

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 15 DECEMBER 2010

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND
DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline for members issues discussed at the meeting of Scrutiny Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners held on Wednesday 8th December and to seek the approval of the Commission to:-
 - a) its draft work programme up to June 2011
 - b) the work programmes of Scrutiny Committees,
 - c) delegate authority to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or Scrutiny Commissioners in the case of the Commission) to agree amendments to work programmes between the submission of periodic reports on all scrutiny work programmes.

Work Programmes

Background

2. Rule 7 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules states that *'overview and scrutiny committees dealing with County Council functions shall obtain the prior approval of the Scrutiny Commission for their work programme and in formulating their work programme they shall take into account wishes of members on that committee who are not members of the current political administration of the County Council.'*

Current Process for agreeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes

3. The current process for agreeing the work programme is as follows:

Adults, Communities and Health

The Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Labour Spokesperson of the Committee meet approximately one month before each meeting of the Committee to discuss the draft work programme and agree the agenda for the next meeting. Any subsequent amendments to the agenda are approved by the Chairman.

Children and Young People's Service

The Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Liberal Democrat and Labour Spokesmen of the Committee meet approximately one month before each meeting of the Committee to discuss the draft work programme and agree the agenda for the next meeting. Any subsequent amendments to the agenda are approved by the Chairman.

Budget and Performance Monitoring Panel

The terms of reference agreed at the first meeting of the Panel on 27 October 2009 state that the Panel will consider quarterly monitoring reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme and quarterly performance reports in relation to targets and commitments contained in the Local Area Agreement 2, Multi Area Agreement and the County Council's Medium Term Delivery Plan. In addition, it can consider reports on specific issues identified as a result of scrutiny of any of the quarterly reports. The Panel also receives reports on Treasury Management activities. This is the basis on which the work programme for the Panel is determined.

4. The work programmes were not as a matter of course reported to the Scrutiny Commission as all three political groups have an opportunity to contribute to the work programme. However, in view of concerns which have been expressed the current work programmes are attached for approval (Appendices 1, 2 and 3 attached).

Future Arrangements

5. The Scrutiny Commission will in future receive the work programmes of each of the Scrutiny bodies above covering a period of four months (i.e. to tie in with the Forward Plan) for approval. Clearly there will be instances where the Chairman and Deputy Chairman will need to respond to developments and additions to the Cabinet Forward Plan. It would be extremely unwieldy for such changes to be reported to the Scrutiny Commission and such an approach may result in scrutiny bodies not considering significant issues within the required decision making timescale. It is therefore suggested that there should be a mechanism in place to enable Scrutiny Committees to respond and amend their work programmes accordingly.
6. The following issues discussed by the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners which relate to the work of Committees will be drawn to the attention of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Spokesmen for possible inclusion in their work programmes.
 - a) Adults, Communities and Health Scrutiny Committee to consider how and when it would wish to consider the Libraries, Heritage and Arts review that had recently been published.

- b) The light touch review on Forced Marriages would be submitted to the Commissioners prior to submission to the Children and Young People's Service Scrutiny Committee.

Scrutiny Commission Work Programme

7. The Scrutiny Commission work programme discussed and agreed at the meeting of the Commissioners and Deputy is set out in Appendix 4. At that meeting the officers were asked to submit briefing papers on the following issues to enable the Scrutiny Commissioners to come to a view of how best these issues might be progressed (i.e. a report or briefing paper to the Commission, a light touch review or a full review):
- i) Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters including funding issues;
 - ii) How the County Council could respond to the Government's ambition to secure the services of Post Offices in the digital age;
 - iii) The Localism Bill - Implications for the Council particularly in relation to:-
 - Planning Issues
 - Community Infrastructure Levy
 - Community and Neighborhood engagement and working

Equal Opportunities Implications

8. None.

Recommendations

7. The Scrutiny Commission is asked to:-
- a) agree its provisional work programme for the period up to June 2011;
 - b) agree the work programmes for the Adults, Communities and Health and Children and Young People's Service Scrutiny Committees set out in the Appendices to this report;
 - c) authorise the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, following consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman or in the case of the Commission the Scrutiny Commissioners, to make amendments to the agreed work programme.