

PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 24 November 2011
Report of: Head of Legal and Property Services
Title: Work Programme and Task Groups 2011/12

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the current work programme for 2011/12. It also includes new scrutiny suggestions for Task Groups.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 that the latest version of the work programme be noted.

2.2 that the Scrutiny Committee considers whether to establish the two Task Groups referred to in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 –

- Review of Recycling Scheme
- Future Council Review

2.3 that the Scrutiny Committee considers whether to agree to any of the other scrutiny proposals and prioritise the order in which they are established.

2.4 that the Scrutiny Committee agrees to delegate the appointment of the final membership of the Task Group(s) to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in consultation with the Head of Legal and Property Services.

2.5 that the Scrutiny Committee prioritises the list of previous reviews shown in paragraph 3.16.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen. Head of Legal and Property Services

3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 The latest version of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer has updated the Programme taking into account Members' comments and decisions at previous meetings.

3.2 **Scrutiny Suggestions**

3.3 Review of Recycling Scheme

At the last meeting held on 21 September 2011 Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a scrutiny suggestion from Councillor Derek Scudder. Members requested performance statistics for the local authorities included in the CIPFA family of authorities and Three Rivers District Council. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer has contacted the Head of Environmental Services to ask if the service has any comparative data for other local authorities. The information will be circulated as soon as possible.

3.4 Future Council Review

At the last meeting held on 21 September 2011 Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed that the Managing Director had suggested a study into the options for the delivery of services. Members asked that the Managing Director be invited to this meeting to explain his suggestion in more detail. The Managing Director will be attending the meeting and will provide more information about his suggestion. Please refer to item 4 on the agenda.

- 3.5 The Chair recommends to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it establishes two task groups and the order in which they should be carried out.
1. To review the recycling systems used by other councils, with particular note being taken of the approach adopted by Three Rivers District Council.
 2. To review the political implications of the choices being faced by the Council in the future delivery of its services.

3.6 Since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 September 2011 further scrutiny suggestions have been received. The suggestions were forwarded to the relevant Executive Director or Head of Service.

3.7 Cycling on the pavement

Councillor Lynch has requested that a review should be set up to address the issues relating to pedestrians' safety and provisions for cyclists. The proposal was forwarded to the Head of Planning for comment. The completed suggestion form, including the Head of Planning's comments, is attached as Appendix 2.

3.8 Review of addressing the housing needs of disadvantaged groups

This has arisen from the forthcoming closure of the Stonham Hostel for ex-offenders in Queens Road. This matter is being addressed through a specific working party set up by Stonham and it is now suggested that the review be widened to look at the housing needs of all disadvantaged groups such as young people with disabilities, mentally disabled etc.

3.9 The Head of Community Services has indicated that her Department is currently going through a complete re-organisation and is not in a position to support this work but has suggested that it could be carried out in mid 2012. Members are asked to agree to this deferment.

3.10 A further request has been received from Councillor Lynch concerning the abuse of drugs by residents at the YMCA. Further information will be available at the meeting.

3.11 **Task Groups**

3.12 The terms of reference for the Task Group would need to be set and a scope prepared. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will then email all non-executive members to ask whether they would be interested in taking part in the review. The final membership will need to be agreed. As the next full meeting is not due to take place until February, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree to delegate the appointment of the final membership of the Task Group(s) to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in consultation with the Head of Legal and Property Services.

3.13 Members are reminded that in order to meet the capacity of the Democratic Services Team there should be no more than two time limited Task Groups established at any one time. The Scrutiny Committee is able to prioritise the order of Task Groups and these will be added to the rolling work programme; therefore as soon as one Task Group has completed its review the next Task Group can be established.

3.14 **Previous reviews**

3.15 At the meeting held on 21 September 2011 Members received a list of the scrutiny reviews carried out between 2006 and 2011. Members were asked to identify any reviews which they would like to re-visit and consider any outstanding recommendations. The Chair was disappointed that so few Members responded to this request.

- 3.16 At the time of writing this report the Committee and Scrutiny Officer has received from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee the following reviews for re-visiting –
- The Colosseum (January 2007)
 - Green Spaces (March 2008)
 - Choice Based Lettings (February 2011)
 - Elections in 2010 (February 2011)
 - Neighbourhood Forums (March 2011)
- 3.17 The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will be collating the information for each of these reviews which can then be considered at future meetings. Members are asked to prioritise the list of previous reviews shown above.
- 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**
- 4.1 **Financial**
- 4.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that the implications of any detailed scrutiny review would need to be considered on an individual basis. It is unlikely however that any incidental expenditure could not be contained within existing estimates.
- 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)
- 4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal implications in this report.
- 4.3 **Staffing**
- 4.3.1 Democratic Services is able to manage two time-limited Task Groups at any one time to ensure there is capacity within the team to manage the meetings.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011/12
(November update)

Appendix 2 – Cycling on the pavement scrutiny proposal

Background Papers

Minutes of previous meetings

File Reference

None