

Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan 2009/10

LEAD OFFICER: Tim Capper, Head of Democratic Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Neil White, Scrutiny Officer

Recommendation: that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be advised which items this committee would wish added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees work plan for 2009/10.

1. Background

This is the last meeting of this Committee this civic year. At Appendix “A” is the current work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee will note that it has not been possible to deal with all of these issues this year.

This had been mainly due to the number of issues being more than can be handled by the available staff resources and being overtaken by events particularly with this committee on health issues.

The Committee is invited to consider which of the issues from its current work plan it wishes to carry over and what new issues it would like to look at in the new civic year.

2. Work Programme

There are many sources for potential topics for Scrutiny and Members may wish to consider some of the following as a starting point for identifying topics:

- Councillors experiences
- Issues identified by Audits and Inspections (past and present)
- Results of Consultation
- Areas of poor performance
- Stakeholders concerns raised by the Council's partners and service users
- Consultation with Cabinet and Heads of Service on pertinent issues that are emerging or any forthcoming opportunities or threats
- Central government policy changes

Use of the **Forward Agenda** and **pre – Scrutiny**, can also provide more opportunities for involvement in the decision making process. If pre-scrutiny is well planned and used appropriately it should lead to successes and enhance the democratic process, while dealing with any barriers at an earlier stage than for example a call – in could achieve. When managed effectively, pre-

scrutiny can strengthen Officer's reports and if Council policies are to be robust, inclusive and ultimately, have Member buy-in, then pre-scrutiny can play its part.

This could be achieved by inviting Portfolio Holders to give regular presentations to the relevant Committee, during which they could highlight upcoming issues.

The overview aspect of overview and scrutiny continues to need to be developed at the council and the Portfolio Holder's assistance in drawing the committee's attention to long term policy issues will be welcome. The work currently being done by the Youth Engagement Task and Finish Group is a good example of this.

It would also be prudent to build some flexibility into the work plan to cover for urgent issues as they arise and for any Councilor Call for Actions that would fall to this committee to consider.

This Committee will have 6 meetings during the year and it is suggested that Scrutiny needs to be selective in identifying the areas it wishes to scrutinise and focus on issues where it can add value. Work programmes should allow enough time to do justice to all of the items on each agenda. In practice, this will mean being more selective in deciding which issues to scrutinise, perhaps focussing on one main piece of scrutiny for each meeting agenda.

Work Programmes should also contain clear links to Council priorities and National Indicator Set performance information and encourage an input from the Executive into the development of the Work programme.

3. Selection Criteria

It is proposed that an initial selection test should be applied for every potential scrutiny topic to ensure that the topics put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration meet the selection criteria.

When putting forward requests for new items members are asked to refer to these criteria.

Selection Criteria
An area with a high level of dissatisfaction where improvements to services would be likely
Poor or declining performance in service including the review of performance in areas where concerns had previously been addressed elsewhere
Is one of the Council's key priorities
The topic is an area of high public concern ~ demonstrated through consultation or highlighted via Councillor surgeries

A service that is an external priority in an area the Council supports or is a shared priority with the Local Strategic Partnership
An area of high budgetary commitment
New guidance or legislation is likely to impact on the way the Authority works

Rejection Criteria
Scrutiny is unlikely to result in service improvements
The topic is already being addressed elsewhere
Scrutiny of this topic falls outside the remit and responsibility of the Council
The topic is better addressed initially by another party than through the Authority's scrutiny process
The objective cannot be achieved in the specified timescales
The topic is too broad

Members are also asked to consider:

- Is there a clear objective for scrutinising this topic?
- How does it link in with the Council's priorities?
- Is there evidence to support the need for scrutiny?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- What are the likely benefits to the Council and our customers?
- Are we likely to achieve the desired outcome?
- What are the potential risks?

4. Prioritisation

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will be asked to prioritise topics on the basis of importance and impact as to where they fit into the work programme. A simple grid will identify those that are of the highest priority.

Scoring Guide

Score	Importance indicator	Impact indicator
0	No evidence of links to the Council's aims and priorities	No identified benefits
1	No evidence of links to the Council's aims and priorities, but an ongoing area of public concern that falls within the Authority's remit	Minor potential benefits affecting one ward/customer group
2	Some evidence of links to the Council's aims but they may be indirect and the topic is not a current Council priority	Minor potential benefit affecting 2 or more wards/customer groups Moderate potential benefit affecting one ward/customer

		group. Potential benefit to an individual service area within the Council
3	Good evidence of links to the Council's aims and priorities and/or evidence of public concern	Moderate potential benefit affecting 2 or more wards/customer groups Substantial potential benefit affecting one ward/customer group. Potential benefit to a department within the Council
4	Strong evidence of links to the Council's aims and priorities and a high level of public concern	Substantial potential benefits for a significant proportion of the community Substantial potential benefits for the Council

If the committee does have a priority order for the items within this committee's remit it is asked to use this guide to score the items to aid the Management Committee.

5. Conclusion

A common pitfall for Overview and Scrutiny Committees can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to 'add value' to the work of the Council. As such the selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny as such processes can ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community.

It is also important to note that Overview and Scrutiny has limited time and resources and therefore work plans need to be manageable. It is not possible to include every topic suggested by Members, Heads of Service or the Public in the Work Plan. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way.

The Committee is invited to advise which items would wish added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees work plan for 2009/10.

List of Appendices

Appendix "A" – Current work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

List of Background Documents

None

Management					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
REGULAR ITEMS					
Call Ins			Neil White		As and when needed
Work plans			Neil White		Each meeting
Performance Management	2.6.5 – 2008/9	Executive Quarterly report	Hilary Mitchell	Last reported June 2008	Next Quarter
West Cumbria Strategic Partnership	1.3.2/2.1.4 – 2008/9/Annual	Update reports	Jane Murray (Allerdale)	Next meeting to be arranged	Report back following next meeting
Cumbria Strategic Partnership/Local Area Agreement	1.4 - Annual	Joint working (county-wide) Update reports	Neil White	Meeting held on 24 February 2009	Report expected from February meeting
Gershon Efficiency Savings	1.1.7 - Annual	Regular monitoring Twice a year	Hilary Mitchell	Twice Yearly	May 2009
Complaints' Monitoring	2.5.1/2.5.2 – 2008/9/Annual	Quarterly report	Marissa Joyce	Reported on 18 July	Report expected next quarter
SPECIFIC ITEMS					
Budgetary Process	1.1.7/2.7.4/2.7.5/2.7.6 /2. 7.7 – Mostly 2008/9 and annually	Task and Finish Group	Neil White	To be arranged for April 2009	24 April
County Joint Councillor Call for Action Form		Report	Neil White		May
How devolution, community cohesion and place shaping will develop in Copeland	1.3.9 – May 2009	Update report	Hilary Mitchell	Being worked on by the Corporate Improvement Board	Future meeting

Management					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
Customer First - Look at whether the Council is providing the services the public want, how the Council is communicating to the public and how it is seeking to raise customer satisfaction	2.5.1/2.5.2/2.5.5 – 2008/9/Annual	To be confirmed	Jane Salt	To follow on from Communications MOT	Future meeting
Open and transparent council; Role of Councillors/ Constitution involvement of public		Potential Task and Finish Group	Councillor Pitt	Report to be written	Future meeting
Publicity of credit unions		Report	Neil White	To be arranged	Future meeting
The barriers to closer collaboration between Councils	1.1.3 – 2008/9 and annually	Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Neil White	Will ask Joint Committee to look at once its new role has been agreed	Future meeting
The ability/capacity of partners in Copeland to deliver the Local Area Agreement	1.1.4 – 2008/9 and annually	Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Neil White	Will ask Joint Committee to look at once its new role has been agreed	Future meeting

Children, Young People and Healthy Communities					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
Youth provision in Copeland and how to engage the Youth in the council's decision making process	2.1.1 – 2011 2.1.3 – 2008/9 and annually	High priority - Task and Finish Group	Neil White	Task and Finish Group now meeting	Future meeting
Refurbishment of Lonsdale Centre Whitehaven	3.6.5 – 2008/9 and annually	Site visit	Neil White	Centre recently opened – to be part of above Task and Finish Group	Future meeting
Foyer Project Penrith	3.2.6 – Annually	Visit	Neil White	To be part of above Task and Finish Group	Future meeting
Dental treatment in area	3.7.1 – Annually	Within the remit the County Health and Well Being Committee.	Councillor Garrity	Councillor Garrity to update as a member of the County task and Finish group that is looking at this issue	Future meeting
Look at how voluntary agencies can access funds	2.7.9 – 2008/9	Task and Finish Group	Neil White	To be arranged	Future meeting
Drug and Alcohol Abuse	3.2.3 – Annually 3.2.6 – Annually	Joint meeting with Safer and Stronger Communities	Neil White	Ask Cumbria DAAT to come back for an update when appropriate.	Future meeting
Closure of Ehenside School at Cleator Moor and Wyndham School in Egremont.	3.3.5 – 2010/11	Information report	Neil White	Planning Policy Officer's view to be sought	Future meeting
Provision of "drop in" Copeland Council office on King Street in similar manner to Allerdale's in Workington		To be confirmed	Councillor J Williams	Further clarification on this issue is being sought	Future meeting

Children, Young People and Healthy Communities					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
Building Schools for the future	2.4.5 – 2008/9	Presentation	Neil White	To be arranged	Future meeting
Equality Impact Assessment – effect on service delivery	2.4.3 - 2009	Report	Martin Jepson	Assessments still being completed	Future meeting
Department of Health Consultation Pharmacy in England	3.7.1 – Annually 3.7.2 – 2008/9 and annually	County Health and Well Being Committee	Neil White	Government agreed no change	Future meeting
Closer to Home	3.7.1 – Annually 3.7.2 – 2008/9 and annually	Presentation by Cumbria PCT	Neil White	Last reported in April	Future meeting

Economic Development and Enterprise					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
Copeland Regeneration Delivery Plan	1.1.11 – 2008/9 and annually	Presentation	Councillor Giel	On agenda	16 April 09
Regional Strategy 2010 Issues Consultation		Report	Julie Betteridge	On agenda	16 April 09
Wind		Task and Finish Group	Neil White	Referred from Council	16 April 09
Whitehaven Town Centre Regeneration and Business		Report	Julie Betteridge	Report expected	2 July 09
Lessons from Market Town Centre Initiatives at Millom and Egremont and Cleator Moor Square		Report and presentations	Julie Betteridge	To be arranged	2 July 09
Highway Infrastructure		Joint Workshop with Cumbria County Council	Neil White	To be arranged – Special meeting AM	20 August 09
Marketing Copeland – key selling points	3.1.3 – 2009	Presentation	Neil White	To be arranged	20 August 09
World Heritage Bid		Presentation	Lake District National Park Authority	To be arranged	20 August 09
Nuclear New Build		Report	Julie Betteridge	Update report	20 August 09
Visit to Energus site at Lillyhall		Site visit	Neil White	To be arranged	May/early June
National Indicators		Report	Neil White	As appropriate	Future meeting
Business Community Engagement – are the right representatives being consulted	1.3.5 – 2008/9	Presentation/ Report	Neil White	To be arranged	Future meeting
Encourage more market traders	3.1.2 – 2008/9 and annually	Report	Neil White	Results of market tendering exercise are awaited.	Future meeting

The maintenance and condition of the public realm in Copeland and the extent to which this satisfies local people and supports the visitor economy of the area	3.3.6 – 2008/9 and 2012	Presentation	Cumbria Tourism	Ask Cumbria Tourism to make this into more manageable parts for a Task and Finish Group	Future meeting
The quality of car parking services in the Borough and the scope to work more closely with adjacent authorities and other operators to provide a more customer focused service	2.5.6 – 2008/9 and annually	Report	Neil White	County Council currently looking at traffic flow in Whitehaven town centre	Future meeting
6 month review of the enforcement of conditions attached to planning decisions.	3.3.3 – 2008/9 and annually	Task and Finish	Neil White	Meeting 8 July	Future meeting
Six month review of Planning Appeals recommendations		Task and Finish	Neil White	Meeting 8 July	Future meeting

Safer and Stronger Communities					
Topic	Corporate Plan	How	Who	Status	Report Due
Increase number of Public toilets in Whitehaven and cleaning of James Street toilet	3.3.5 – 2010/11	Update report	Councillor Giel	Part of Harbourside Action Plan	30 April
Housing Issues	3.5.3 – 2012	Presentation/ Report	Neil White	Audit Commission Informal Progress report	30 April
Crematorium		Presentation	Toni Magean	Review of last year and focus for next year	30 April
Drug and Alcohol Abuse	3.7.4 – 2008/9 and annually	Report	Cath Coombs	Council's Substance Abuse Policy being drafted	30 April
Public Convenience Provision		Report	Julie Betteridge	Investigations being undertaken	Future meeting
Liveability	Various	Task and Finish Group	Neil White	Currently meeting	Once meetings have concluded
Doorstep recycling	Regular monitoring		Janice Carrol	Part of Liveability Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group
Visit to Shanks Waste Treatment Site	3.3.4 – 2009 and annually	Task and Finish Group	Janice Carroll	Part of Liveability Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group
Quality of Parks/ Green Spaces and Quality Coast Awards	3.3.2 – 2010 and Annually	Task and Finish Group	Toni Magean	Part of Liveability Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group
Litter and detritus to include the provision of cigarette litter bins in Whitehaven	3.3.6 – 2008/09 and 2012	Task and Finish Group	Janice Carroll	Part of Liveability Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group