

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 15 March 2010
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To review items included in the Committee's Work Programme and to prioritise new items added since the last meeting of the Committee.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee agree its Work Programme, determine a priority order, agree timescales and methodology.
- 2.2 That the Voluntary Sector Task Group be disbanded pending an interim progress report from the Head of Policy and Performance.
- 2.3 That the completion by the Budget Consultation group of its initial deliberations in relation to the 2010/11 budget consultation be noted and the Committee re-convene the group with new membership to oversee the budget setting and consultation processes from 2011/12 and beyond.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is good practice to agree a 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 for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 None identified at the moment.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 Not known at this stage.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 There are no identifiable risks.

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 The Committee has reviewed its work programme at meetings throughout the year and has refined the list into an active' and 'reserve' list. From the active list, the Committee had set up a Task and finish Group to review the role and funding of the Voluntary Sector and more recently, a Budget Consultation Group, involving Members from all 5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to oversee the budget Consultation preparations.

11.2 At its meeting held on the 3 February 2010, the Voluntary Sector task group took a critical look at the review and scope, based upon the fact that that the total funding position across all Council directorates for 2010/2011, was still not clear. The group was informed that the Council was taking a pragmatic view about funding the voluntary sector for the 2010/11 financial year by honouring existing commitments, with a proviso that each organisation will be advised that the Council is currently reviewing that position and the funding arrangements may change in subsequent years.

11.3 Work was consequently underway across all corporate areas to identify future funding commitments and budgetary provision. Unfortunately, it had still not been possible to unravel all existing commitments from the demised authorities which in turn meant that a clear picture has not yet been established about future commitments and budget requirements.

11.4 Although there is a general acceptance that a comprehensive review was required, the task group considered that this would be best achieved through a Corporate Officer working group.

11.5` Members consequently recommended that this Committee should disband the Task group and allow the review to take place through a Corporate Officer working group.

11.6.1 The Budget Consultation group met twice during January 2010. At its first meeting, the group agreed its terms of reference and sought

additional information from Finance officers on the 'Challenge sessions' that had been held between the portfolio holder and service heads.

- 11.7 At its second meeting on 29 January 2010, members of the group were able to question representatives from Service departments on a number of issues and were provided with an outline of the main points dealt with at the challenges sessions. The group was then able to recommend the budget cycle of O&S meetings which took place over 11 and 12 February 2010
- 11.8 The group reiterated its commitment to continuing the good work already started by recommending that preparations for the 2011/2012 Budget Consultation process should begin in April of this year, with the aim of having in place a robust timetable early in the new civic year to involve O&S committees in budget setting at the very start of the process and to ensure a continuing involvement throughout the new financial year.
- 11.9 The Committee had identified at the beginning of the current municipal year, asset management as a potential work programme item. At the present time, this matter sits in the reserve list. The Chairman has suggested that subject to prioritisation, this matter be brought into the active list for 2010/2011 for the committee to commission a study into the portfolio of assets held by the Council with a view to making recommendations as to their potential future retention/and or disposal.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 It is good practice to have a Work Programme for the Committee to consider and prioritise on a regular basis.

13.0 Access to Information

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

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