

Suggestions for topics to be scrutinised – evaluation table

A Member, Officer or member of the public suggesting a topic for scrutiny must complete Section1 as fully as possible. Completed tables will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny for consideration.

| | |
|--|---|
| Section 1 – Scrutiny Suggestion | |
| Proposer: Councillor/Officer/Member of public Councillors Steve Rackett and Asif Khan | |
| <p>Topic recommended for scrutiny:</p> <p><i>Please include as much detail as is available about the specific such as;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>areas which should be <u>included</u> in the review.</i> • <i>areas which should be <u>excluded</u> from the review.</i> • <i>Whether the focus should be on past performance, future policy or both.</i> | <p align="center"><i>Property Scrutiny</i></p> <p><i>Member led scrutiny of the council’s property assets:</i></p> <p><i>Including all property owned by Watford Council</i></p> |
| <p>Why have you recommended this topic for scrutiny?</p> | <p align="center"><i>Members have concerns regarding the council’s property portfolio:</i></p> <p align="center"><i>whether the council is getting the appropriate rental value</i></p> <p align="center"><i>whether the arrangements for lettings to the voluntary sector are fair and reasonable</i></p> <p align="center"><i>To review previous performance of property management</i></p> |

What are the specific outcomes you wish to see from the review?

Examples might include:

- *To identify what is being done and what the potential barriers are;*
- *To review relevant performance indicators;*
- *To compare our policies with those of a similar authority;*
- *To assess the environmental/social impacts;*
- *To Benchmark current service provision;*
- *To find out community perceptions and experience;*
- *To identify the gap between provision and need*

Identify whether there are any assets the council can dispose of

To look at how the council's involvement in the retail part of its property portfolio is being managed in the current economic climate

To see whether any performance indicators are required in terms of occupancy or income

To look at how similar authorities manage their portfolios

To look at how voluntary sector lets are managed and whether changes need to be made

Examine the optimum level of rents which will produce the greatest revenue from businesses

Look at the lengths of rental agreements.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>How do you think evidence might be obtained?</p> <p><i>Examples might include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Questionnaires/Surveys</i> • <i>Site visits</i> • <i>Interviewing witnesses</i> • <i>Research</i> • <i>Performance data</i> • <i>Public hearings</i> • <i>Comparisons with other local authorities</i> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hearings/Witnesses</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Looking at other council's asset management and property policies</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Examine income streams and any projected forecasts of rental income.</i></p> |
| <p>Does the proposed item meet the following criteria?</p> | |
| <p>It must affect a group or community of people</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Council owns a number of properties which are let to community groups</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The councils' income from rental and disposal of property impact on revenue and capital funding of the authority</i></p> |
| <p>It must relate to a service, event or issue in which the council has a significant stake</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The council owns a significant property portfolio across the borough and its lettings, rental and disposals have impacts on both the commercial and property sector</i></p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>It must not have been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months</p> <p><i>There will be exceptions to this arising from notified changing circumstances. Scrutiny will also maintain an interest in the progress of recommendations and issues arising from past reports.</i></p> | <p>Budget Panel received a presentation update on the Property Review as part of the Panel's training programme at its meeting on 29 November 2011.</p> <p>A further update to be presented to Budget Panel at its meeting on 11 March 2013.</p> |
| <p>It must not be an issue, such as planning or licensing, which is dealt with by another council committee</p> | <p>Not applicable</p> |
| <p>Does the topic meet the council's priorities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making Watford a better place to live in 2. To provide the lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth 3. Promoting an active, cohesive and well informed Town 4. To operate the Council efficiently and effectively <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please confirm which ones</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It certainly meets 2 and 4, and also 1</i></p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Are you aware of any limitations of time, other constraints or risks which need to be taken into account?</p> <p><i>Factors to consider are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>forthcoming milestones, demands on the relevant service area and member availability:</i> • <i>imminent policy changes either locally, regionally or nationally within the area under review.</i> | <p>The work will help increase the income for the council. To examine the reasons behind the current level of income.</p> <p>Changes of policy will include the new business rates.</p> |
| <p>Does the topic involve a Council partner or other outside body?</p> | <p><i>Voluntary sector partners, Capital Shopping, Chamber of Commerce</i></p> |

Are there likely to be any Equality implications which will need to be considered?

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *Gender reassignment*
- *Pregnancy or maternity*
- *Race*
- *Religion or belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual orientation*
- *Marriage or civil partnership (only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)*

This will have an impact on voluntary groups which provide a service to people with the protected characteristics.

Need to ensure that any changes do not have a negative impact on any of the groups which are covered by the Equality act 2010.

Sign off

Councillor/Officer

Cllr Steve Rackett and Cllr Asif Khan

Date

29/01/13