



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSION 12 JUNE 2007

Report of the Corporate Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services

Overview and Scrutiny Commissions – Work Planning and Resources 2007/08

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Commission consider a work programme for the municipal year, including the balance between topic reviews, focused scrutiny and those items that can be considered at four scheduled meetings of the commission.
- 1.2 That members:
 - a) consider whether they wish to conduct a topic review, or have focussed scrutiny meetings, in the period up to November 2007/08, and if so
 - b) delegate the Chair, Vice Chair together with a Liberal Democrat member to formally agree the subject(s) on the basis of the outcome of consultation with Commission members.
- 1.3 That the Commission confirm that i) Performance Eye and ii) retrospective scrutiny be included as standing items on all Commission agendas.
- 1.4 That members consider the use of the time available at the ensuing four scheduled meetings during the municipal year

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the beginning of the municipal year it is usual for each Overview and Scrutiny Commission to consider its work plan and to select any topics that they wish to review in the coming year. Reviews can cover anything that affects Derby, and Commissions can if they wish review external as well as internal services.
- 2.2 This year the Children and Young People Department has two external inspections in the autumn and this Commission has previously acknowledged that officers must be allowed to focus preparing those inspections. Any Commission chosen review before November 2007 therefore needs to produce minimal call on the Department's resources yet have scope to be value adding. Senior staff are being asked for suggestions that meet those criteria. Concurrently the Chair, Councillor Poulter, invites suggestions from Commission members. Attached as Appendix Two is a pro forma which is also being separately supplied to each member. This also shows the co-terminus portfolio of this Commission and the Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Commissions should if possible aim to

engage the public in the review process. A topic selection matrix is shown in Appendix 3 of this report and this can later be used to rate the various suggestions received.

- 2.3 The Commission is advised that for the coming municipal year the Co-ordination Team is able to offer the Commission up to 25 meetings of around two hours duration. Some of these meetings will be taken up by the Commission's scheduled meetings, but the remainder will be available to the Commission for performance monitoring, focussed scrutiny or topic reviews, or for any other activities that the Commission considers would enable it to achieve its objectives for the coming year.
- 2.4 In order to make best use of the available meetings, it is suggested that the Commission should develop a work plan for the coming municipal year. The work plan should take into account any known demands on Commission time such as budget scrutiny, and should then allocate the remaining meetings to either topic or scrutiny review work according to Commission members' perception of needs and priorities.
- 2.5 This year there is no July meeting which has been used by commissions to finalise work programmes. To overcome that it is proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair together with a Liberal Democrat member be delegated to formally confirm the work programme for the first half of the municipal year. They would do this on the basis of e-mail consultation with all members in the fortnight after the June meeting.
- 2.6 The Scrutiny Management Commission meeting on 7 June 2005 resolved to:
 - a) Have Performance Eye as a standing item on all Commission agendas
 - b) Include retrospective scrutiny as a standing item on all Commission agendas.

On 6 March this year the SMC decided that in 2007/08 there should 'be a particular focus on performance management'.

- 2.7 This Commission confirmed in June and July 2006 it would have Performance Eye as a standing item and 'to receive all performance indicators relevant to the Children and Young People Commission'. With the SMC indicating that in future more time should be spent on performance monitoring, including making fuller use of Performance Eye, that will mean more time at scheduled meetings will need to be devoted to this agenda item. The SMC has also encouraged the undertaking of 'focused scrutiny' which sees a Commission holding a special 'one subject' meeting and devoting anywhere between 90 minutes and a full day to an issue of concern or interest.
- 2.8 Performance Eye provides the means of tracking the performance of service departments in a wide range of key areas. Data is available for a large number of indicators and the Commission decided it wished to have all the annual and quarterly indicators available to view. However, the Performance Assessment Framework, PAF, indicators, on which hinge the Council's performance rating for

social care, have still not been added. The Co-ordination team can prepare reports on any indicators identified by Commission members for examination. Training on the use of Performance Eye can also be provided for members.

- 2.9 Retrospective scrutiny offers Commission members the facility to examine the impact and outcomes of decisions made by Cabinet members and officers. The Co-ordination team can prepare reports on any decisions identified by Commission members for retrospective scrutiny.
- 2.10 Overview and Scrutiny is a member led process but the Commissions will be supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Team which comprises the Scrutiny and Complaints Manager, three Co-ordination Officers and a Team Administrator. Previously the three Co-ordination Officers and the Scrutiny and Complaints Manager have worked in pairs with each pair covering several Commissions. This arrangement has worked well and has provided the flexibility needed to cope with unexpected work load peaks and absence due to holiday or sickness. It is therefore proposed to continue the arrangement in 2007/08
- 2.11 To enable the Commission to carry out its work plan it can draw on the Overview and Scrutiny budget which, for 2007/08 amounts to £24,000. This sum will need to be shared between all the Commissions.

For more information contact:	Rob Davison 01332 255596 e-mail rob.davison@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Work Programme Suggestion Form
	Appendix 3 – Topic Selection Matrix

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Costs incurred in implementing the Commissions' workplans will have to be contained within the 2007/08 Overview and Scrutiny budget of £24,000.

Legal

2. None arising directly from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising directly from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Effective Overview and Scrutiny will be of benefit to all Derby people.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with all the Council's priorities for 2007-10.

Pro Forma

**Derby City Council
Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Suggestions**

The portfolio of the Commission mirrors that of the Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:

- Designated Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services
- School Improvement and Inclusion
- School and Departmental Support Services
- School Organisation and Capital Programme
- Awards
- Children, Young People and Family Social Care Services
- Integrating Children's Services – Project and Partnerships
- Early Years and Childcare, Play, Children's Centres and Extended Schools

The Commission can consider all of the aspects above *plus* any issues impacting on the city or its inhabitants that relate to children and young people.

1. What is the topic?

2. What is the background to the issue? What is the current situation/problem?

3. How do you think that Overview and Scrutiny can make a difference and add value to this issue?

Thank you for your suggestion.

Please return this form to: Rob Davison, Room 137, The Council House, Corporation St, Derby DE1 2FS

e-mail: rob.davison@derby.gov.uk

Appendix 3

Topic Selection Matrix

The Commissions are solely responsible for selecting the subjects on which they will carry overview 'topic' reviews.

Although the Commissions are able to exert considerable control over the subjects they select for review, the amount of time that Commission members can devote to the overview and scrutiny process is usually quite limited. This means that it is important for the Commissions to select for detailed review only those subjects that are likely to justify the time and effort that will be needed to carry out the review

One way of doing this is by making sure the Commissions concentrate on reviewing 'significant' subjects.

Significant subjects are topics and issues that are:

- a) important and/or of interest to the Council and/or to local people, and where:
- b) the Commission will add or gain value by doing the review

The simple decision matrix shown below can be used to assess the significance of subjects for review.

	HIGH Score 4-5	MEDIUM Score 3	LOW Score 1-2	Total
IMPORTANT – is it a) Interesting b) Controversial				
ADDS VALUE				
URGENT				
Specific				
Measurable				
Attainable				
Relevant				
Trackable				
TOTAL				

By using the matrix, the significance of each potential review subject can be assessed by attributing numerical scores according to:

- **How important the subject is, either to the public or to the Council.** There is little point in spending time reviewing a subject that is not important. To some extent importance will depend on:
 - a) **How interesting the subject will be.** The public are more likely to want to participate in reviews of subjects they consider to be interesting
 - b) **How controversial the subject is considered to be.** Reviewing a controversial topic may present some difficulties but it is likely to generate a lot of interest and public involvement
- **How much value the Commission will add or gain by doing the review.** If no real value will be added or gained by the Commission, there is little point reviewing the subject.
- **Is it Urgent that the Commission carries out the review?** Urgency can in some cases override Importance and Value.
- **Whether the review will be SMART.** Does it have a specific aim, measurable outputs, achievable and realistic objectives and can it be completed in the available time.

The decision matrix can be used to choose which subjects to review. The maximum score is 40 and as a general rule, unless they are very urgent, subjects that score less than 25 are unlikely to justify the time and effort of a review.

The decision matrix was created to assist in the selection of relatively complex subjects for overview 'topic' reviews, and can be used to 'sort' a number of review topics into an order of importance.