

To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18th. June 2012

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: Work Programme Planning 2012-2013

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To allow committee members to consider suggestions made for the work programme and begin to plan their work for the coming year.

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Committee Chair

Recommendations:

1. To note the methods of working and resources available
2. To consider the long list of items presented and other suggestions at the meeting and decide which issues to pursue this year
3. When placing an item in the programme to agree:
 - How the issue will be scrutinised
 - The broad scoping
 - The members who will be involved
 - The lead members
 - An details of co-option
 - Requirement for reporting

Introduction

1. Each year the committee sets a programme to guide its debates and inquiries for the coming year. This meeting is to set the outline of the programme for 2012/2013. The outcomes in the form of recommendations from last year's programme are available on request.

2. This is one of two scrutiny committees – Communities and Partnership (CAP) and Value and Performance (VAP). The remits of the 2 committees are broadly set as inward and outward facing with this committee (CAP) taking the outward facing role. In practice the distinction between the 2 committees is not always easy to draw and so members are asked to act collaboratively to allow for effective work flows.
3. In an effort to fit with the organisation the Councils Corporate Priorities are used as a guide:
 - Vibrant Sustainable Economy – CAP
 - Meeting Housing Need – CAP
 - Strong, Active Communities – CAP
 - Cleaner Greener Oxford – VAP
 - Efficient, Effective Council - VAP

General Principals of Working

4. In 2011/2012 committees agreed that all housing related issues (landlord and strategic) would be taken together at CAP. This decision was taken in an effort to fit with the organisation and recognise the need for holistic responses to housing issues. This proved successful and a Housing Standing Panel was set under CAP. It is hoped that members will agree to keep all housing issue together regardless of whether a Housing Standing Panel is set or not.
5. In order to bring forward suggestions officers have:
 - Asked all councillors what they would like to see in the programme. Councillors were directed to think as both ward representatives and members of the City Council.
 - Considered the work undertaken in 2011/2012 and brought forward any issues arising or outstanding
 - Identified key issues from the work planned by the Council in the first half year
6. Missing from this list are the views of residents as individuals or communities. One of the key roles of scrutiny committees is to “Enable the Voice of Communities”. The views of communities should be considered both in planning the topics to be considered and debating and concluding on recommendations. Councillors as ward representative act as community leaders and are a good source of knowledge but Committee needs to consider if it wishes to go further than his in planning for the future.

General Principles of Working

7. Scrutiny councillors work in a number of ways to take their evidence, form their opinions and make their recommendations. The table below

shows those used in Oxford and an outline suggestion of the capacity there is to deliver within these. Obviously the focus is for the committee to decide and so adjustments around the deployment of capacity are for members to debate.

Methodology	Outline	Frequency
Committee Meetings	<p>Formal public meetings. All committee members.</p> <p>Holding decision makers to account, short term inquiries, pre scrutiny of decisions, call in, review reports.</p>	4 planned meetings plus a planning meeting
Select Committee	<p>Formal public meetings. All committee members but with a few working behind the scenes to agree a scope and write a select committee report.</p> <p>Taking evidence in public around a particular issue, decision or proposal.</p>	<p>Usually within the planned committee meeting slots above but additional slots can be added.</p> <p>2 if held within planned meeting slots.</p> <p>1 if additional slots required.</p>
Standing Panel	<p>Informal private or public meetings. No more than 5 members of the committee.</p> <p>Small groups meeting to consider or develop a particular set of information or actions regularly.</p>	1 Panel, meeting as required but usually about 4 or 5 times a year.
Short Term Panel	<p>Informal private or public meetings. No more than 5 members of the committee.</p> <p>Small groups meeting to pursue short term inquiries or respond to proposals from the organisation or its</p>	2 Panels meeting 3 or 4 times each over a short period.

	partners.	
Review Group	<p>Informal public or private meetings. No more than 5 members of the committee.</p> <p>Small group making detailed inquiries and investigations into a topic, service or issue.</p>	<p>1 group meeting as required over a period of between 3 and 6 months.</p> <p>Work will often require members to be involved in a more detailed way than attending meetings.</p>
Championing of Issues	<p>Informal work within the organisation or with partners.</p> <p>Councillors acting as spokespersons or champions for the views or recommendations of the committee.</p>	<p>As many as committee wish to delegate.</p>

All these have their part to play in a balanced programme. The skill is to:

- Be sure that the issues chosen for the programme are likely to add value, have broad support and have a clear aim.
- Choose the correct method for the subject matter through issue scoping.
- Engage councillors that are “interested” in the topic and are willing to give their time.
- Co-opt people to bring skills and broaden opinion.

8. The resources available to the committee fall into 3 groups:

- Staff in Democratic Services – 1 Scrutiny Officer plus the equivalent of 1 Democratic Services Officer.
- The time, skills and information provided by senior officers and City Executive Board Members who are required to attend and advise scrutiny.
- The time and skills of scrutiny councillors.

9. The work programme you are about to decide will guide the year and will be managed by the committee through discussions at each committee meeting and in-between meetings by the committee Chair and Vice Chair. In practice this broadly means:

- The whole committee will decide on the themes and issues it wishes to pursue and then delegate these to the groups that it

sets. The detail of that delegation is for the committee to decide but should be a minimum of identifying a lead councillor and setting a broad scope for the work.

- The work programme has a degree of flexibility and will be available at each committee meeting for members to discuss and adjust as necessary.
- Any committee member or any 4 members of Council can place an item on the agenda of a committee and it is for the committee to decide how much time it gives to the item.
- Committee must review and report back on issues required by the Full Council. The timing of these issues is for the committee to decide upon. The committee does not have to undertake reviews requested by the Executive but should give these requests proper consideration.
- The committee must consider decisions that have been “called-in” at its next available meeting or at a meeting called by the Monitoring Officer.
- The committee can require, with reasonable notice, City Executive Board Members and Senior Officers to attend their meetings and debates and to provide information.
- Scrutiny is entitled to see and review information relating to the issues it is scrutinising (this includes confidential information).
- When conclusions are drawn and recommendations agreed these are presented by the Committee Chair or another Lead Councillor agreed by the committee.
- Panels will present their own recommendations without reference back to the committee unless this has been specifically required at set up. These recommendations will be shown to the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee before presentation.
- Decision makers are required to consider and respond to the recommendations made by scrutiny.
- Lead Members will be required to keep the committee up to date on the progress of their work through committee meetings and other informal networks.
- A report back on the success or otherwise of recommendations will be presented to each committee meeting.

10. Last year the committee set a Housing Standing Panel and offered a non voting place on that Panel to an Oxford City Council Tenant. A number of housing issues have been suggested for inclusion in the programme and the committee will decide which of these it takes and how it wants to deliver on them. Whatever the outcome it is right and reasonable to include the views of tenants broadly and possibly individually, particularly when considering “landlord issues”.

11. Developments and improvements in tenant engagement are underway in the organisation with the potential in the medium term to set an independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel. Once committee has set its

programme it is suggested that in all housing related matters the committee agree to take the views of tenants in the most appropriate way related to the topic under discussion. In practice this means:

- **If a Housing Standing Panel or review is agreed –** Councillors ask the Council’s involvement staff to provide a short list of tenants who are interested in being part of the Panel or review and councillors select the best candidate.
- **For anything else** the committee agree to take witness evidence from tenants as part of their debates and considerations. These tenants similarly to be identified through involvement staff.

Suggestions for the Programme

12. **Appendix 1** shows the suggestions made for the programme. At this stage members need to decide:

- The items they wish to pursue.
- The method they wish to use.
- Which members will take part.
- Who will take the lead?

13. When making selections members should be mindful of:

- The resources available (see paragraph 7).
- The need to leave “room” for new and topical items as they arise.
- Tasks always take longer than anticipated!
- Having a clear reason for pursuing an issue and the likelihood of adding value.
- The one year life of the committee means to get good outcomes we need to start early and strongly.

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List of background papers:

Version number:2

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee 2012/2013- Suggestions made for the work programme

Long List

Suggestion/Issue	Source	Methodology	Comment
Review of the first year of Area Forums.	Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee	Review Already involved - Cllrs. Sander, Wilkinson, Campbell and Sinclair	This review ran throughout last year with an interim report presented to the Committee. More work was requested and this is ongoing. This should be completed by the committee otherwise a significant amount of work will be lost. Councillors have also raised issues related to this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Council can effectively engage the public in decision making through local structures. • What have ward member budgets been used for and how effective a tool do councillors think they are.
Supporting young people into	Communities and Partnership	Select Committee/Review	A select committee at the end

education, training and work.	Scrutiny Committee	Already involved – Cllrs. Altaf-Khan and Lloyd-Shogbesan	<p>of last years programme took evidence from a number of partners and members of the community on the difficulties experienced by young people in accessing jobs, skills and training.</p> <p>Further consultation work was agreed by the committee to take this work forward. The outline agreed is at Appendix 2.</p> <p>This work has not started in detail so effort will not be lost however the issues considered are still live and topical in communities and a strong recommendation was made by last years committee to continue with this work.</p>
Housing related issues	Housing Standing Panel, Councillors, Forward Plan.	Standing Panel/Committee	<p>The Chair of the Housing Standing Panel requests that the committee consider setting the Panel for 2012/2013. A number of issues have been suggested to take either at this Panel or failing this at Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Strategy –

			<p>consultation draft published June.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Strategy – consultation draft published in June. • Rent arrears and debt advice arrangements review. <p>Recommendation from VAP on Housing Revenue Account Refinancing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operation of governance arrangements within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan • Housing Strategy Action Plan – delivery year 1. • The effects of government housing policy in Oxford (performance set agreed by the last Panel)
Education attainment	Councillors, Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee, Councillors.	Standing Panel or Short Term Panel	To consider the focus and outcomes from the City investment to improve pupil attainment in City primary

			<p>schools. This work is underway with Anna Wright (Education Adviser) engaging with Stakeholders identifying the key issues contributing to underachievement. 2 further actions are planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June – expert Panel to review findings and propose options for spending. • July – conference for all stakeholders to launch the initiative and communicate key decisions. <p>The aim is to make the first investments in September.</p> <p>If this topic is taken a Panel needs to be agreed now to allow engagement in this scoping and focus exercise. This is essential for effective challenge and encouragement to outcomes by members.</p>
Customer Contact Strategy	Councillors, Forward Plan	Committee/Short Term Panel	The Council's Customer

			<p>Contact Strategy has been refreshed and will be presented to the City Executive Board in July. It will outline our focus for improvement through to 2015.</p> <p>Comments have been received from councillors on the outcomes from all customer contact.</p>
Refresh of Oxford's Regeneration Framework	Forward plan, Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee, Councillors	Committee/Short Term Panel	<p>The committee has taken an active interest in the Regeneration Framework since its inception.</p> <p>The third re-fresh of the Framework will be presented to the City Executive Board in July. This is the third year of this Framework and it is likely that outcomes, achievements and trends will be more visible.</p>
Follow up on the health and well being select committee	Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee	<p>Championing</p> <p>Already Involved – Cllrs. Jones and Sinclair</p>	<p>The City Executive Board recently accepted the recommendations of the recent select committee on public health and asked that the scrutiny group work with the</p>

			<p>Board Member on an action plan for implementation.</p> <p>Cllr. Jones is leading on this for scrutiny (Cllr. Sinclair was originally part of this group but has recently become an executive member)</p>
Role of Community Associations in empowering communities	Councillors	Committee/Short Term Panel	<p>How effectively community centres are run to engage and empower communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managements arrangements • Governance • Training • Community events <p>Work is already underway in the organisation to support and improve outcomes from community associations. Committee may want to understand the current position to avoid duplication.</p>
Enfranchisement and empowerment	Councillors	Select Committee/Short Term Panel	<p>The first report on the census is due shortly this will show the proportion of people who did not complete the form without at least 1 reminder. Alongside</p>

			<p>this there are a number of households with no one registered to vote.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is this? • What does it mean for services, funding and the understanding of our communities. • What effects does this have on community cohesion and engagement? • Can we do anything about it?
Localism Act –	Councillors	Select Committee	What should be the City Councils response be.
Cowley Road Carnival.	Councillors	Select Committee/Short Term Panel	<p>The Carnival is used extensively in the Council's promotional literature as an example of the vibrancy that exists in our multicultural City. How do we/are we supporting and encourage the community to allow this important event to happen.</p> <p>Does the City Council see the event as an important community capacity building exercise?</p>

Supporting Young People into Education Training and Work – Select Committee

Talking to young people

The select committee meeting decided it wanted to talk/consult with young people before it went much further to try to gather their views and opinions.

The Lead Members and the Chair (called the Panel) of the committee met on the 29th. March to decide on the outline for this work.

Outline

In principle The Panel agreed:

- To talk to as many young people as possible in a “focus/discussion group” format.
- To recognise that some groups may have particular issues that would be better discussed away from more general discussions.
- To get the most from discussions to be honest about what we can and cannot do and be prepared to “build a relationship”.
- To engage young people on their patch rather than expect them to come to the Town Hall
- To use the “Hubs” and the various area based initiatives and programmes to supplement the views of young people.

This consultation work is crucial to the evidence within the select committee and we should not move forward to conclusions until this is complete. The expectation is that the process will take about 6 months.

Organisation of discussion groups with young people

These will be organised around the 2 “Hub Areas” within the city with a pre determined script that allows some flexibility. The script will cover:

- What do you do with your day and time?
- What opportunities do you use or know about to support access to training and work.
- Where is your life at the moment and do you have a “plan”.
- What are the limitations on your ambitions?
- What have you done so far?
- What would help?
- What would you change if you could?
- Which support providers do you use?

For discussions organised around specific groups some time would be spent exploring the particular issues faced by the group as seen from their point of view.

The hope is to facilitate about 4 discussion groups and “get to know you sessions”.

Populating the Discussion Groups

This still needs more thought and the Panel will take advice from the consultation officer and officers in Housing and Communities but the initial view is that we need a mixture of young people. Those that:

- Have worked but are currently unemployed.
- Are NEET.
- Are about to leave school or are “out of school” and so will be looking for work or training shortly.

The Panel hope to identify these young people through:

- The various programmes running in particular areas (SHOUT, Include, Blitz)
- The Positive Futures Programme
- The Hubs
- Programmes in the 2 Academys
- Various cultural groups and connections

Next Steps

A report on this work will be produced for further discussion with City and County Council officers before the Panel decide what to do next.

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