</p>	<p>The Panel had a series of meetings to review the budget process for 2005/6 and feed in its comments on the budget proposals to cabinet. This is an area of work</p>

ON GOING WORK	PANEL	<p>which will be a standard annual item for the panels to consider. Council has set dates for special meetings of this panel to enable scrutiny to comment on the proposals for 2006/7.</p> <p>Members will therefore need to consider placing this item on the next work programme for 2006/7.</p>
12)	Library Review	<p>ON GOING WORK</p> <p>PANEL</p> <p>Members considered budget provision for the council's library services and following a detailed review agreed that further investigation would need to be undertaken to clarify a number of outstanding issues including the allocation of the library budget for each LNP area in relation to their populations.</p> <p>The panel had agreed to look at this in more detail during this municipal year. Members may therefore wish to consider adding this to their new work programme.</p>
13)	Green Spaces (Parks) Budget	<p>ON GOING WORK</p> <p>PANEL</p> <p>This issue was considered as part of the budget consultation process and additional information was requested for the new municipal year. The additional information should cover park employee costs including the number of hours spent at each location; running costs for each park and associated costs for each LNP area.</p>

5. Items for continued consideration for the 2006/7 work programme

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

Items	Comments
1) Parks and Green Spaces	This item is on the agenda under separate cover. The panel may wish to re-establish the working group as necessary.
2) Walsall Illuminations	This item is on the agenda under separate cover. The panel may wish to establish a working group and set out its terms of reference and membership.
3) Monitoring Performance	This is an important area of work which all SPP should consider adding to the work programme. Panels should however give priority to those issues which have an effect on and adds value to the services of the council. Members will therefore need to consider how; when and what will be reviewed. During the last municipal year this panel held a special workshop to identify performance measures to be reviewed.

4) Budget Consultation	Council has identified 28 November 2006 and 1 February 2007 as dates for budget consultation meetings.
5) Library Modernisation Review	Members may wish to add this item to the work programme for future consideration.
6) Parks Budget	Members may wish to add this item to the work programme for future consideration
7) Community Wardens – post April 2006 This item has been referred from Regeneration Panel	<p>The Regeneration, Environment Housing and Community Safety SPP at their meeting in February 2006 requested an update on the progress made to put in place a transitional funding option for the community wardens, after April 2006. There have been considerable discussions with key stakeholders and funding bodies, which have resulted in a number of agreements to provide further funding to continue the service into 2006/7. The SPP have submitted a report to cabinet expressing disappointment at the outcome of the process and stating that in their view a cut in the community warden service would be detrimental to Walsall's communities. Cabinet have been asked to learn from the process and consult with scrutiny on all future issues that affect the work of that SPP.</p> <p>The SPP have also requested that this issue be placed on the work programme of the SPP whose remit now covers this and that that panel should undertake a community safety policy review in order to facilitate an exit strategy that involves partner organisations and feed its findings back to cabinet by October 2006.</p>

5. Conclusion

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 on 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 potential scrutiny items are given fair and consistent consideration.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL	
Scrutiny Panel Remit	Directorate
<p>Chair: Councillor C Towe Vice chair: Councillor R Burley</p> <p>Scrutiny Officer: Pat Warner</p>	<p>Executive Director: Jamie Morris ☎3203</p> <p>Cabinet Portfolios: Councillor R Walker - Environment & Street Pride Councillor L Harrison - Leisure & Culture Councillor G Perry – Safer stronger communities, Partnerships and Vision 2021 Councillor J O’Hare - Resources</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Walsall Borough Partnership (including crime and disorder strategy) <p style="text-align: center;">Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries and Heritage • Sports and Leisure • New Art Gallery • Green Spaces, • Arts events and marketing • Customer Contact, • College of Continuing Education • Electoral registration and administration <p style="text-align: center;">Neighbourhood Partnerships & Programmes Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Partnerships merged with Programmes Team • Programme Team manages a range of external funds including, SRB, ESF, ERDF, and NRF. • LNPs • Community Development <p style="text-align: center;">Built Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pollution • Highways maintenance and traffic management • Refuse collection and waste disposal • Street cleansing; grounds maintenance • Managing land and property • Public protection in relation to public health / consumer issues • Registrar • Coroner 	<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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