

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2011-12

**LEAD MEMBERS:** Councillor Y R T Clarkson and Councillor G Garrity

**LEAD OFFICER:** Joanne Wagstaffe, Corporate Director for Resources and Transformation

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Jessica Hall, Policy and Scrutiny Officer

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report outlines the process for developing the 2011-12 Work Programme. Members are requested to consider and agree the process and note their role.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

That the process for developing the Work Programme is considered

That any changes to this process are agreed by the Chairs

That Members of the OSC consider any topics for the Work Programme Pool

## **1 BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION**

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and the topics on it are fundamental to the success of O&S. Overview and Scrutiny must add value to the work of the Council and produce worthwhile outcomes for local people.

This report outlines how the programme will be developed including consultation, selection of topics and key dates.

The Work Programme will be developed in conjunction with the Work Programme and Prioritisation Protocol (Appendix 1).

## **2 IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL TOPICS/ISSUES**

All key O&S roles will be included in the Work Programme. These include scrutiny of Executive business, improvement plans, and the annual budget.

Identifying other potential topics will be carried out in a number of ways including consultation. They will be as follows;

- 'Standing Items'
- Review of the Executive Forward Plan
- Consideration of issues for potential in-depth review/inquiry
- Consider potential policy review or development
- Consider areas of external scrutiny where there are significant community concerns or where statutory duties exist
- Invite suggestions

### **3 CONSULTATION**

Suggestions will be invited from the following:

- Members of the Council
- The Executive
- Corporate Leadership Team
- Officers
- Partner agencies
- Locality Team
- Parish and Town Councils
- Hard to Reach Groups
- Youth Groups
- Community Groups

The current Chairs will do this in the following way;

- In person and in writing
- Press Release
- Intranet and External website
- Copeland Matters
- Dispatches (the council's partnership publication)
- Attendance at meetings will be offered
- Offer of attendance at local groups

For the purpose of developing the new Work Programme, this consultation will close on Friday 27 April 2011 (although suggestion of topics for O&S consideration can be put forward throughout the year).

### **4 SELECTING TOPICS**

Once topics have been pooled, they will be measured according to the Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol (Appendix 1).

It is important to note that the number of topics suggested could potentially far exceed the Council's capacity and resources to deal with them. Therefore it is important that O&S focuses on issues that matter most and on outcomes that make a real difference to the Council and local people.

The structured approach for topic selection is outlined within the protocol. All topics will be filtered in an open and transparent way and reported to the committees when the Work Programmes are brought to the committees to agree.

This will be carried out by the Chairs and Deputy Chairs by 3 June 2011 before being brought to the new committees at their first meetings later in June.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The report sets out the process for developing the Work Programme. Timescales have been taken into account to consider local elections and the appointment of Chairs, Deputy Chairs and OSC Members after the local elections.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer will report progress to the OSC Co-ordinating Board.

### **Background Papers:**

Work programme prioritisation protocol

Notes of the OSC Co-ordinating Board on Friday 18 February 2011

## **2. COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL'S WORK PROGRAMME & PRIORITISATION PROTOCOL**

### **A. GENERAL**

1. It is the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) to select topics for overview and scrutiny and to set it an annual work programme for itself at the beginning of each municipal year.
2. The work programme will comprise priority issues, so as to allow for the inclusion of ad hoc and urgent items during the year.
3. The Committee will consider other issues in addition to its work programme by agreement. In the first instance an approach should be made to the Chair and Deputy.
4. It is important for the Committee to report its workings and recommendations for future work programmes to full Council at least once a year.

### **B. SELECTION OF TOPICS**

1. This is one of the most critical aspects of the overview and scrutiny process to ensure the objectives set by the Council are achieved.
2. Overview and scrutiny must add value to the work of the Council and produce worthwhile outcomes for local people.
3. A key practical consideration is capacity. Members and officers have a finite amount of time to invest in overview and scrutiny, but the number of topics is potentially very large, far exceeding the Council's capacity to deal with them in a thorough and effective way. Overview and scrutiny must therefore be fully focused on the things that matter most and on outcomes that make a real difference.

### **C. STRUCTURED APPROACH**

1. A structured approach to topic selection is essential. Individual whims, the unimportant, the inappropriate and non-priorities can be filtered out in a consistent, open and transparent way.

#### **2. THREE STAGE SELECTION PROCESS**

Stage 1 - Use to assess reason for topic selection

Stage 2 - Use to confirm there is a reason to reject

Stage 3 - Use to look at rationale and desired outcomes

### Stage 1 Good reasons to select

1. Improvements to local people are the likely result
2. Corporate priority for the Council
3. This is a key issue for the public with high levels of dissatisfaction.
4. A poor performing service
5. Barriers exist creating inequality in service provision

### Stage 2 – Reasons to reject

1. Already addressed/being addressed appropriately
2. Part of a legal process
3. Falls within the Council's complaints procedure
4. Subject to disciplinary/grievance procedure
5. Unlikely to result in real or tangible improvements for local people

### Stage 3 – Questions to ask

1. Why would we do this?
2. How does it link to the Council's Corporate Strategy?
3. What tangible benefits could result for our community or customers?
4. What evidence is there to support the need for a review?
5. What would we wish to achieve and why?

### IF TOPICS ARE COMPETING CONSIDER:

1. Their importance in terms of the Council's aims and priorities
2. The likely benefit of the widest possible sections of the community

## **D. THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

### 1. Main Considerations

Ensure that: (a) all key overview and scrutiny roles are included

- (b) all the topics to be considered are priorities, will help achieve the objectives of the overview and scrutiny functions
- (c) there is a balanced workload which does not exceed the capacity to do a thorough job.

## 2. Types of tasks

Matters included may be regular, ongoing tasks such as scrutiny of Executive business, improvement plans, the annual budget, or alternatively specific one off issues.

## 3 Framework for the development of the work plan

- Process:
- (1) identify potential topics/issues
  - (2) select topics
  - (3) allocate work
  - (4) Timetable work
  - (5) check resources
  - (6) Finalise for approval by Committee
  - (7) Review and update

### (1) Identify potential topics/issues

- (a) Review forward plan, Executive agendas/minutes (leave capacity in programme to pick up in year issues).
- (b) Consider issues for potential policy review or development (eg what's not working well, where are the gaps in policy, input on major policy developments)
- (c) Consider issues for potential indepth review/inquiry (eg significant community concerns, major problem areas, poorly performing services, inequality in service provision, consistent areas of over/under spending)
- (d) Identify 'standard' items for scrutiny and programme in at the outset(eg annual budget, annual corporate planning process).
- (e) consider areas for external scrutiny where significant community concerns and/or statutory duties exist (agency/partner plans, multi-agency plans)

- (f) Invite suggestions from Members of the Council, the Executive, Officers, the Public, and partners.

(2) Select Topics

Once identified, filter and prioritise each potential topic for review or policy development through the topic selection process set out at B and C in this protocol.

(3) Allocate work and check for balance

- (a) Timetable the workload
- (b) Are all the scrutiny functions include?

(4) Timetable

Timetable the draft work programme having regard to the Council's schedule of meetings and other relevant factors (eg holidays, significant other work commitments)

(5) Check resources

Consider the resources needed to carry out draft work programme as allocated (include member time, officer capacity, budget requirements)

(6) Finalise for approval

Finalise draft work programme for formal approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(7) Review and update

Keep work programme under constant review (each committee meeting), adjust as work through, update as new topics/suggestions are received and prioritised), maintain an audit trail of record of progress, achievements, outcomes.[end]