



Report to Children Young People and Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 4th July 2013

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Subject: Work Planning 2013/14

Summary:

This report outlines an approach to Work Planning for 2013/14 has been focused on a single question – how can the Scrutiny Committee achieve a greater impact than it did last year?

The report makes proposals to focus on a more in depth approach on a smaller number of issues and suggests some practical next steps.

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Agree the approach to Scrutiny outlined in the report.
 2. Agree to set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake the tasks set out below in section 2.
 3. Suggest which topics should be on the long list of potential areas for the Task and Finish Group to consider for the first in-depth piece of work.
 4. Agree which members would be on the Task and Finish Group.
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Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Work Planning

1. **Style of Scrutiny Work**

- 1.1. The approach to Work Planning for 2013/14 has been focused on a single question – how can the Scrutiny Committee achieve a greater impact than it did last year?
- 1.2. It is proposed that the focus shifts towards a more in depth approach on a smaller number of issues. This approach will enable the Committee to hear a wider range of differing perspectives and consider a wider range of evidence on a particular issue.
- 1.3. It is also hoped this approach will allow the Committee to do more of its work 'out and about' rather than in the Town Hall. This could involve more direct involvement with people who are affected by the issue the Committee is looking at.
- 1.4. Looking at issues in greater depth will require Committees to look at fewer issues overall. It is proposed this is done by moving away from a large number of one-off monitoring reports.
- 1.5. It might also mean that some items would be circulated to Members of the Committee for information, rather than allocated time on a meeting agenda. If a Member felt an item in this category required a discussion of the whole Committee then they could make this request to the Chair.
- 1.6. That is not to suggest urgent issues should not be considered by the Committee. For clarity, this paper is not proposing any changes to how the Scrutiny Committee approaches the Call-In procedure to review a decision. The Call-In process would continue as it currently does.

2. **Next Steps**

- 2.1. It is proposed the Committee establishes a Task and Finish Group to make progress on an in-depth piece of work before the Committee's next full meeting on 5th September. The proposed Task and Finish Group would be made up of a maximum of 6 Members, including the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2. It is not proposed the Task and Finish Group would be responsible for the totality of the in-depth work and the recommendations on a specific issue. Rather, it would have responsibility for making progress on work between full meetings of the Committee. The full Committee would be involved in developing the work as it progressed.
- 2.3. It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group be given the following tasks:
 - 1) Agree the **topic** for the first in-depth piece of work for this municipal year from the long list produced at the meeting of the full Committee on 4th July. The Task and Finish Group will need to consider on which topic the Committee can have the most impact.

- 2) Discuss and agree a **Terms of Reference** for the work. It is proposed the Terms of Reference would include two or three key questions for the work to focus on.
 - 3) Discuss and agree the **evidence** the Committee would require to answer the questions in the Terms of Reference. This would include who the Committee would benefit from hearing from and where this would best take place.
- 2.4. It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group undertake this work in July. This would mean that the Committee's meeting on 5th September can include the people relevant to the issue the Committee is considering. It is proposed that the in-depth piece of work would be an item on every agenda of the full Committee meetings. This could be to hear evidence from people identified by the Task and Finish Group or to have an update on progress.
- 2.5. If the approach is agreed the initial step would be to consider which issues might be appropriate for the in-depth work. Members are asked to suggest which topics should be on the long list of potential areas for the Task and Finish Group to consider for the first in-depth piece of work. The Child and Household Poverty Strategy is attached as Appendix A to stimulate thinking on ideas for potential topics for the in-depth piece of work.

3. Future meetings

- 3.1. Future meeting dates of the Committee are:
- 5th September 2013
 - 3rd October 2013
 - 5th December 2013
 - 6th February 2014
 - 3rd April 2014
- 3.2. Items from the 2012/13 work programme that the Committee might wish to consider for the 2013/14 work programme are:
- Annual meeting with young people
 - Overview of the use of the Pupil Premium
 - Annual Safeguarding report
 - Attainment
 - Young Carers

4. Support for Scrutiny

- 4.1. The support arrangements for Scrutiny have changed. Scrutiny will be supported by two Policy and Improvement Officers in the Elections, Equalities and Involvement Team in the Policy, Performance and Communications Service. The capacity of the new support arrangements will enable each of the Council's four subject specific Scrutiny Committees to undertake one piece of in-depth work at a time.

- 4.2. Brief guidance will be available for people attending scrutiny on what the purpose is and what they can expect. This will include keeping introductions to reports or presentations brief and to the point to enable more time to be spent on the discussion.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

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- 3) Suggest which topics should be on the long list of potential areas for the Task and Finish Group to consider for the first in-depth piece of work.
- 4) Agree which members would be on the Task and Finish Group.