Bolton Council

Report to:	Development, Housing and Skills Scrutiny Committee		
Date:	29 November 2010		
Report of:	Director of the Chief Executive's Department	**Report No:**	
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Report Title:	**Identification of Issues for Scrutiny / Annual Work Programme**		

Confidential / Non Confidential:	(***Non-Confidential***) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public
Purpose:	The report outlines the Committee's Annual Work Programme for the 2010/2011 Municipal Year, which will be updated on an *ad hoc* basis. This document has been put together following a Work Programme Event to bring forward ideas for the Committee to scrutinise in the forthcoming Municipal Year.
Recommendation	To consider the Work Programme.
Background Doc(s):	A timetabled list of issues agreed by the Committee as issues they would like to receive reports/investigate over the next twelve months is appended. Some items on this list emanate from Executive decisions made over the last year, along with other matters from performance and external inspection information.

Background Information

1.0 Choosing Issues

At the Committee Work Programme Meeting, held at the beginning of the municipal year, the matters set out in 1.1 and 1.2 below were borne in mind when setting the programme. Members of the Committee are asked to refer to these issues when considering additional items for consideration during the municipal year.

1.1 Key Factors in Assessing Relevance of Issues for Scrutiny

Relevance

- The Policy highlighted for Scrutiny is under the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.
- That the planned scrutiny has an impact in improving services to better meet the needs and expectations of residents/customers.
- Ensure that the policy, action, or organisation is not being scrutinised elsewhere.

Public Interest

- There is evidence of significant Bolton wide public interest in this topic.
- It is a “high profile” topic for specific Bolton wide communities or interest groups.
- The review would, where appropriate, give an opportunity for the people of Bolton to have a say.

Impact

- The review will have a significant impact on the well-being of the public of Bolton.
- The issue has implications for diversity, equality, and social inclusion.
- This could make a big difference to the way services are delivered.
- This could make a big difference to the way resources are used.

Performance

- Is Performance particularly good/bad?

1.2 Identification of Criteria to Evaluate the Appropriateness of Issues for Scrutiny Panels

The review of whether a subject is suitable for scrutiny should consider:

•	Relevance	
	•	Would a review be replicated by any other internal or external review process?
	•	Is the service or issue a national government priority?
		Have there been national changes to policy?

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	•	Is the issue of significant interest to the Bolton wide public?
	•	Would there be a significant impact on a particular community? (both interest and locality)
	•	Have there been local changes to policy?
	•	Is it an area of poor performance?
	•	Is it an area of outstanding performance?
	•	Is there a pattern of budgetary overspend in service area?
	•	Has there been a change to the remit of our arms length bodies?
•	Potential Impact of a Review	
	•	Is it possible for the Scrutiny Panel to make a valuable contribution?
	•	Are there sufficient resources both in terms of finance and officer availability to have a tangible impact?

1.3 **The Council's Main Aims and Priority Themes**

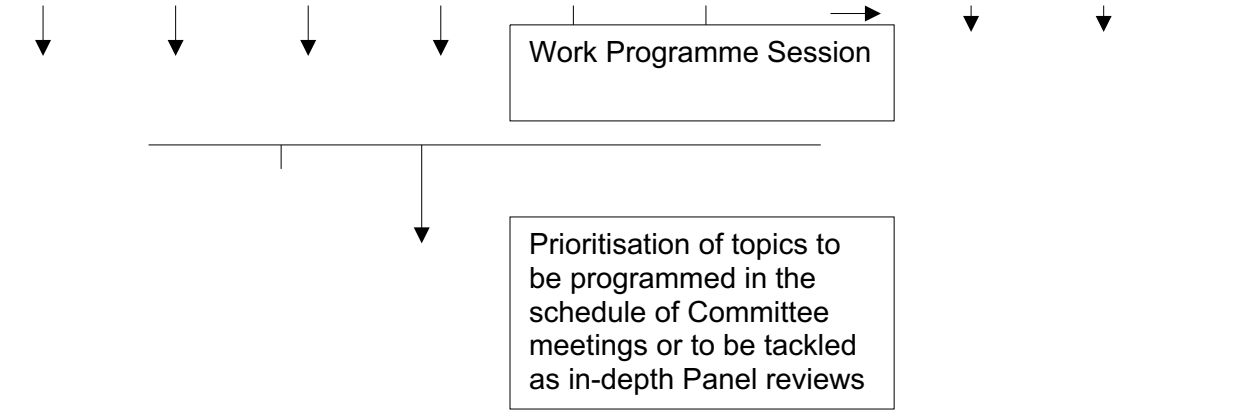
It is also worth keeping in mind the Council's Main Aims and Priority Themes when considering Committee Work Programmes:

Main Aims – Economic Prosperity, Narrowing the Gap and Transforming Services.

Priority Themes – Healthy, Achieving, Prosperous, Safe, Cleaner and Greener and Strong and Confident.

Attached at **Appendix One** is a schedule which Members can use as an aid to the identification of items for consideration by the Committee.

1.4 Planning and Managing the Committee Workload



1.5 Evaluating the Work of Scrutiny Panels

Evaluating the work of Scrutiny Panels will become increasingly important to aid the Council in determining what works well and in terms of Government expectations, leading from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Councillor Call for Action

Proposed process for evaluating the Panel and monitoring implementation:-

1. At their last meeting, all panels include an item in which they look back on the panel's work and evaluate its effectiveness. Panel members' views of what has and has not been effective is noted so that it can be taken on board for future panels.

2. Once the report has been received by the Executive or Executive Member it is sent out to all those who contributed to the panel's work along with a short evaluation form asking contributors about their experience of the scrutiny panel, from the adequacy of administrative arrangements to the standard of interaction with the panel and their views on the final report. The published report is put on the web site and also sent to all libraries and is provided on request to anyone who wants a copy.

3. Ultimately the real effectiveness of the panel must be measured by the difference it makes to outcomes. This remains extremely hard to evaluate given that there may be many changes occurring within a particular service area at any one time due to any number of reasons and these can all have an impact on residents' lives. Singling out the effect of the implementation of scrutiny panel recommendations is therefore very difficult.

4. However, care should be taken to ensure that those recommendations that are agreed by the Executive are implemented.

   This should be done via a standard Decision Monitoring Schedule which will be implemented this municipal year.

   In certain circumstances it may though be necessary to write off some outstanding recommendations. This may be because implementation was initially agreed in principle, subject to funding being approved but despite attempts to locate sources there is no reason to think that funding will be available in the near future. It could also be because legislation or internal changes had altered the shape of a service to such an extent that some recommendations had become obsolete.

Development, Housing and Skills Scrutiny Committee

21 June 2010	1) The Economic Position of Bolton 2) Skills
16 August 2010	1) The Economic Position of Bolton 2) SME's 3) Quarter 4 Reports 4) Progress on Bolton's Core Strategy
4 October 2010	1) The Economic Position of Bolton 2) Quarter 1 reports 3) Refresh of Bolton Town Centre 4) Affordable Warmth Update
29 November 2010 (At the College)	1) The Economic Position of Bolton 2) MIDAS
31 January 2011 (including budget)	1) The Economic Position of Bolton 2) Housing and Employment Land Updates (2009/2010)
11 April 2011	**1)** The Economic Position of Bolton

Workshops – Bolton and Farnworth and their implications
Narrowing the Gap through Neighbourhood Management