

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 12 October 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 note the work programme.

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 previous meeting agreed to set up monitoring groups in connection with ICT Harmonisation and the Highways Transformation Contract. Both of these groups are now up and running.

10.2 A site visit has been arranged for the Committee to inspect the Crewe Lyceum Theatre and Knutsford Cinema on 11 October.

10.3 Arrangements to hold a special meeting in the near future to deal with the assets presentation will be announced shortly. The Committee has previously indicated that it wishes to set up a Task and Finish group to review some aspects of the Asset Challenge Process. For clarification, I have reiterated the advice of the Monitoring Officer in respect of Task and Finish Groups.

10.4 If the Committee does not wish to set up a task and finish group on a proportional basis the following applies:

10.5 The constitution currently requires that Task and Finish are organised on a proportional basis, but this has proved difficult with such small numbers (they usually consist of 5 or 6 members).

10.6 Notwithstanding the constitutional requirement, there is still a statutory requirement, by virtue of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Schedule 1, meaning advisory committees are subject to the proportionality rules contained in the act. Unlike the constitutional requirement, however, the Act permits proportionality to be dispensed with, provided that the scrutiny committee so decides on a 'nem con' vote. Therefore, if the committee decides to appoint on a non proportional basis, it must do so on the basis of a nem con vote, ie. a vote without objection.

10.7 In reviewing 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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