Scrutiny Committee – 3rd April 2012

11. Scrutiny Work Programme – Selection of Items

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Purpose of Report

This report contains a list of topics that members have suggested for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme and asks members to use the agreed Scoring Methodology to decide which items should go forward and the most appropriate way of addressing each topic.

Action Required

Scrutiny Committee members consider which items to include in their Scrutiny Work Programme using the agreed Scoring Methodology.

Background

Why do we need an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme?

Setting the Work Programme for the Scrutiny function is an important stage in the Scrutiny process. An effective Scrutiny work programme will identify the key topics that Scrutiny will consider over the coming year.

A well planned Scrutiny function will help both officers and members plan their workloads as well as providing a clear picture to the public of planned Scrutiny activity.

Who sets the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme?

It is vital that members of the Scrutiny function take responsibility for both drawing up and managing their own work programme. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is not approved by any body other than the main Scrutiny Committee.

What are some key principles for setting an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme?

- Topics included in the Work Programme must add value to the work of the Council in delivering services to our residents.

- Where possible involve partners, stakeholders and the public

- Allow some flexibility to enable topics to be included as they arise.

The Work Programme should reflect all types of Scrutiny activity such as policy reviews, reviews of external organisations and holding the Executive to account.

Last year, all non-Executive members were invited to attend a Scrutiny Work Programming Workshop. At this workshop, members were asked to suggest topics that they would like to see in the Scrutiny Work Programme.

Since that workshop, there have been two key developments which mean we are now in a position to bring forward this report for members' consideration, Firstly, the Scrutiny Committee has agreed a revised scoring methodology which allows all suggestions for work programme items to be considered in the same open and transparent way; and secondly, the Council has recently approved and adopted a new Corporate Plan against which each suggested topic can be scored.

Therefore, this report sets out each of the topics suggested by members at the workshop along with some **suggestions** as to how best to progress each idea. The final decision of course rests with members of the Scrutiny Committee.

Each suggested topic will still need to be scored by the Scrutiny Committee before a final decision is taken on whether to include it in the work programme. The table below suggests how the issue **could** be taken forward **if** the Committee agree to include the topic in the Scrutiny Work Programme.

This list is not exhaustive and members may wish to suggest additional/ alternative topics during the meeting.

Suggested Topic	Suggested way forward
Yarlington's Community initiatives	Invite a representative from Yarlington to attend and give a presentation to members outlining the details of their Community Initiative and how we can ensure an effective relationship.
Identifying additional income streams	Annually, a Task and Finish group is established to work on various aspects of the budget setting process (inescapable bids etc) – this year, the Task and Finish Group could be established slightly earlier and could work on this topic and feed their findings into the budget setting process.
Assessing the Community impact of the Lean Review of the Area System	Members have been involved in the Lean Review to date through a series of workshops. Following recommendations from members, officers are now applying the Lean methodology to the area working delivery structures. Members will need to clarify where Scrutiny could add value to this.
Website – Customer Experience	The website has recently been re-launched, members may wish to consider requesting a report to Scrutiny Committee – focusing on the Customer experience of using the website and the impact the website is having on the number of telephone enquiries received.

Function of the Local Strategic Partnership – South Somerset Together	This issue has been considered at great length by the Partnerships Task and Finish Group - it would be difficult to demonstrate the added value of Scrutiny looking at this again.
Localism – relationship between tiers of local government (County / District / Town and Parish) to ensure effective working	Initial presentation to full Scrutiny Committee on all the relevant legislative changes and how SSDC are planning to implement them.
Countryside Service	This topic is very broad; an initial presentation to the Scrutiny Committee may be useful to give an overview of the service so that members can identify any specific areas for potential further investigation from an informed position. Members may want to consider the benefits of having the portfolio holder for Leisure and Culture deliver their presentation on the same date.
Joint Working/shared services	An initial report to Scrutiny Committee from the Chief Executive / Management Board outlining the Council's current approach to joint working / shared services may be a good starting point. Scrutiny Committee members would then be able to identify any areas for further investigation / information as appropriate.
Innovation Centre – occupancy levels	The relevant officer(s) and Portfolio Holder could be invited to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting and report to members on the current position.
Core Strategy – the process used to inform the strategy	The Scoring Methodology refers to the fact that Scrutiny should avoid looking at issues that are being or have recently been considered by other member level bodies. The Core Strategy has been, and continues to be, considered extensively by members at numerous committees and ultimately by Full Council (where all members will have an opportunity for formal involvement).

Scoring each topic

As already mentioned, during the meeting members will be asked to use the agreed Scoring Methodology (attached at Appendix A to this report) to assess each of these suggested topics.