

**To: The Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup>. July 2013.**

**Report of: Head of Law and Governance.**

**Title of Report: Scrutiny Work Programme Planning 2013 – 2014 outcomes.**

## **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.

**Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills (Committee Chair)  
Councillor Gill Sanders (Committee Vice Chair)**

### **Recommendations:**

1. Consider the Forward Plan and decide which reports it wishes to pre-scrutinise. This is an ongoing monthly exercise.
2. Decide on any Standing Panel(s) and agree their remit and Lead Member.
3. Agree to invite the Board Member for Community Safety to discuss the crime and safety issue for the programme.
4. Decide if it wishes to pursue issue/topic suggestions any further.
5. Look at the suggestions for Panels and decide which it wishes to explore further using the process in paragraph 12 below.
6. Decide if it wishes to review the “Service Level” set of performance indicators for focus.
7. Consider the performance, risk and finance information in the appendices and agree what is to be scrutinised and how this is to be done.

## Introduction

1. Each year the committee sets a programme to guide its debates and inquiries for the coming year. This report is to allow members to set the outline of the programme for 2013/2014.
2. At the last meeting the Committee considered the general principles within which it would operate and these are included again below updated for the changes agreed by the Committee. Changes are shown in bold type.

## Operating Principles

Operating Principle	Comment
<p>10 meetings are provided during the year to fit with the City Executive Board cycle.</p>	<p>Meetings are provided in this way to allow Scrutiny to pre-scrutinise reports/issues on their way to the City Executive Board for decision.</p> <p>The committee does not have to meet on all occasions provided and is able to add meetings at different times if this proves necessary.</p>
<p>There will be a Chair and Vice Chair elected by the committee who will administer the work programme outside of committee meetings.</p>	<p>Committee members will be encouraged to take themed leads to reflect the priorities of the scrutiny programme.</p>
<p>Panels will be commissioned to conduct more detailed scrutiny work.</p> <p><b>Panels do not have to be politically balanced but the Committee will use the following guide for appointment:</b></p> <p><b>All Panels should have between 3 and 6 members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3 member Panel – 1 from each party or 2 from the administration plus 1 other. If a party does not want to take a place then committee agree on the allocation of that place.</b></li> <li>• <b>4 member Panel – 1 from each party plus another administration member. If a party does not want to take a place then committee</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Scrutiny Committee will continue to hold the Executive and Senior Officers to account publicly at committees but will also set Panels drawn from all non executive councillors to consider issues in more detail.</p> <p>Themed Lead Members will lead or actively engage with Panels within their area and report back to the Scrutiny Committee on progress and outcomes.</p>

<p>agree on the allocation of that place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 member Panel – 1 from each party plus another administration member. Committee agree the 5<sup>th</sup>. member. If a party does not wish t take a place the committee agrees on the allocation of that place.</li> <li>• 6 member Panel - 1 from each party plus another administration member and another opposition member. Committee agrees the 6<sup>th</sup>. member. If a party does not wish to take a place the committee agrees the allocation of that place.</li> </ul>	
<p>Panels and Standing Panels may have a degree of autonomy from the Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>The general principle is that the Scrutiny Committee commissions and scopes the work of Panels and therefore has final agreement on their recommendations. On occasions this may not be possible so Panels will then report directly to decision makers. This is most likely if the Scrutiny Committee sets Standing Panels.</p> <p><b>Recommendations from all Panels that go directly to decision makers will be circulated to all committee members for comment.</b></p> <p>No substitutions will be allowed on Panels.</p>
<p>Residents and other specialists will be co-opted onto <b>the Committee and Panels as the subject matter dictates. The Committee will actively consider the appointment of a resident to sit as part of the Committee on a non voting basis.</b></p>	<p>If the committee feel that a Panel or a Committee debate will benefit from the advice or views of a citizen or expert these will be appointed.</p> <p><b>For the year 2013/2014 the resident appointed to the Housing Panel will sit as part of the Committee (unless a Housing Panel is set)</b></p>
<p>The work programme will consist of a number of issues for consideration informed by consultation with all</p>	<p>Items will be taken forward as resources allow and scoped before Panels are commissioned.</p>

<p>councillors. <b>A points system will be used as a guide to prioritise consideration.</b></p>	<p><b>As a first principle all scrutiny will be done in public.</b></p> <p><b>The only movement from this will be with the agreement of the Committee at the time of scoping.</b></p> <p>Consideration will be given by the Scrutiny Committee to the hosting of a scrutiny conference in an effort to engage a wider audience in the formation of topic lists.</p>
<p>The management of the work programme will be with the whole Committee with the Chair and Vice-Chair taking an “organisational role” between meetings.</p>	<p>The Forward Plan will continue to be used as a tool to select items for pre-scrutiny.</p> <p>Scrutiny Members or any 4 other members will be able to put an item on the agenda of a Scrutiny Committee and all Councillor Calls for Action and Call Ins will be considered at a public meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Chair will report regularly to Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee and officers will take a regular slot on the member briefing sessions to update members and seek views and comments.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee may want to give consideration to varying the venue of Committee meetings.</p>

### **Work Programme 2013-2014**

3. 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 and other non executive councillors.
  
4. The work programme framework has been agreed as:

- Forward committee agendas including the programme, items members wish to pre-scrutinise and those issues the committee choose as suitable for debate within a formal committee setting.
  - Should Committee agree, no more than 2 Standing Panels.
  - A list of topics/issues for review which will be taken forward as resources allow.
  - Updates from Panels.
  - A record of all recommendations and outcomes along with accompanying reports.
5. In addition the Committee will use the following scoring guide to prioritise the topics/issues it takes forward:

### **Scoring**

*Should any of the negatives be present the topic falls otherwise the issue should score at least 3 in the positives.*

Positive attributes (score 1 for each bullet point)

- The subject matter is contained and focused.
- Some degree of clarity exists about what members might expect to see as measures of success.
- Links to an objective of the organisation.
- Links to or has a significant impact in communities.
- Broad members support exists for the issue or topic.

Negative attributes

- Some other group is already working on the issue.
  - Topic is too large scale and therefore difficult to provide focus and commit resources.
  - No clear measure of success.
  - Polarised support either within the organisation or Member Groups.
6. The Committee decided to continue with 5 of the 6 on-going Panels and agreed that most of these should finish in September/October 2013. This means that new issue based Panels cannot begin immediately but the Committee needs to begin to plan the programme.
7. It is an important principle that the scrutiny committee considers the views of as wide a group as possible when deciding the issues it pursues. As in previous years all councillors have been asked to suggest their priorities for the scrutiny programme and encouraged to think as both representatives of wards and members of the Council.

For the first time the response has been disappointing, the suggestions made are at Appendix 1. Given that the Committee is unlikely to take new issues forward until the autumn members may want to pursue this further but should not delay in beginning to plan the programme.

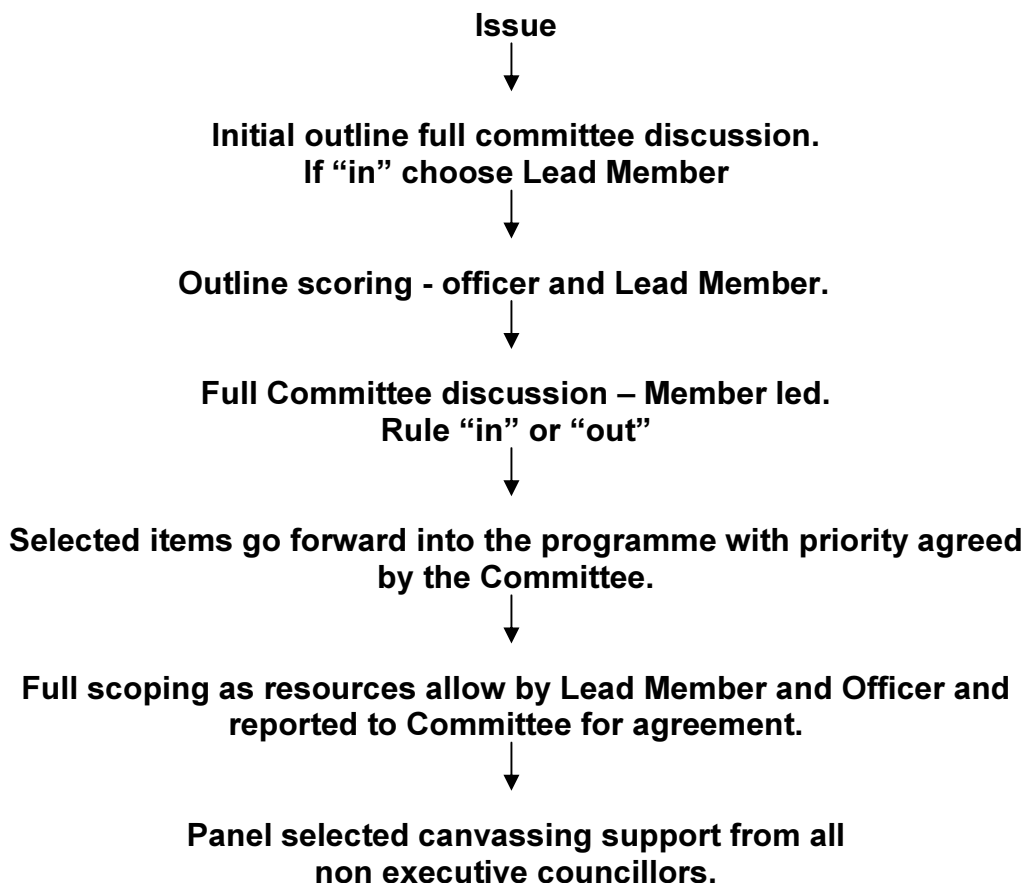
8. It is a requirement for the Council's Scrutiny Committee to consider 1 item each year that is related to crime and safety issues. This can be directly or indirectly related and Committee is asked to invite the Board Member leading in this area to attend and provide information on current issues and challenges to inform their choice. The Board Member is also the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel (scrutiny body for the police and Crime Commissioner) and this will also provide an opportunity for a discussion on any mutual opportunities for scrutiny.
9. The Committee has in the past few years set a Housing Standing Panel to consider housing issues both landlord and strategic. Last year the Council agreed a strategy to improve tenant and resident involvement and included in that is the development of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel. Officers are recruiting to this Panel now and the aim is that all the scrutiny of "consumer issues" will be conducted within this and the wider tenant and resident involvement function. The Scrutiny Officer has written into the terms of reference of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel a twice yearly opportunity for tenants and representatives from this Committee to meet informally to discuss issues of mutual interest. Members can still scrutinise any issues they wish but members are advised to consider where housing issues can be most effectively dealt with and to avoid duplication.
10. In addition the committee has considered the end of year combined performance, finance and risk report and agreed to use this as a further tool to focus the work programme. The Council also has an extended number of performance indicators at "Service Level". Amongst this set are a number that scrutiny councillors have focused on in the past. These are not included here but members may wish to review this set to see if there are any in this large group that they wish to focus on. Attached are the following documents:
  - Appendix 2 – Detail of performance against Corporate Plan measures 2012/2013.
  - Appendix 3 – Corporate Plan measures for 2013 - 2014 with the latest performance (April).
  - Appendix 4 – Lines of inquiry from the end of year combined report where financial issues were highlighted either by the Committee or the report.

### **Next Steps for Work Programme Planning**

11. The Committee needs to do a number of things now:

- Consider the Forward Plan and decide which reports it wishes to pre-scrutinise. This is an ongoing monthly exercise.
- Decide on any Standing Panel(s) and agree their remit and Lead Member.
- Agree to invite the Board Member for Community Safety to consider the crime and safety issue for the programme.
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**12. Issue selection process:**



13. Once outline decisions have made officer will work with the Chair and Vice Chair to form the outline programme.

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**Work Programme Suggestions - Members**

**Labour Group**

Suggestion	Comment
Street Trading and Busking in the City Centre.	
Tracking the experience of a few families affected by Benefit Changes	
Allocations Policies – Are they “right” in the current circumstances and how can we communicate this better.	
Decent Homes standards where do we go from here.	
Regeneration for the long term. How do we do this, how do we engage people in ideas and planning, are partnership working well, are budgets sufficient for ambitions.	
The method by which the scale of new buildings and extensions is indicated in planning applications, in particular an evaluation of the agreed pilot scheme based on the practice in Swiss Cantons.	
<p>KRM programme and the achievement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Looked after children</li> <li>- Boys</li> <li>- Pakistani background children</li> </ul> <p>Have there been any knock on effects of the reading programme in</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Borrowing from libraries</li> <li>- Attracting helpers/volunteers into schools</li> </ul>	
<p>To scrutinise the satisfactions KPI on repairs and maintenance to understand why the 97% satisfaction rates does not seem to correlate with what councillors here from their constituents. Possibly get beneath dissatisfaction and why this doesn't come through in "official" results.</p>	

### **Green Group**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p>Council Tax exemptions. Are these being applied consistently and managed.</p>	

### **Liberal Democrat Group**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p>Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)</p>	
<p>Benefits</p>	
<p>Flooding and sewage in Northway</p>	
<p>Use of social media by the Council</p>	
<p>How the Council provides services to students</p>	
<p>Supporting economic growth in the City (Covered Market panel already)</p>	

## Appendix 4

### **Financial Issues from the 2012 -2013 Integrated report raised at the last meeting.**

More detail on these issues was discussed at the last meeting and members can find details in the Integrated Report published on the last Scrutiny agenda.

1. The challenge of meeting on-going efficiency targets along with the challenge of delivering a large Capital Programme. The City Executive Board has been advised by officers to expect a 12% reduction in Revenue Support Grant.
2. The level of contingencies and the agreement to look at the feasibility of pooling some risks. (Agreed scrutiny recommendation)
3. The effects of Business Rates changes.
4. The financial and social risks around Welfare Reform.
5. Despite good financial performance in the Council overall there were issues of overspending in the services forming Organisational Development and Corporate Services. Some of these were for one off events and pressures. The base budget has been adjusted and the report calls for more intense scrutiny of spending in some of these services. The report mentions performance issues in this area that can be seen in the Corporate Performance tables.
6. Fee income mainly in Building Control and Planning.
7. Direct Services ability to bid for and win contracts going forward.