

**Report to:** Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 7th April, 2011

**Report of:** Director of Chief Executive's  
Department

**Report No:**

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**Report Title:** **Identification of Issues for Scrutiny / Annual Work Programme**

**Confidential /  
Non Confidential:**  
(delete as approp)

**(Non-Confidential)** This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:**

To provide members with a copy of the updated Committee work programme, agreed at the last meeting, which is updated on a rolling basis.

Also to provide Members with suitable criteria to assist in the selection of the issues for the Scrutiny Committee to receive reports on or investigate further during the current municipal year.

**Recommendations:**

To note and comment on the Work Programme for 2010/11.

**Decision:**

**Background  
Doc(s):**

The attached report includes a timetabled list of issues identified by the Committee as ones they would like to investigate over the current municipal year.

# 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 need to 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?
  - 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)

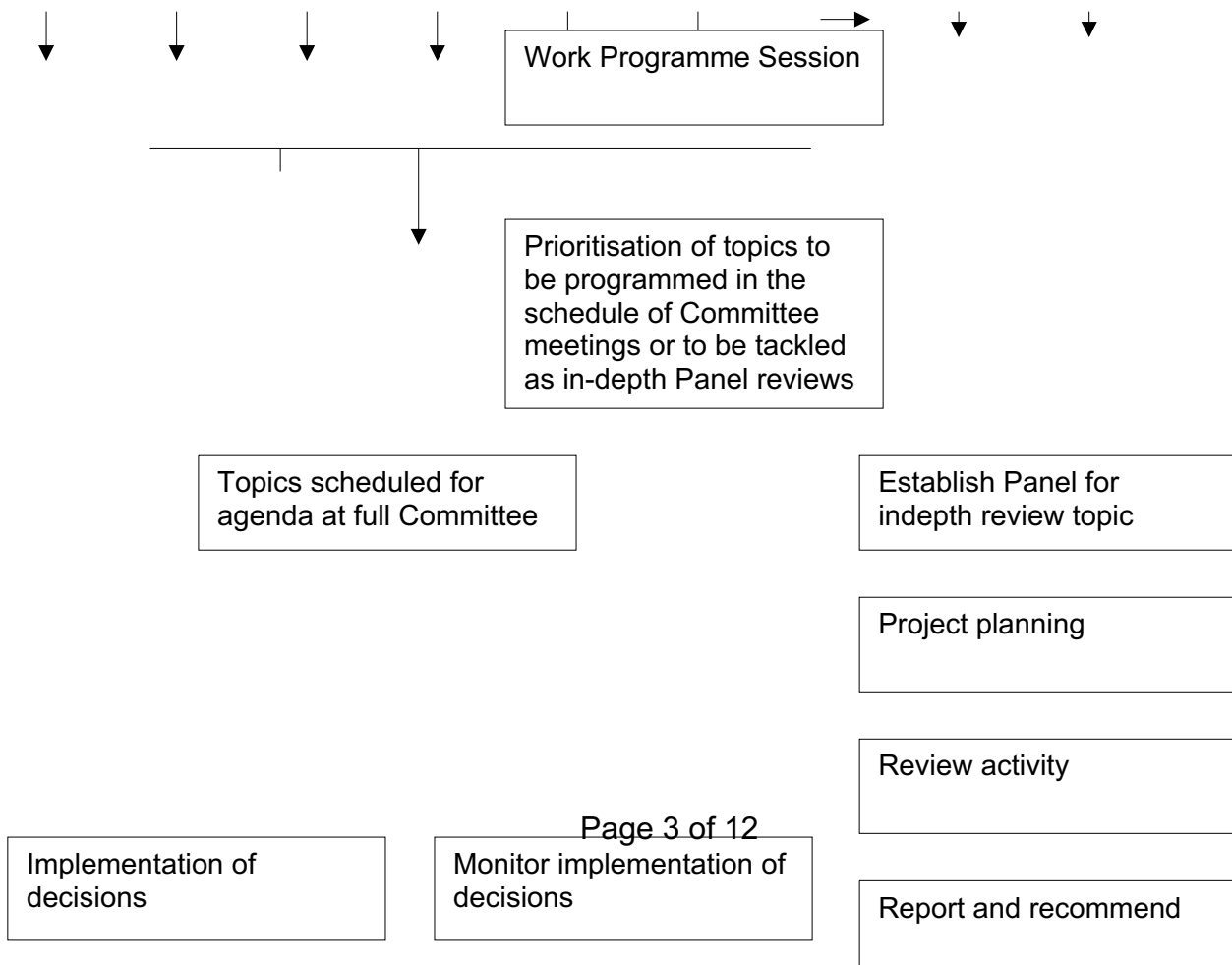
- Have there been local changes to policy?
  - Is it an area of poor performance?
  - Is it an area of outstanding performance?
  - Is there a pattern of budgetary overspend in service area?
  - Has there been a change to the remit of our arms length bodies?
- Potential Impact of a Review
    - Is it 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 Key Aims and Change Programme Themes

It is also worth keeping in mind the Council's Key Aims and Change Programme Themes when considering Committee Work Programmes.

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



Monitor implementation of  
recommendations

**2.0 An informal meeting of the Committee took place on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 to consider a detailed presentation from the Director of Children's Services on the key issues / challenges facing the service in the forthcoming year.**

**The meeting was attended by Councillors D. Brierley (Chairman), Wild (Vice-Chairman), P. Allen, Ashcroft, M. Connell, Francis, Mistry, Mrs. Rothwell, Ruston and White and Judith Martin (Lay Member) and supported by Ian Mulholland, Sarah Schofield, Margaret Asquith, John Livesey, John Daley and David Smith.**

**During the presentation the Committee debated key issues and indicated that they would like to see the work programme include the following, viz –**

## **2.2 Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

17th June, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Nursery Funding Arrangements</u></b></li></ul> <p><b>A presentation on Nursery Funding Arrangements which explains to Members – Funding streams of revenue, capital and grant. What has changed recently regarding funding and the envisaged impact of people needing child care. The Single Funding Formula and the role of the Schools Forum.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Recent Scrutiny Panel Decisions</u></b></li></ul> <p><b>A note to Members indicating the recent Scrutiny Panels relevant to this Committee and detailing the decisions made. This will enable the Committee to decide on what aspects it wishes to have impact / effectiveness reports on to future meetings.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Committee Work Programme</u></b></li></ul> <p><b>To present to the committee details of the proposed Committee work programme following the event held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.</b></p>
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26 <sup>th</sup> August, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Value for Money, Efficiencies, Savings and Grants</u></b></li> <li>• <b>This is going to one of the key themes during the forthcoming Municipal Year and the Committee needs to have the capacity in its work programme to respond to HM Government budget announcements and in terms of Executive Member decisions at a local level. The Committee also expressed a desire to have an update on the school deficit position and the interventionist measures in place._</b></li> <li>• <b><u>Front Line Social Workers</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>A visit to meet front line Social Workers for the purposes of finding out the key challenges faced, to understand the processes involved and to provide a degree of reassurance and understanding. This should also address issues of safeguarding, levels of experience, retention, case loads, high risk cases etc.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Sure Start / Children's Centres</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>A look at the processes and success measurement particularly in terms of the targeting of hard to reach families. This will become clearer when matters around the Children's overall budget are decided. Potential for the Committee to make interventionist recommendations to the Executive member and the Department.</b></p>

<p>7<sup>th</sup> October, 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Value for Money, Efficiencies, Savings and Grants</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>This is going to one of the key themes during the forthcoming Municipal Year and the Committee needs to have the capacity in its work programme to respond to HM Government budget announcements and in terms of Executive Member decisions at a local level.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Educational Attainment</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>A joint meeting of this Committee and the Policy Development Group, at the appropriate time, to look at Educational Attainment performance at both Primary and Secondary level with a focus on possible interventionist measures that could make a difference to performance. Perhaps best practice information from other statistically similar authorities could be included.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>School Head Teacher Cluster Working</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>To invite two Bolton Head Teachers to explain to Members about collaboratively cluster working by Heads and what outcomes there are including better performance.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Children's Services Performance and Financial Monitoring Reports</u></b></li> </ul>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Value for Money, Efficiencies, Savings and Grants</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>An update presentation for the Committee in terms of the recent decisions taken by the Executive Members relating to this portfolio and in terms of the outcome of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review – what we know and the possible impact.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Substance Misuse and Bullying</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>Details of the analysis that is undertaken in relation to these issues and the interventionist procedures in place. Potential</b></p>

	<p><b>for the Committee to make recommendations for changes in order to make a difference to the Executive Member.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Transfer of the Learning and Skills Council</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>Matters around the challenges being faced in terms of the transfer including the new Diploma qualifications and the effectiveness of the National Apprenticeships Service.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Pupil Referral Unit Review</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>A verbal report explaining recent matters considered at Policy Development Group Meetings and forthcoming meetings to which Members of this Committee will be invited.</b></p>
10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Value for Money, Efficiencies, Savings and Grants</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>This is going to one of the key themes during the forthcoming Municipal Year and the Committee needs to have the capacity in its work programme to respond to HM Government budget announcements and in terms of Executive Member decisions at a local level. The Committee also expressed a desire to have an update on the school deficit position and the interventionist measures in place.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Recent Scrutiny Panel Decisions</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>A report setting out what has happened following the recommendations of the recent Scrutiny Panels of – Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training, Educational Attainment of Looked After Children and Children Leaving Care.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Bullying</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>Details of the analysis that is undertaken in relation to this issue and the interventionist procedures in place.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Children's Services Budget Reports, 2010/11.</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>To consider the proposed budget reports for the service which will have been considered by the relevant Executive Members and prior to the Budget Council.</b></p>



7 <sup>th</sup> April, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Value for Money, Efficiencies, Savings and Grants</u></b></li> </ul> <p><b>This is going to one of the key themes during the forthcoming Municipal Year and the Committee needs to have the capacity in its work programme to respond to HM Government budget announcements and in terms of Executive Member decisions at a local level. The Committee also expressed a desire to have an update on the school deficit position and the interventionist measures in place.</b></p> <p><b><u>Town Centre Skate Park</u></b></p> <p><b>That a report on the strategy for the Town Centre Skate Park be presented.</b></p> <p><b><u>Anti-Bullying in Schools</u></b></p> <p><b>Evidence from schools on the effectiveness of Bullying strategies and Policies be presented to a future meeting of this Committee which would possibly include the attendance of a secondary and primary school head teacher and mentors.</b></p>

### **3.0 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.

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 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.

### Criteria to Aid Topic Selection – Appendix One

<b>Title of suggested review:</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>					<b>Score</b>
<b>Will it duplicate recent or planned work?</b>	<b>NO</b> If NO, go to Q.1	<b>YES</b> If YES, go to DECISION			
<b>CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT</b>					
<b>Q1. Is there evidence that customers/residents have raised this as an issue that needs to be addressed?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>Q2. Does this suggestion lend itself to a review in which the customer/resident can contribute significantly?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>Q3. Will this proposal result in services which better meet the needs and expectations of customers/residents?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE</b>					
<b>Q4. Will this proposal improve the council's performance in line with our cleaner, greener, safer and stronger ambitions?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>Q5. Will the proposal help us to achieve the Council Plan priorities?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>					
<b>Q6. Will the proposal help the council to reduce cost and improve efficiency. i.e. better VFM?</b>	0	1	3	5	
<b>Q7. Is there evidence that we are either a) performing at a high cost or b) performing poorly in this area?</b>					
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					
<b>How does suggested review score against this criteria?</b>					
<b>DECISION</b>					
<b>Should the suggested review be added to the work programme, and if so, how should it be carried out?</b>	Short-listed for Scrutiny review?	Request a report/Add to the work programme as an agenda item?/ appoint a rapporteur		No further action?	

