

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

20 FEBRUARY 2008

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
LAW AND DEMOCRACY**

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

SUMMARY

To seek suggestions for topics to be considered for inclusion in Stockton Council's scrutiny work programme for 2008/09.

BACKGROUND

1. An annual work programme for the Council's seven Select Committees is agreed each year following extensive consultation with elected Members and officers. All topic suggestions are discussed by the Council's Scrutiny Liaison Forum comprising Scrutiny Chairs, Members of Cabinet and Corporate Management Team. Following this, the Executive Scrutiny Committee, the co-ordinating body for scrutiny agree a work programme. To date, each Select Committee has conducted an average of two in depth scrutiny reviews each year.
2. In order to assist with prioritising suggested topics, the PICK system has been introduced this year (details are attached at Appendix 1). In proposing topics for scrutiny, the Committee are asked to consider the justification under the PICK categories. Officers will initially be responsible for "scoring" each proposal which could then be reviewed/ amended by the Scrutiny Liaison Forum. Whilst the scoring will not be binding, it would help to give a weighting to the suggestions coming forward.
3. The Committee are invited to propose suggested topics for scrutiny review.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no direct financial or legal implications identified at this stage.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

5. Service Delivery (Enhance Local Democracy).

Director of Law and Democracy

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<u>Background Papers:</u>	None
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	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

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. There is no shortage of Performance Indicators available and areas where performance has dropped should be our priority.

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 separate 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 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

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: 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
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.