

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 12 July 2010
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

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

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee recommend a draft work programme for 2010/2011 to be shared with Cabinet.

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 2010/11 and beyond

- 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 This Committee at its meeting held on 15 June reviewed the 2009/2010 work programme, in line with the recommendations approved in the Strengthening Scrutiny paper approved by Members in April 2010. The Committee also had regard to changes to the Committee's remit as recommended by the Scrutiny Chairs Group. The recommendations in relation to the new remits have been considered by the Constitution Committee and a recommendation will now be considered by Council on 22 July 2010, to accept the Scrutiny Chairs group's recommendations in full with the exception of the responsibility for overseeing the scrutiny of the Corporate Plan and Risk Management remaining with this Committee. The schedule attached reflects that position.
- 10.2 In reviewing the work programme, Members must pay close attention to the emerging Corporate Plan which appears elsewhere on this agenda and Sustainable Communities Strategy. Both of these documents are currently in consultation stage and are expected to be adopted by Council in July
- 10.3 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
- 10.4 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

- 10.5 The Budget Consultation group has now held its first meeting of this municipal year. The group has identified 4 key milestones in the budget consultation process which are:
- **Stage1** – Backward look at the 2010/2011 process
 - **Stage 2**- July/August priorities to be developed based upon the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy
 - **Stage 3** – October – Forming of the draft budget
 - **Stage 4** – January 2011, stakeholder events with Scrutiny involvement, followed by detailed look at the budget proposals by the group.
- 10.6 The group acknowledged that there would also be number of intermediate meetings as required and that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be consulted at each key milestone.
- 10.7 Members acknowledged the strong links between the business planning process and Corporate Plan.
- 10.8 The group subsequently agreed the following:
- (a) – That Partner Organisations such as Police, Fire PCT's etc be invited to attend the October meeting to enable those organisations to share initial budget proposals.
 - (b) – That the Scope for the current consultation process be approved at the next meeting.
 - (c) That each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to examine draft budgets within their own remit between November 2010 and January 2011.

11 Access to Information

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

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