

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

2010/11 Draft Work Programme

15 June 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Board with the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2010/11, to update Members on work programme items from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme and to consider items for inclusion on the 2010/11 work programme.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended:

- (1) To agree the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the draft work programme for 2010/11 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note the update on items carried forward from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme.
- (3) To nominate Members to participate in the fees and charges policy review group.
- (4) To consider the items suggested for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.

Details

Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2010/11

- 1.1 The overview and scrutiny work programme as at the year end 2009/10 is attached at Appendix 1.

Update to the Work Programme Items 2009/10

Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings

Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership

2.1 At the June 2009 meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, Members agreed that the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership would be an appropriate subject for partnership scrutiny for the last quarter 2009/10.

2.2 The scrutiny review was intended to link in with a value for money review of the Partnership. The Board was advised that value for money review had been delayed and agreed in February 2010 to roll the item forward to the 2010/11 work programme.

2.3 The Board will wish to note that the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services will be invited to the Board's July meeting to brief Members on the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership. This will also be an opportunity for the Board to consider the approach to a scrutiny review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership.

Contracts Review

2.4 The Head of Finance and Strategic Procurement Manager will brief Members on the Council's procurement policy at the Board's July meeting. Members will wish to consider the role the Board could play in monitoring the performance of the Council's key contracts.

Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on implementation of recommendations

Partnerships: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

2.5 In 2009/10 the Board scrutinised the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. The Board's report was submitted to the Executive in April 2010. The Executive commended the report and accepted all of the recommendations. A report updating Members on progress against the recommendations will be submitted to the Board's September meeting.

2.6 Although the review focussed on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, it flagged up some general issues about the role and responsibilities of elected Members who represent the Council on partnerships and outside bodies. Members noted that the Leader of the Council had commissioned a review on the current councillor representation on outside bodies. The outcome of this review will be considered by the Executive on 7 June 2010.

2.7 Members will wish to note that as an outcome of the review on councillor representation on outside bodies, a training session on 'Elected member representation on partnerships and outside bodies'

will be held on Wednesday 7 July. This session offer guidance and support for members appointed to serve as a Cherwell District Council representative on a partnership or outside body.

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

2.8 February 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the Bicester Vision Partnership and made a number of recommendations. This Committee resolved to pass this to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for monitoring. The Board considered this in July 2009 and January 2010.

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

2.9 In February 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the Bicester Vision Partnership and made a number of recommendations. This Committee resolved to pass this to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for monitoring. The Board considered this in July 2009 and January 2010.

2.10 The Board agreed that they should review the Council's involvement in the Bicester Vision Partnership in 2010. The Chairman, will brief Members on recent developments and suggest how to proceed.

Past Year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring

2.11 As part of the 2009/10 budget process the Board undertook a review of fees and charges. As part of the 2010/11 budget process the Board undertook a scrutiny review of the Council's prioritisation matrix, revenue expenditure by service and reviewed the capital bids received as part of the 2010/11 budget process.

2.12 The Head of Finance attended the Board's XX meeting to update Members on progress on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the fees and charges review. The Head of Finance explained that officers had carried out research into the charging, discount and concession policies of other local authorities and that they were now ready to work with members of the Board to formulate similar policies for Cherwell District Council ahead of the 2011/12 budget process. Councillors Rae, Steward and Weir were nominated to work with officers on the formulation of charging, discount and concession policies for Cherwell District Council ahead of the 2011/12 budget process. As Mrs Rae stood down as a District Councillor at the 2010 elections, the Board will wish to nominate another Member to the fees and charges review group.

2.13 At the Board's July meeting the Head of Finance will update Members on further progress against the recommendations of the 2009/10 and 2010/11 budget scrutiny reviews.

Food Waste Processing

2.14 The Performance Scrutiny Working Group will review this in autumn 2010.

Sports Centre Modernisation

2.15 The Strategic Director Environment and Community has submitted a report which provides an end of project appraisal for the Sports Centre Modernisation Programme to the June meeting of the Executive. The Finance Scrutiny Working Group will review this in summer 2010.

Deleted Items – items no longer on the work programme

Partnership Scrutiny: Registered Social Landlords' Management Group

2.16 This was on the Board's 2009/10 Work Programme. The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, the Head of Housing Services, the Strategic Housing Manager, the Strategic Housing Officer and the representatives from Charter Community Housing, the Bromford Group and Charter Residents' Voice attended the Board's March meeting to participate in a discussion about the Registered Social Landlords' Management Group, including its links to the Council's corporate priorities, the national standards that apply and strategic and operational issues relating to the management of housing stock across the district.

2.17 Following the discussion, the Board concluded that that there was a strong working relationship between the Council's Housing Services and the main Registered Social Landlords which was focused on common objectives which supported the Council's corporate priorities. This was underpinned by a formal structure to manage and measure the effectiveness of the partnership. As a result, Board agreed that there was no further scrutiny of this partnership should be undertaken at this time.

2.18 The Board agreed that a brief report summarising the information presented should be submitted to the Executive commending the Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing and the staff of Cherwell's Housing Services for their work, in partnership with the Registered Social Landlords, on the management of social housing in the district. This report was completed and submitted in May 2010.

Work Programme Items 2010/11

Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny

Proposed Scrutiny Topics

3.1 In addition to the items carried forward from the 2009/10 work programme, Members of the Board have suggested the following items for consideration for inclusion on the Work Programme 2010/11. The Board will wish to consider these items and decide if they feel they are appropriate for inclusion on the Work Programme.

- Disabled Facilities Grants
- The cost and length of Planning Appeals
- The cost of Cherwell District Council employing external consultants

3.2 In considering these suggestions for the work programme and prioritising the topics the Board will wish to consider the resources available to support the work and the timescales. The Board should also reflect on the demands that scrutiny reviews place on the resources in the individual service areas.

3.3 The Board will also wish to consider the priority checklist. The current, informal criteria applied to all suggestions for a scrutiny review are that it must:

- be of concern to a group of people living within the Cherwell District;
- relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence;
- not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months;
- not relate to an individual service complaint;
- not relate to an individual planning or licensing application.

Budget Scrutiny 2011/12

3.4 The Head of Finance will be present at the meeting on 7 September and together with the Chairman will facilitate a discussion about the approach and schedule for budget scrutiny for 2011/12.

Future Meetings Schedule

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board	20 July 2010, 7.00pm 7 September 2010, 7.00pm 12 October 2010, 7.00pm 7 December 2010, 7.00pm 11 January 2011, 7.00pm 1 March 2011, 7.00pm
Finance Scrutiny Working Group	13 July 2010, 6.30pm 28 September 2010, 6.30pm 30 November 2010, 6.30pm 28 February 2011, 6.30pm
Performance Scrutiny Working Group	29 June 2010, 6.30pm 21 September 2010, 6.30pm 23 November 2010, 6.30pm 9 February 2011, 6.30pm

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 June 2010, 6.30pm 27 July 2010, 6.30pm 14 September 2010, 6.30pm 26 October 2010, 6.30pm 14 December 2010, 6.30pm 25 January 2010, 6.30pm 8 March 2010, 6.30pm
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Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant CS&R, 01295 221982

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor, 01295 221691

Risk Management: If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are overstretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watt, Risk Management and Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Wards Affected

Each scrutiny review will identify the wards affected

Corporate Plan Themes

Each scrutiny review will identify the relevant corporate plan themes

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Work Programme 2010/11
Background Papers	
None	
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