

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 March 2011

Work Programme and Forward Plan

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the work programme.

2.0 Scope of the Committee

- 2.1. Under the Council's constitution the scope of this Committee is defined as

"the Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality and diversity, performance management, communications and access to services.

Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety (the designated Crime and Disorder Committee)".

3.0 Citizens Panel

- 3.1. Your Chairman reported your views to the Performance Monitoring meeting of the Executive in February (recorded in full in the minutes of your last meeting enclosed with your agenda papers).
- 3.2. County Councillor Carl Les responded that when this was discussed at the last Performance Monitoring meeting, the viability of the Panel was in doubt, partly because District Councils were withdrawing their interest. Now that the Scrutiny Committee thought it would remain useful if some changes were adopted, he was happy to consider the matter further.
- 3.3. He proposed, and it was accepted, that a further report to come to you on changes made and their effects.

4.0 Area Committees – Scrutiny Involvement

- 4.1. Your Group Spokespersons became aware of issues regarding the relationship between Community Engagement Forums and NYCC Area Committees. This cropped up during a recent meeting of Area Committee Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, CSP and LSP Representatives.

- 4.2. There was consensus amongst Area Chairmen that the role of Area Committees across the board needs to be reviewed. A way forward was agreed :-
1. Neil Irving will circulate a survey completed by the Portfolio Holder to gauge opinions and establish options;
 2. An additional meeting of Area Chairmen etc, to be convened in June to look at the survey results and ideas for future arrangements;
 3. **Possible involvement of Corporate and Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee (13 June or 12 September);**
 4. Recommendations to the Members Constitution Working Group (probably June onwards)
- 4.3. The next steps would then be:-
- Members Constitution Working Group recommendations to the Executive (July - September);
 - Executive recommendations to County Council (possibly 12 October);
 - Implementation of any new arrangements on date agreed by County Council.
- 4.4. Your Chairman made the following points:-
- Selby Area is unique currently as it has an active community engagement programme, which seems to work. Duplication for officers/councillors is a waste of time/money.
 - Either the area committees become more relevant or join up with the CEFs.
- 4.5. Because of this Committee's previous involvement in "governance issues and area committees" Your Chairman believes it should be again, before any recommendations go to the Executive.
- 4.6. **Your Group Spokespersons agreed and recommended that the work programme be amended accordingly.**

5.0 Scrutiny and the Budget Process

What the Committee is looking at

- 5.1. The Mid-Cycle Briefing discussed (without commitment) the Committee's suggestion that Members' review how information had been presented to elected Members as part of the budget cycle. The discussion focused therefore not on the budget per se, rather the process around information to and involvement of Members.

- 5.2. The question the Members asked themselves was how was this information presented, what in particular worked well and what might we do differently next year and in future years?

Last Years Process - Opinions expressed

- 5.3. Group Spokespersons liked the balance of local area based consultations, workshops and Scrutiny Committee involvement.
- 5.4. The discussion acknowledged that a good deal of the budget preparations had been reactive in the light of the pressure from the Comprehensive Spending Review, frontloading over the 4 years and the election. A perfect storm if you will. Information had come to Scrutiny Committees during November and early December based upon service budgets presented by directorates, whose work most closely related to that of the Committee.
- 5.5. The Group Spokespersons thought this had been both successful and useful. It had put Members in a better position to understand the implications of budget proposals. Additionally, it helped place the information brought to the Member's Seminar in a service context.
- 5.6. Decisions were made on the involvement of Scrutiny as we reacted to events, albeit successfully as it turned out. For next year, it would be good to have a provisional timeline mapped out before the start so Members would know what was coming when.
- 5.7. The consensus amongst the Group Spokespersons was that, overall the level of detail was pitched about right. Information was available to those who wanted it.

The relationship between Executive and Scrutiny in relation to the budget cycle

- 5.8. In November, Scrutiny Committees were invited to comment on the savings/cuts proposals – what should be in what might be out. Making these judgements was in part problematic, not having been part of the earlier negotiations on the range of options considered especially those that had been ruled out and the reasons behind that. How we address that would need some thought but probably best done informally, outside the formality of a Committee.
- 5.9. Finally, from their perspective Group Spokespersons thought there was a good deal of confusion around how Scrutiny Committees go about monitoring the impact on services of budget proposals. As a point of principle, having taken a particular interest, Committees should have the opportunity to assess service implications during the course of the year. Again how we might do that would need more thought.
- 5.10. **It was agreed that an options paper be prepared for the Committee meeting in June and the work programme be amended accordingly.**

6.0 Access for Rural Services, Big Society, Rural Post Offices

- 6.1. Members will recall that the Committee has set up a task group to review and report upon Access to Services in North Yorkshire Communities, focussing in

particular on community managed resources, building community capacity and the aspirations of the Big Society.

- 6.2. The task group visited Stillington Village Post Office and Shop on 9 March, meeting with members of the management committee. The task group learnt how the existing community spirit, resourcefulness and skills set of residents in the village greatly aided the setting up of the shop and has led to it continuing to be a successful enterprise. The task group will also be visiting the community run pub and shop in Hudswell on 24 March.
- 6.3. Both are examples of good practice and the task group will look at identifying what the challenges and issues are, and improvements that the County Council could make to help other communities manage services. As part of this process the task group will be meeting with relevant voluntary sector organisations working in the field of community engagement and volunteer support.

7.0 Improving communications with parish and town councils: North Yorkshire County Council Parish Charter

- 7.1. On 11 January 2011 the Executive considered the deferred report of the Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee on improving communications with parish and town councils. The Executive approved the North Yorkshire County Council Parish Charter and asked for the proposal to produce a monthly online newsletter for parish councils to be considered further by the Executive Member for Corporate Services. This was in the wider context of how the Council communicates with other bodies and the current reduction in resources.
- 7.2. At some point I will ask Group Spokespersons at their Mid Cycle to consider the impact the Parish Charter is having on our relationships with parish councils across the county

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. The Committee is recommended to review the work programme in the light of this report.

BRYON HUNTER
SCRUTINY TEAM LEADER
County Hall
Northallerton

Author and Presenter of Report: Ray Busby
Contact Details: Tel: 01609 532655
E-mail: ray.busby@northyorks.gov.uk

15 March 2011

Background Documents: None

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

In-depth Scrutiny Projects

SUBJECT	AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
DAAT review and drugs alcohol services/support	<p>Work in three phases - Initial report assessment of commitment/progress. Second structural "total place" analysis, third balance of alcohol drugs activity.</p> <p>Committee invited to re-appoint or replace the Members appointed to work jointly with Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members on this subject.</p> <p>Report on Task Group meeting 24 February included with this agenda.</p>	Seamus Breen / Cllr Tony Hall / Ray Busby	Decision to be taken on strategy to reduce alcohol related harm.
Citizens Panel	<p>Referred by the Executive. Review of the current status of the Citizens Panel. This would include an assessment of the value of this resource, what evidence is there that the results are being used by directorates to inform service planning</p> <p>Work completed and Chairman reported comments.</p>	Hugh Williamson / Neil Irving	Review again in 12 months.
Future Performance Monitoring Arrangements	Proposition on the performance management information it would be most appropriate for the authority to retain or develop in future financial years.	Hugh Williamson	June 2011
Partnerships Contribution and Resources	Reviews the annual report on partnership monitoring arrangements and any subsequent decisions taken by the Executive, prior to considering what additional work, if any, may be required.	John Moore/ Neil Irving/ Gary Fielding	Second half of 2011
Access to Services	<p>Looking at community managed resources, building community capacity, sustainable Broadband-led transformation and the aspirations of the Big Society</p> <p>Task Group appointed: Cllrs John McCartney, Val Arnold, Geoff Webber, Brian Simpson, Liz Casling, David Jeffels.</p> <p>Initial meeting to start work: 31 January 2011</p>	Neil Irving/ Gary Fielding	

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

Overview Reports

SUBJECT	AIMS/TERMS OF REFERENCE	ACTION/BY WHOM	TIMESCALES
NYSP Community Safety Agreement	Reviewed annually as part of Crime and Disorder designation.	Neil Irving / Chair Safer Communities Forum	Autumn 2011
Area Committees and Community Engagement Forums	Proposal in work programme.		To be decided
Council Plan	This work be directed more towards a post-implementation review of how the Council Plan was developed with a view to making recommendations on how it (the product and the process) can be improved in future.	Neil Irving	13 June 2011
Sustainable Communities Strategy	Statutory requirement on work on the LAA removed. Committee to be consulted during development of SCS – timetable to be determined. A watching brief only be made on the examination and preparation of possible key indicators on partnership working.	Neil Irving	To be determined
Executive Members Update	Schedule alternately	Cllr Carl Les	28 March 2011
Leader of organisations attend to explain commitment/contribution to Community Safety/Safer Communities Forum	Key feature of Designated Crime and Disorder committee. Programme be drafted for attendance of strategic leaders at forthcoming meetings.	Ray Busby	Probation Service to return in Spring 2011 (31 March 2011 possibility)
Enhanced two tier working	Joint meeting with representatives of District & Borough Councils deferred. This has been deferred pending results of discussions on shared services and future collaboration.	Gary Fielding	To be determined
Equality – taking into account anticipated new public sector equalities duties.	Monitor compliance	Neil Irving	13 June 2011
Corporate Risk Register	Reported at the appropriate time.	John Moore	12 September 2011
Health and Safety – 2010/2011	Includes Public Liability – reported annually.	John Moore	Annual Report 13 June 2011
Annual Procurement Report	Annual report including Sustainable procurement for Directorates within NYCC and in respect of property and highways works.	John Moore	Annual Report 12 September 2011

Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

Property	To be agreed.	John Moore	13 June 2011
Communications Strategy	Further dates to be discussed.	Helen Edwards	Not decided
Community Engagement/Duty to Involve	A key part of the Committee's Work Programme but no decision has yet been made on when a report be submitted.	Neil Irving	Not decided
Scrutiny and the Budget Process	Proposals be drafted for consideration at the Committee that this work be directed more towards a post-implementation review of how budget information was made available to Members, i.e. a snapshot / satisfaction assessment.	John Moore/Gary Fielding	Scope and approach considered at Mid Cycle in March. Options report to 13 June 2011.
HR Annual Report	Overview and update of HR internal communication.	Justine Brooksbank / Helen Edwards	To be decided
Volunteers Policy	To consider the development of a policy for how the authority manages the support it gives for volunteers.	John Moore / Geoff Wall	28 March 2011
Information Governance	An update in respect of how the County Council protects and develops the security, quality and management of its information.	Fiona Sowerby	31 January 2011

2011/12

<i>Scheduled Committee Meetings</i>	28 March 10:30 am	13 June 10:30 am	12 September 10:30 am	14 November 10:30 am	23 January 10:30 am	19 March 10:30 am
<i>Scheduled Agenda Briefing</i>	28 March 9:30 am	13 June 9:30 am	12 September 9:30 am	14 November 9:30 am	23 January 9:30 am	19 March 9:30 am
<i>Scheduled Mid Cycle</i>	3 May 10:30 am	19 July 10:30 am	17 October 10:30 am	12 December 10:30 am	10 February 10:30 am	21 May 10:30 am