

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

27 JANUARY 2009

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
LAW AND DEMOCRACY**

SCRUTINY:

(1) MONITORING UPDATE

(2) "OVERVIEW" WORK

(3) WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on monitoring activity of Select Committees, presents a proposal for developing the overview role of Select Committees and seeks to confirm the process for setting next year's work programme in the context of a new efficiency and improvement framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That progress updates be reported on a quarterly basis to Select Committees as part of their monitoring activity.
- (2) That the "overview" role for Select Committees be supported.
- (3) That the process for setting next year's work programme be approved.

(1) MONITORING UPDATE

Current Process

1. The agreed process states that following approval of recommendations, the relevant link officer, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, will draw up an **Action Plan** briefly setting out how the decision will be implemented, including any success measures and timescale for implementation.
2. The Action Plan is submitted to the relevant Select Committee usually at their next meeting and this enables the Select Committee to schedule a date to receive a **Progress Report**. As a guide this initial progress report would normally be submitted to the Committee between 6 and 12 months from receipt of the Action Plan.
3. The relevant link officer, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s), is responsible for collating the Progress Report to the Select Committee. The link officer/Cabinet Member states their view of where progress currently lies according to the following criteria:

1 Achieved (Fully)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified
2 On Track but not yet due for completion	The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.

3 Slipped	The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped. An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.
4 Not Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved. An explanation for non achievement of the recommendation should be provided.

4. The relevant Cabinet Member and relevant link officer attends the meeting of the Select Committee to discuss progress in relation to the recommendations.
5. If the Select Committee does not agree with the view of the Cabinet Member on progress, the Select Committee may need to give further guidance on what will demonstrate achievement and ensure that this is clearly understood. The final arbiter as to the status of a recommendation where there is a disagreement between the Select Committee and Cabinet/officer view will be the Executive Scrutiny Committee/Council (ultimately).
6. Following the initial report back on progress, further **Progress Updates** are received by the Committee on all recommendations that were not signed off as being 'fully achieved' when the initial Progress Report was considered by Committee; these are usually in the form of a twice yearly report that brings together any outstanding actions from previous reviews for the particular Select Committee.
7. There may be instances (particularly with older recommendations) where the Select Committee may take the view that other developments now supersede the need to achieve the recommendations.
8. Where, as a result of the review process, further issues or concerns emerge, these issues will be recorded and brought to the attention of the Executive Scrutiny Committee who will decide whether they warrant further review work.

Assessment of Current Arrangements

9. The current monitoring arrangements have provided a structured approach to monitoring the implementation and impact of scrutiny reviews and was highlighted in the most recent CPA Inspection Report as evidence of performance monitoring being embedded within the organisation and providing an important element of challenge built into the system with Cabinet Members being called to Select Committees as part of in depth review work and also to answering questions on the implementation of review recommendations.
10. Owing to the increasing number of reviews subject to monitoring, it is proposed to increase the frequency of reporting of progress update reports to a quarterly basis. It is not proposed to invite Link Officers/ Cabinet Members to the Select Committees where the quarterly update reports are presented but only to the initial progress report.

(2) "OVERVIEW" ACTIVITY

11. Whilst most of the activity of Select Committees currently comprises in depth policy review, there is scope to develop the "overview" role of scrutiny. For example, the

Housing and Community Safety Select Committee currently have an annual meeting with the Police District Commander to discuss the annual performance report and related issues.

12. The recent review of RSLs included a number of requests for further information to be presented to the Committee on an ongoing basis. In order to keep this manageable, it is proposed to set aside one meeting of the Committee each year to concentrate on its overview role and during this meeting it could, for example, receive the updates related to the RSL review as outlined above, the Police District Commander's annual report on performance, an overview of council Housing and Community Safety performance.
13. This approach could potentially be replicated for other select committees with perhaps an annual "overview" meeting attended by the appropriate Head of Service and Cabinet Member to outline achievements, current issues and performance. Careful timing of these meetings could assist the Committee in developing ideas for future in depth policy review work as well as providing the Committee with "additional opportunities for challenge" as recommended by the recent CPA inspection.

WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

14. In relation to in depth scrutiny reviews, input has, to date, been sought in the following ways:
 - A standing item on Select Committee agendas
 - All members have been asked for suggestions for topics
 - CMT and HOS have been asked for ideas (Employees have input via line manager/HOS/CD)
 - Quasi judicial committees have been asked for suggestions
 - Consultation with Health Partners
 - An item on Renaissance Board
 - Members of the public (through the scrutiny website/ Stockton News/ Scrutiny leaflets and publications)
15. It is also proposed that Stockton Business Forum be included on the list of bodies invited to submit suggestions and that, given the increasing emphasis on external scrutiny, officers meet with key partner contacts to invite their input into the programme.

PICK System

16. All suggestions are recorded on a standard pro forma and presented for discussion at Scrutiny Liaison Forum prior to consideration/ approval by the Executive Scrutiny Committee which has ultimate responsibility for co-ordinating the scrutiny work programme. In order to assist Members in the prioritisation of topics, last year the PICK system was introduced. Following receipt of the pro formas, Officers gave each proposal an initial "scoring" for consideration by the Scrutiny Liaison Forum. Whilst the scoring would not be binding, it was hoped that this would help to give a weighting to the increasing number of suggestions coming forward.
17. With reference to the PICK system, Members at last year's Scrutiny Liaison Forum noted that it gave inadequate recognition of organisational development topics in the scoring matrix and the Executive Scrutiny Committee was asked to review this. It is proposed that the "Council Performance" section of the pro forma be amended to reflect this comment and this can also be borne in mind when scoring next year's topic suggestions.

Efficiency Improvement and Transformation Programme

18. Taking into account the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Programme which is being developed, it is also suggested that the PICK system should reflect the importance of efficiency work as well as organisational effectiveness with reviews supporting the efficiency work taking a high priority. It is therefore proposed to give suggestions under the heading Council performance and efficiency a greater weighting.
19. Details of the revised PICK system are attached at Appendix 1.

Consultation

20. Members also suggested that for the exercise in 2009/10, all Members be advised of the outcome of the PICK scoring system prior to the meeting of the SLF in order that they could highlight their own top priorities prior to the work programme being set by Executive Scrutiny Committee. This suggestion can be accommodated easily within the process.
21. Similarly to last year, it is proposed to present the list of suggested topics to Scrutiny Liaison Forum to prioritise an overall work programme rather than allocate reviews to individual Select Committees.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

22. Present resources are at full capacity and this needs to be taken into account in setting the overall work programme.

RISK ASSESSMENT

23. Account will need to be taken of emerging guidance from recent legislation to ensure that the Council's scrutiny arrangements are fit for purpose.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

24. Service Delivery (Enhance Local Democracy).

CONSULTATION

25. All Members will be asked to input into the work programme for 2009/10.

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Background Papers: None
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific
Property Implications: None

PICK Priority Setting

P for Public Interest

Members' representative roles are an essential feature of Scrutiny. They are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that the policies, practice and services delivered to the people of the District, by both the Council and external organisations, are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny. Members themselves will have a good knowledge of local issues and concerns. Surgeries, Parish Councils, Residents Associations and Community Groups are all sources of resident's views. Consultation and Surveys undertaken by the Council and others can also provide a wealth of information.

I for Impact

Scrutiny is about making a difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. Not all issues of concern will have equal impact on the well-being of the community. This should be considered when deciding the programme of work, giving priority to the big issues that have most impact. To maximise impact, particularly when scrutinising external activity, attention should also be given to how the committee could influence policy and practice. Sharing the proposed programme of reviews with Members, officer and key partners will assist this process.

C for Council Performance and Efficiency

Scrutiny is about improving performance and ensuring the Council's customers are served well. Members will need good quality information to identify areas where the Council, and other external organisations, are performing poorly. Areas where performance has dropped should be a priority. As well as driving up Council performance, scrutiny also has an important role in scrutiny the efficiency and value for money of Council services and organizational development.

K for Keep in Context

To avoid duplication or wasted effort priorities should take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered. Is there a Best Value Review happening or planned? Is the service about to be inspected by an external body? Are there major legislative or policy initiatives already resulting in change? If these circumstances exist Members may decide to link up with other processes (e.g. Best Value Review) or defer a decision until the outcomes are known or conclude that the other processes will address the issues. Reference should also be made to proposed programmes of work in the Councils plans and strategies

Weighting

Public Interest	Score x 0.2
Impact	Score x 0.2
Council Performance and Efficiency	Score x 0.4
Keep in Context	Score x 0.2

PICK Scoring System

- **P**ublic Interest: the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen

Score	Measure
0	no public interest
1	low public interest
2	medium public interest
3	high public interest

- **I**mpact: priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area

Score	Measure
0	no impact
1	low impact
2	medium impact
3	high impact

- **C**ouncil Performance and Efficiency: priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well.

Score	Measure
0	'Green' on or above target performance/ efficiency
2	'Amber',
3	low performance 'Red'

- **K**eep in Context: work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Score	Measure
0	Already dealt with/ no priority
1	Longer term aspiration or plan
2	Need for review raised but not adopted policy
3	Need for review acknowledged and already incorporated into programme or contained in a strategy and/or Council target

Each topic will be scored under each category as indicated above. Where a category is not applicable, no score will be given.