

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

WORKPLAN 2005-06

Introduction

The Work Plan of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been drawn together from a number of sources:

From individual Members drawing on the experience they have as ward Councillors and their specialist interests.

From Parish and Town Councils.

From studying the Corporate Plan for the coming year and discussing work items with the Executive and Departments

From individual members of the public, responding to publicity and from

Media coverage relating to Council services.

It is intended to give a good idea of the ground the Committees will cover in the coming year. It is, however, an organic document and is subject to change and review as priorities change.

If there are any comments or contributions you might want to make to the Work Plan, then please do not hesitate to contact Scrutiny Support in the first instance:

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REVIEWS

ITEM	REVIEWS	BACKGROUND	INT/EXT	TIMESCALE
Section 106 agreements	Pre-scrutiny → Poss review OSC EC	Members would like to establish what Copeland's policy is on 106 agreements. It has been suggested that the Council might make more of such agreements. A report of current policy will enable members to decide whether they wish to pursue this item further Pre-scrutiny briefing 18/7; report requested for 12/9 giving all section 106 agreements in past 12 months. Also CCC and LDNPA to be asked to do the same.	Internal	Conclusion: until there is a change in legislation, the guidance is pretty clear and seems to be followed by all authorities.
Public Toilets	REVIEW OSC ENV	Members would like to undertake a comprehensive review of the provision, standard and maintenance of public loos in Copeland, exploring best practice for delivery in rural areas, and the needs of local people and of the tourist industry in Copeland. In doing this, they will expect to retain a sense of realism and to look at all provision, including those provided by external organisations.	Internal and External	Report submitted to Exec Dec 6 th and recommendations approved
Budget Criteria	REVIEW OSC PR/EC	Opinion is being voiced by some members of Overview and Scrutiny, particularly those of Environmental Well-being, that the budget criteria are too job focused. They point out that the right conditions need to be created for regeneration to flourish, and these are often environmental issues, and they also feel that issues that they have looked at, and which haven't necessarily scored very highly, for example travel concessions and pest control, are socially important issues that the Council does need to address.	Internal	Joint meeting of Exec and OSC Chairs and Vice Chairs agreed to delay a look at the budget criteria until the Council's role in regeneration is better defined – maybe next year.

REVIEWS

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Regeneration in West Cumbria	Pre-scrutiny Poss REVIEW	The LSP Economic Well-being group has suggested a joint review of who is doing what on the regeneration front in West Cumbria.	Internal ↓ Poss external	Chris Collier, Chief Exec, Cumbria Vision attended special meeting 13/06/05 at 10.30am. Chris Collier scheduled for 24.4.06
Enforcement	REVIEW OSC ENV	Members want to take a very close look at enforcement as a whole. This will include all aspects, including dog fouling and car parking policy on issuing of fines. On car parking issues, OSC Economic to be invited to attend. Results may feed into the restructure review..	Internal	Business Plan presented October 2005. Progress to be reviewed June 2006.
Restructure 6 mths +	REVIEW OSC PR - Lead	Further thought is required as to how exactly this will be done, but their aim is to establish whether the restructuring exercise has delivered what it set out to do.		OSC PR Sub group 10 th November and decided to leave review of restructure until June 2006.
Leisure Opening Hours	Pre-scrutiny→ Poss Review OSC Social	It has been suggested that Members might want to look at the opening hours of the pool, sports' centre etc, in particular in respect of public holidays. A preliminary report will be requested for members to decide whether they wish to look at this item in more depth.	Internal	July meeting – recommended that a pilot be carried out into opening on a bank holiday.
New Councillors	Review/OSC PR	What do other Councils do to attract a more diverse range of candidates and what more could Copeland do?	Internal	Initial report to January OSC

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Dentists	REVIEW OSC SOC	We have suggested to the health scrutiny cttee of the County Council that the provision of NHS dentists in Copeland should be scrutinised. Dentists have been put onto the work plan of the Health Scrutiny Cttee (on which Copeland has a representative), but yet to hear whether there is an appetite for joint working.	External	County Council feels this is a national problem and are not inclined to follow it up other than monitoring the situation.
Schools in Copeland	Pre-scrutiny → Poss Review OSC SOC	The questionnaire carried out by OSC on the things that attract people to come and live here and those that put them off has not been given wide distribution as <u>some</u> of the data was unreliable. However, most results were largely predictable and placed a good deal of emphasis on the quality of schools, equally of local importance. Recent statistics showing that Copeland is lagging behind the Cumbrian and national average when it comes to test results for 14 year olds has prompted the Committee to explore why this is the case, and in looking at the bigger picture, what more might be done to drive up performance.	External	Delayed as CCC Director of Education resigned. School improvement team invited to the November meeting and provided statistics of school performances. Statistics to be updated and monitored.
School dinners	Pre-scrutiny → Poss Review	A pre-scrutiny report on healthy food initiatives to be commissioned from the County, before deciding if the Review will take place and in what format.	External	CCC Education have followed up on this quite strongly and it is felt that there is no need for further review.
Review of Conference budget		How should the available money be spent for conference attendance by Members.		Report be reconsidered.

MONITOR /CHALLENGE

ITEM	MNTR/CHLGE	BACKGROUND	INT/EXT	TIMESCALE
Tourism	Monitor OSC EC	They have already indicated that they would like to be kept abreast of all developments and initiatives in tourism as affects Copeland.	Internal /External	Tourism sub group to be set up to contribute to development of strategy.
Sundry Debtors	Challenge	Outstanding Audit actions on sundry debtors, on the list for some time, has prompted members to ask for a full report on the issue of the processing of sundry debtors.	Internal	Members decided not to pursue after this was dropped from outstanding audit actions.
Fly Tipping	Monitor OSC Env	Members are aware that a Cumbria wide strategy is being discussed and would like to be kept abreast of developments which may also feed into their overview of enforcement generally.	Internal	Difficulty in raising the environment agency on this one.
Transport Concession	Monitor OSC Soc	Members want to review the new voucher system to see whether it has achieved savings, and to examine the impact of the decision to give free bus travel to senior citizens.	Internal	The concession was reviewed. Savings were identified. OSC recommendation for a railcard accepted.
Asset Management	Challenge OSC PR	Members are aware that the Asset Management Plan is ready for review. Equally, they want to make sure that officers are confident the asset management register is up-to-date and that there is no risk of the Council losing land by default.	Internal	

MONITOR /CHALLENGE

ITEM	TYPE	BACKGROUND	INT/EXT	TIMESCALE
Benefits Fraud Inspectorate Report	Monitor/ Challenge OSC PR	Members would like to see the full report and consider and monitor the action plan in more detail.	Internal	May November
Food Safety Plan	Monitor OSC ENV	To monitor the food safety service plan.	Internal	March
Health and Safety Plan	Monitor OSC Soc	To monitor the health and safety service plan.	Internal	February
BVR Communications Improvement Plan	Challenge	Members want to take a close interest in the implementation of the Improvement Plan, in particular plans for better consultation and how Members might better feed views of their constituents into the process.	Internal	When Communications Manager is appointed.
Copeland Homes	Monitor OSC Soc	Members wish to receive a report annually on progress towards the decent homes standard in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair's participation in the liaison group, and the standard of maintenance and repairs.	External	

MONITOR /CHALLENGE

ITEM	TYPE	BACKGROUND	INT/EXT	TIMESCALE
Provision of street cleansing and refuse collection service	Challenge OSC Env	Members are concerned about the number of complaints that they themselves are dealing with about, in particular, the refuse service (missed bins etc). They want to monitor the performance of the service itself (not just recycling targets).	Internal	This was challenged in September and has continued to be monitored through performance monitoring.
Nuclear Opportunities Group	Monitor OSC EC	Members want to be kept informed of all developments and receive regular briefings from the Manager of the Nuclear Opportunities Group.	External	23 May 2005 12 Sep 2005 6 March 2005
Government Strategic Forum	Monitor OSC EC	Members want to learn and keep abreast of initiatives, action plans and outcomes.	External	Members received a briefing at their November meeting.
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	Monitor OSC SOC	There has been a suggestion from the LSP that a joint scrutiny is undertaken (Districts and County) on the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund, which is a new way of delivering funding. Whether or not this is achieved, Members would like to examine how the fund is being spent for the benefit of Copeland.	External	Looks like the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is now being subsumed by the LSP. Watching brief.
Cleator Moor Single Regeneration Budget	Monitor/ Challenge OSC EC	As this wraps up, Members would like to see an evaluation of the programme, including how the money was spent and how many jobs were created.	External	18 th July – Judith Brown (813536) 7 th November – Tim Knowles

MONITOR /CHALLENGE

Supporting People Strategy	Poss joint review with County OSC SOC	It has been suggested that a joint scrutiny by County and District be held, which Copeland has supported. However, we have pointed out that the timing may not be right as the new strategy only just came into force in April.	Internal/ External	County scrutiny panel has deferred to 2006.
IDEA Review of Arts development - Action Plan	Monitor OSC Soc	IDEA undertook a review of Art development in 2004-05. Their final report – due to be issued shortly – has a number of action points which Members will wish to challenge and monitor.	Internal	November

POLICY DEVELOPMENT/WORKING GROUPS

ITEM	TYPE	BACKGROUND	INT/EXT	TIMESCALE
Bereavement Strategy	Working Group OSC Env	A sub group of Members is assisting in the development of a bereavement strategy	Internal	Delayed – update to Members in Feb
Green Spaces Strategy	Working Group OSC Env	A sub group of Members is assisting in the development of a green spaces strategy.	Internal	Delayed – update to Members in Feb
CCTV	Working Group OSC Soc	A sub group of Members is working with the Portfolio Holder and department on provision of CCTV.	Internal	Interim Report to Exec July 2005. Hoped to conclude by July 2006.
IT	Working Group OSC PR	A sub group of Members is working with the Portfolio Holder and department on the future provision of IT services.	Internal	Ad hoc
Audit	Working Group OSC PR	A sub group of Members provides quarterly monitoring.	Internal	Quarterly

