Scrutiny Committee – 30 July 2013

12.   Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme

Lead Officers: *Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager*
                      Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: *emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462566 or*
                      joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462077

Purpose of the Report

To provide members of the Scrutiny Committee with some background information about the role of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

Actions Required

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to bring forward potential items for the 2013/14 Scrutiny Work Programme. Members of the Committee are asked to consult with other non-executive members in advance of this meeting and bring forward any potential work programme items.

Report

Why do we need a 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. However, in the interest of improved co-ordination between all member level bodies, the Work Programme should be reported regularly to Full Council and be easily accessible to all members and officers.

What are some key principles for setting Scrutiny Work Programmes?

- 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.

What are the possible sources for identifying items for the Scrutiny Work Programme?

There are many different ways to identify issues for the Scrutiny Work Programme, one of the most important being suggestions from Councillors. Other sources can include:

- Suggestions from elected members (especially non-executive members)
- Directly from members of the public through our 'Have your say' Scrutiny section on the Website
- Executive Forward Plan
- Issues identified through Area Committees
- Issues identified through the budget setting and monitoring process
- Issues identified through the performance management role of Scrutiny.

It is important to bear in mind the points raised earlier about Scrutiny adding value when selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme. The Scrutiny Work Programme should reflect all types of Scrutiny activity such as policy reviews, reviews of external organisations and holding the Executive to account.

The Scrutiny Manager will support members at all stages of formulating the Scrutiny Work Programme and will ensure that relevant advice and information is available to anybody wishing to propose an item for the Scrutiny Work Programme. The Scrutiny Work Programme is a 'living document' by which we mean it can be added to or amended as and when issues arise, but it is important that a broad framework is agreed by members of the Scrutiny Committee.

All members of the Committee are invited to bring suggestions for the Work Programme to this meeting. Any suggestions received will be 'worked – up' by the Scrutiny Manager to enable Scrutiny members to have an informed discussion about at a later stage.

Selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme must be a transparent process and to facilitate this, Scrutiny members have agreed a 'Scoring Process' (attached at Appendix A to this report).

There are some elements of the Work Programme that are non-optional such as budget monitoring and performance management – such items will automatically be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme.