



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 25th 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 on some practical next steps.

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Agree the approach to Scrutiny and work planning for 2013/14 as outlined in the report.
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Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Work Planning 2013/14

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 spend more time on those issues it deems are more important.
- 1.3. 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.

2. Next Steps

- 2.1. It is proposed that the Committee aim to have a maximum of two main items at each of its meetings.
- 2.2. In order to have fewer items on the agenda it is proposed 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.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. It is proposed the Committee use a Task and Finish Group approach to work on an 'as and when' required basis. At this stage it is not proposed to set up a Task and Finish Group.

3. Future meetings

- 3.1. Future meeting dates of the Committee are:
 - 26th September 2013
 - 28th November 2013
 - 30th January 2014
 - 27th March 2014
- 3.2. Items from the 2012/13 work programme to include in the 2013/14 work programme are:
 - Homelessness Update
 - Refresh Schedule Requirement for B&B Accommodation for housing homeless
 - Implementation of Allocations Policy
 - Community Safety Partnership Annual Update

- Relationships between external contractors and housing (including tenant influence; specification; and monitoring)
 - Management of HRA Land
 - Review of HRA Business Plan
 - Progress on PRAM
 - Housing Company
 - Kier Contract
- 3.3. It is proposed the Chair, supported by the Scrutiny Policy Officer works up the detailed programme of which items should be taken at which meeting.
- 3.4. For the following items where follow up information or action has been requested by the Committee it is proposed these items would be 'for information', in other words they would not initially be allocated time on the agenda for a discussion:
- Right to Buy update
 - Fire Safety in communal areas (including mobility scooter policy)

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 have one Task and Finish Group operating 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 (maximum of 10 minutes) to enable more time to be spent on the discussion.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- 1) Agree the approach to Scrutiny and work planning for 2013/14 as outlined in the report.

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