

**Regeneration
Scrutiny and Performance Panel**

**Agenda
Item No.**

DATE: 19 June, 2008

7

Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2008/09

Ward(s) All

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Andrew – Regeneration
Councillor Harris - Transport

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.

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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 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:

Regeneration Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel

All aspects and general services related to regeneration for example; economic, environmental and physical regeneration, planning, partnership working 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 suggested for potential inclusion on the 2008/09 work programme by Councillor D. Pitt and G. Clarke are as follows:

- a) Markets Working Group**
- b) Area Based Grant including Working Neighbourhoods Fund**
- c) City Strategy**
- d) Regional Strategy**
- e) Joint Core Strategy**
- f) St. Matthew's Quarter Working Group (on conclusion of Markets Working Group)**
- g) New Deal for Communities – Exit Strategy**

Markets Working Group

Core Membership of: D. Pitt, D. Anson and G. Wilkes with meetings open to all Panel Members.

1. *To Consider the proposed design options for Walsall Market, in light of proposed changes brought about by the redevelopment of St. Matthews Quarter.*
2. *Identify and assess the potential funding and management options for Walsall Market, in light of the above.*

The Working Group has met on a number of occasions and presented recommendations to the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel and subsequently Cabinet regarding the proposed design options for Walsall Market.

The Working Group is currently part way through considering the potential funding and management options for Walsall Market and is close to completing the tasks that it was set.

On conclusion of this Working Group the Panel have previously resolved to consider establishing a new Working Group to consider the wider St. Matthews Quarter redevelopment.

Members need to decide whether the markets issue needs to continue to be run as a working group for this year, or to be included in the main stream work programme. If it is to be run again as a working group then membership will need to be reconfirmed as one of the working groups core members, Councillor G. Wilkes, is no longer a Member of the Panel.

In addition to the above, at its meeting on 5 June 2008 the Health, Social Care and Inclusion Panel resolved to reconvene the **Affordable Housing Working Group** to complete its work from last year. The purpose of this group was to research the current situation of demand, access and affordability of housing and to analyse and make recommendations on the housing issues within the context of the regeneration of the borough. The HSCI panel wish to invite members of the Regeneration Panel to rejoin this working group, last years membership from this Panel comprised of Councillor D Pitt, Councillor S Coughlan and Councillor I Shires.

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 new 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 table below highlights suggested items from officers.

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
LAA Monitoring	<p>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 3 in particular are of direct relevance to the Corporate SPP</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of additional houses; • Proportion of children in poverty; • 16-18 year olds who are NEET; • Working age population who are qualified to at least level 2 or higher; • Working-age people on out-of-work benefits; • VAT-registered businesses in the area showing growth; • Adapting to climate change; • Skills gap in the workforce reported by employers • Tackling fuel poverty; • Levels of support to new and existing business; • Per capita CO2 emissions in the Local Authority Area.
Child Poverty	<p>Child Poverty is a key priority for the borough in its new Local Area Agreement. One of the main ways of reducing the levels of child poverty in the borough is by increasing the economic wellbeing of families. It is recognised that this is a cross cutting issue that will be of interest to other scrutiny and performance panels, particularly Children and Young Peoples, so Members may wish to consider undertaking a piece of joint scrutiny. The work will necessitate an external focus and a high degree of engagement with council partners.</p>	<p>Reducing the number of children living in poverty is a key target in the Councils new Local Area Agreement. The LAA lasts until 2010 so it would be expected that any scrutiny work and recommendations will be able to have an impact on the achievement of the LAA targets.</p>	<p>Local Area Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of children in poverty;

Item	Background	Timescales	Performance Management Information
Economic Assessment of Walsall	A requirement to complete economic assessments is part of the current Sub-national Review of Economic Development. The Review is being consulted upon and detail is not yet available as to exactly what will be required from economic assessments. However, the requirement for economic assessments signals a greater focus on understanding an areas economic performance and addressing this through direct intervention.	There will be an intensive phase of work to introduce economic assessments, likely during the current year but ongoing implications in terms of framing responses to the indicators within the assessment.	Not yet available
Worklessness	Addressing and reducing the levels of worklessness in the borough is a long term target of the council and its partners. Members can consider a range of issues around this topic, including, economic development plus local and regional worklessness schemes and strategies.	Reducing worklessness is a key target in the Councils new Local Area Agreement. The LAA lasts until 2010 so it would be expected that any scrutiny work and recommendations will be able to have an impact on the achievement of the LAA targets.	<p>Local Area Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 year olds who are NEET; • Working age population who are qualified to at least level 2 or higher; • Working-age people on out-of-work benefits; • VAT-registered businesses in the area showing growth; • Skills gap in the workforce reported by employers • Levels of support to new and existing business;
Urban Regeneration Company	Urban Regeneration Companies are subject to periodic review. A review has been carried out locally but the Regional Development Agency, supported by English Partnerships, has requested that a formal review be carried out of the objectives and operations of WRC.	During latter part of 2008/09	Not yet known

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Strategic Regeneration Framework	The SRF has been agreed by the Council as an approach to regenerate district areas outside of those parts of the town covered by the Urban Regeneration Company. Details of the relationship between WC and WHG, as the principal partners, is being clarified through the drafting of a Collaboration Agreement. The first phase of planning has been undertaken and the partners are now moving into implementation.	2008/09 and early 09/10 for securing legal agreements and development of a delivery plan. Development of additional masterplans.	Achievement of affordable housing, uplift in values in target areas, more sustainable, balanced communities. Will contribute to LAA targets.