

Report to: Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7th December, 2009

Report of: Director of Chief Executive's
Department

Report No:

Contact Officer: Ian D Mulholland

Tele No: 01204 331037

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:

This document provides members with suitable criteria to assist in the further selection of the issues for the Scrutiny Committee to receive reports on or investigate further during the current municipal year. Also included is the updated work programme for 2009/10

Recommendations:

To consider the updated work programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year

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, 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?
 - 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

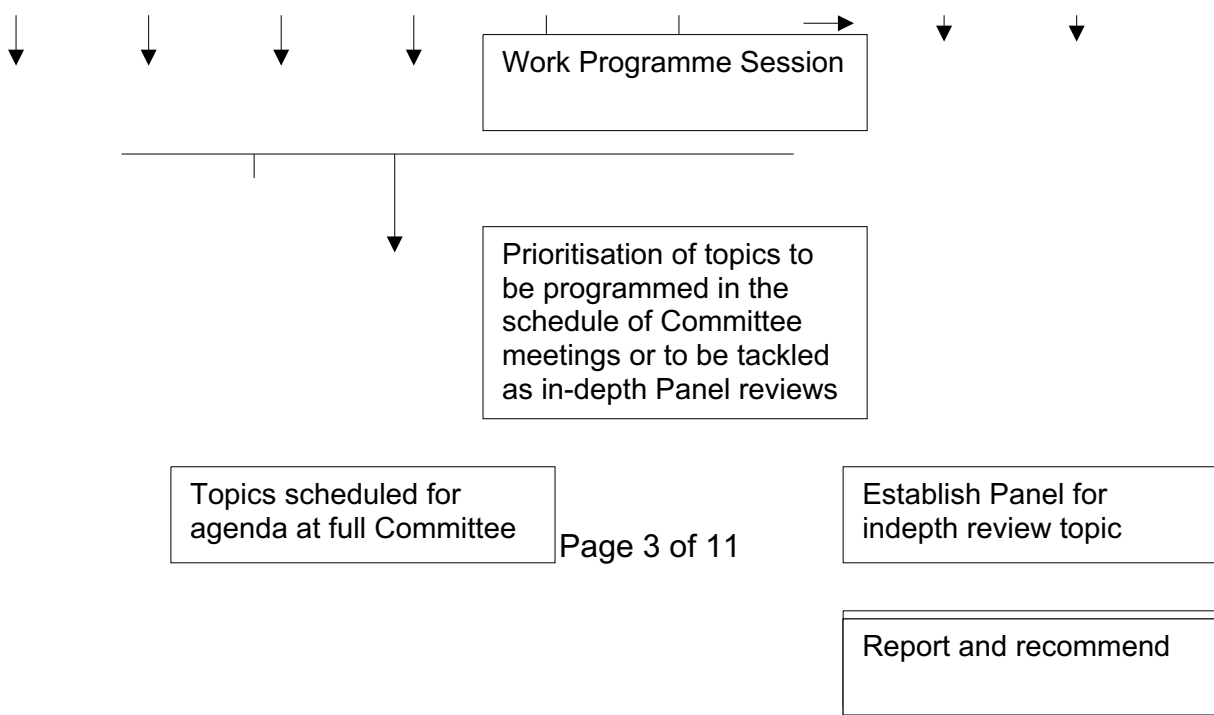
It is also worth keeping in mind the Council's Main Aims and Priority Themes when considering Committee Work Programmes:

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



Implementation of
decisions

Monitor implementation of
decisions

Monitor implementation of
recommendations

2.0 Work Programme Event

At the Committees Work Programme Event held on Monday 8th June, 2009 the Committee received a presentation from the Director of Corporate Resources and discussed the following issues –

- Customer Services Strategy – one stop shop, area offices
- Implementing new Customer Relations Management System
- Website and service delivery
- Economic climate impact – Revenues and Benefits, Council finances, reduced income from various sources
- Implementing International Accounting Standards
- Property Rationalisation – 20% target reduction
- Corporate Property Management
- Sustainability / carbon reduction
- Regulatory Services
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Performance and Area Working
- Communications and Marketing
- VFM across the Council – service reviews, collaborate working, income generation
- Pension increases of 1% per year

Following the presentation and debate Members honed in on the areas set out below that could be



included in the Work Programme for this Municipal Year :-

Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

15 th June, 2009.	<p><u>Work Programme</u> To consider and agree the work programme for this Committee for the 2009/10 Municipal Year</p> <p><u>Committee Remit</u> To update Members on the Remit of this Committee for the Municipal Year</p>
24 th August, 2009	<p><u>Savings</u></p> <p>Where the big savings have been made in the Council over the last 2/3 years ? Possible early identification of targets to inform VFM in the forthcoming reducing budgetary years.</p> <p><u>Funding Sources</u></p> <p>The Council currently receives about £26 million to fund various posts and schemes. What is the future security of these monies ? What are the options open to the Council ? Possible early identification of solutions.</p> <p><u>Accounting</u></p> <p>Need for background information and position statement on what the new International Accounting System is, what is cost centred accounting and what trading accounts the Council operates.</p> <p><u>Work Force</u></p> <p>Possible recommendations on better ways of retaining / succession planning especially in an increasingly VFM environment – medium term financial plan.</p>
12 th October, 2009	<p><u>Customer Relations Management</u></p> <p>Position Statement on where this is up to, what has been learnt and is it working</p> <p><u>The IT Strategy</u></p> <p>Suitability in relation to expansion into areas such as home working. Details of proposed future benchmarking initiatives. Possible recommendations in terms of different technology and maintenance timescales. Contract renewal in about twelve months time.</p>
7 th December, 2009	<p><u>Marketing and Communications</u></p> <p>Essentially an update on the progress reported at the April meeting. (Monitoring of efficiencies recently made in terms of communications and publications. Possible recommendations regarding new ways of getting the Council's message across and reduced expenditure.)</p>

	<p><u>Regulatory Services and Enforcement</u></p> <p>A presentation on the current and proposed Regulatory Services including Enforcement.</p>
8 th February, 2010	<p><u>Claims</u></p> <p>How efficiently are claims against the Council handled? Does the Council achieve VFM? How does it compare locally? Possible recommendations in terms of the handling process.</p> <p><u>VFM</u></p> <p>Value for Money across the Council in terms of processes and procedures in place. Details of the Council's plans to manage capacity in the light of the current financial constraints.</p> <p><u>Customer Relations Management</u></p> <p>An update to the Committee in terms of the lessons learnt from phase one of the changes outlined at the October, 2009 meeting.</p>
13 th April, 2010	<p><u>Sustainability</u></p> <p>A review against the planned achievements.</p> <p><u>Employment Monitoring</u></p> <p>Statistical information on the makeup of the Council including trend information. Possible recommendations concerning further exploration of areas of concern / trends.</p>

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

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

- Council's Key Aims – Strong and Confident Bolton, Safe Bolton, Achieving Bolton, Prosperous Bolton, Clean and Green Bolton, Healthy Bolton, Transforming our Services.

- Change Programme Themes – Customer Access, Local Delivery, Seamless Service, Shared Services and Resources.

