

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

**CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH
AUGUST 2012**

2012/14 WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT OF SCRUTINY OFFICER

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To enable the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee to agree the Committee's work programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To agree topics for in-depth review for the 2012-14 work programme.
- 2.2 To agree any other minor items for the work programme.

3.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 3.1 None

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Management Board met on 4th July 2012 to consider the scrutiny work programme and the suggestions which had been put forward for review. The Board agreed:
- That there would be a two year work programme, refreshed after 12 months, to allow for continuity of work.
 - The allocation of suggestions to each Scrutiny Committee for further consideration by the Committees, and the endorsement of recommendations made by the Chairmen.
 - That resource would be allocated to support 6 formal meetings per Scrutiny Committee per year, with additional resource allocated by the Scrutiny Management Board according to the demands of the work programme.
 - That the role of the Scrutiny Management Board would include holding Cabinet members to account.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Management Board acknowledged that the 20% reduction of resources across the organisation had and would continue to impact on capacity to support scrutiny work, and that there was a

need to plan the work programme with senior officers so that resources for scrutiny could be built into work loads.

- 4.3 The Board also recommended that the approach for scrutiny should be for the Committees to focus on a small number of key issues in detail and at the right time so that scrutiny could have a greater impact on policy development.
- 4.4 The Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee now needs to consider the suggested items to agree the 2012/14 work programme.

5.0 CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the new suggestions and the items carried over from the previous work programme for the Committee to consider for the 2012/14 work programme.
- 5.2 The Chairman has recommended that the Committee selects up to 3 items for in-depth review, and that the reviews will be carried out one at a time to avoid overload and loss of focus. Each review will be scoped at the start to agree the objectives and work the Committee wishes to carry out. The order and timing of reviews will be decided by Members according to the urgency, decision making timetable, legislative timetable and availability of resources for the topics being reviewed. The aim is for scrutiny to be involved at an early stage of decision making to have greater influence and impact
- 5.3 Decisions about the work programme must be agreed by the Committee. As a starting point, the Chairman has indicated her preferred topics for in-depth review, and made suggestions about how other items could be dealt with. These suggestions are shown on Appendix 1. Items not selected for the work programme will be archived, and no scrutiny of these issues will be carried out unless the Committee agree a change to the work programme at a later date.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are no specific equal opportunity impacts arising from this report. Equality issues will be considered as part of each review.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There are no specific environmental impacts arising from this report. Environmental issues will be considered as part of reviews.

8.0 LEGAL COMMENT

The proposals accord with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council's Constitution and the provisions of the Scrutiny Handbook.

9.0. LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Scrutiny Management Board has recommended that items selected for the work programme are linked to the Council's priorities.

10. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

Setting the work programme presents an opportunity to identify work where scrutiny can make an impact on the work of the Council and the services delivered to local people. There is a risk that scrutiny could be tempted to look at too many issues and lose focus and impact.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The work programme will need to be managed within existing resources and adjustments made accordingly to ensure that this is the case. Any financial implications arising from recommendations will be considered as part of the relevant reports and any variances will be reported through financial monitoring.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Suggestions for the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

	Suggestion	Comments and issues for members to consider	Chairman's recommendations	Timing
1	<p>Co-operative Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of approach – benefits and risks, where does it fit in the democratic process? Implementation of recommendations 	<p>Update to Committee 8th August.</p> <p>Opportunities for scrutiny will be discussed with the Cabinet Member and officers to help members decide whether this should be included in the work programme.</p>		
2	<p>Employee Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the model - what do staff think? Involvement / barriers / embedding the model. Sharing the TWC model with other authorities Implementation of recommendations 	<p>Update to Committee 8th August.</p> <p>The Chairman has recommended that this is included in the work programme as an in-depth review. A review could include testing Co-operative Values with staff (see suggestion below)</p> <p>Opportunities for scrutiny will be discussed at the meeting on 8th August.</p>	Recommended for in-depth review.	February onwards
3	<p>Co-operative Values – is the Council delivering on its values and how is the Council held to account? The Co-operative Commission recommended this comes to scrutiny.</p>	<p>Update to Committee 8th August.</p> <p>Opportunities for scrutiny will be discussed with the Cabinet Member and officers to help members decide whether this should be included in the work programme.</p>	How the Values are promoted to staff could be included in the above review.	
4	<p>Adopter Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on implementation of projects – 	Update to Committee 8 th August.		

	<p>identify topics for more detailed work. This will include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single point of contact for businesses to Council Services - update on development of model and progress towards implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on previous scrutiny recommendations on First Point for Business 	Update report to a Committee meeting.	
5	Update on impact of changes to leisure concessions	Review whether changes to the policy have delivered the required savings.	Update report at a Committee meeting.	Any time from September
6	Improvements to customer care	A report is due to go to Cabinet in September on the customer service strategy and action plan.		
7	<p>Welfare benefit reforms – how the Council and partners are supporting people through benefit changes.</p> <p>Possible areas to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localisation of Council Tax benefit • Impact of benefit changes on communities (shortfalls, benefit cap, LHA reform, universal credit) and welfare assistance. 	<p>Timescales for the introduction of benefit reforms has been set by the government. At TWC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline options developed by member/officer working group by mid-August • Consultation August/September • Ratification of preferred option by Cabinet / Full Council in November • Go live 1st April 2013 <p>Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee may scrutinise financial implications for the Council.</p>	<p>Strongly recommended this for in-depth review.</p> <p>Meeting August/September to review Council Tax options and scope further work.</p>	August onwards
8	Funding for Citizen's Advice Bureau	Potential to involve CAB/voluntary sector in a review of welfare benefit assistance as above. Note on-going work with voluntary and community sector following recommendations by the Co-operative Commission report on Commissioning & Procurement.		
9	Commercial opportunities for the Council – and threats – arising from the Localism Act.	Key strategic issue. The Leader announced to Council the creation of a Commercial Enterprise Manager to help the Council develop new income	Possible strategic issue for the Scrutiny Management Board.	

		streams to reduce dependency on grant funding.		
10	Social Deprivation – not covered in 2011/12 work programme. Chairman asked for this to be carried forward for re-consideration.	The CYP Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing the impact of early intervention programmes. Details will be confirmed, but could include Strengthening Families, Family Connect, Brookside Children & Family Centre pilot.	Need to avoid duplicating work with other scrutiny committee. Suggested members could attend relevant CYP meetings.	
11	Community Environmental Projects. This was not covered in 2011/12 work programme; the Chairman has asked for this to be carried forward for re-consideration.	Adopter programme: Environmental Action Teams have been set up in some wards in partnership with parish councils. Need to avoid duplication with existing work.		
12	Working with Town & Parish Councils. This was not covered in 2011/12 work programme; the Chairman has asked for this to be carried forward for re-consideration.	New Parish Charter agreed. Parish Forum reviewed. Need to avoid duplication with existing work.		