

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 1 February 2011
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To review items in the 2010/2011 Work Programme listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by Committee Members.

2.0 Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the work programme.
2. That the Committee agree to set aside a whole meeting to consider a report on Council Owned Farms.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is good practice to agree and review the Work Programme to enable effective management of the Committee's business.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Not known at this stage.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Not known at this stage.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 There are no identifiable risks.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The Committee at its meeting on 14 December 2010, formally set up a Task and Finish Group comprising 4 Members to review the 4 Business Generation Centres (BGC's) owned by Cheshire East. Councillor H Davenport was subsequently appointed by the Environment and Prosperity Committee to represent the interests of that Committee in relation to Economic Development matters.
- 10.2 On 18 January 2011 the Task and Finish Group undertook site visits to the 4 Council owned BGC's at Brierley Business Centre Crewe, Scope House Crewe, Congleton Business Centre and Wesley Avenue Sandbach. The group intends to report its findings in March of this year and will over the next month be engaging with various stakeholders including Chambers of Commerce Town Councils and the private sector.
- 10.3 The Budget Consultation Group has had to re visit its objectives this year largely due to the tight deadlines imposed on the Council by Government as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The group's original objectives had been to :
1. Disaggregate budgets to fit in with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in relation to budget setting.
 2. Give each of the 5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees an opportunity to have an input in setting budget priorities for the 2011/2012 budget.
 3. Submit an advisory report to Cabinet, containing the preliminary views of Corporate Scrutiny on the budget challenge process, in light of the Government's funding announcement.
 4. Organise a cycle of dedicated O&S meetings in early January to formally comment on the budget.
- 10.4 As members are aware, the pre-budget report was released for consultation purposes on the 19 January 2011 and the Budget Consultation Group itself had an opportunity to briefly question Cabinet and Heads of Service about the emerging budget at a hastily convened meeting on 13 January 2011. At that meeting, there was only time to consider the revenue budget. The Group is due to reconvene in the near future to consider the capital budget proposals. The pre-budget report appears elsewhere on this agenda.
- 10.5 At an informal mid point meeting on 11 January, Members supported proposals to create Wellbeing lifestyle Centres, subject to adequate transport facilities

being provided to ensure easy access to the proposed facilities. Members also gave their support in principle to the Tatton Park Vision. The Chairman of this Committee attended the Cabinet meeting on 17 January and reported the Committee's observations on the two reports.

- 10.6 During the informal mid-point meeting, Members also agreed to dedicate a future meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, to consider the future of Council farms.
- 10.7 Members are reminded that in selecting new items for the work programme, Members must pay close attention to the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. Both of these documents have now been approved and adopted by Council.
- 10.8 Members must also have regard to the general criteria which should be applied to all potential items when considering whether any Scrutiny activity is appropriate. Matters should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority
- Is the issue of key interest to the public
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service

If during the assessment process any of the following emerge, then the topic should be rejected:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere
- The matter is subjudice
- Scrutiny cannot add value or is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within the specified timescale

11 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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