



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 20 June 2006

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services

Overview and Scrutiny Commissions – Work Planning and Resources 2006/07

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Commission note and approve the report.
- 1.2 That members:
 - a) Consider and select the topic that the Commission wishes to review in 2006/07 and that this is done in time for the topic to be agreed at the Commission's meeting in July 2006.
 - b) Agree a Commission workplan for 2006/07
 - c) Indicate whether they wish to use the method adopted for the Primary Care Trust review to conduct their 2006/07 review.

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. Commissions should if possible aim to engage the public in the review process. A topic selection matrix is shown in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.2 The Constitution limits Commissions to one topic review report every six months which means that it is in theory possible for each Commission to conduct two reviews in each municipal year. This has been achieved in the past, but if a Commission also wants to conduct effective scrutiny it is probably more realistic for it to aim to complete one topic review each year.
- 2.3 In 2005/06 the Scrutiny Management Commission looked at a number of possible review topics and agreed that there would be value in conducting a review of Council Tax income/expenditure on a ward by ward basis. A meeting to consider the scope of this report was held on 26 April 2006 and the notes of that meeting are attached as Appendix 3 of this report. Members are asked if they wish to undertake this review in 2006/07.

- 2.4 Topic reviews are not mandatory, but if the Commission wishes to conduct one during the coming municipal year it is suggested that members should aim to have agreed on the review topic by the date of the Commission's July meeting. If members wish, a special topic selection meeting can be arranged for a date in June/July to assist in this process.
- 2.5 To enable the Commission to carry out its work plan it can draw on the Overview and Scrutiny budget which, for 2006/07 amounts to £24,000. This sum will need to be shared between the five Commissions.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 In 2006/07, the Co-ordination Team will be supporting five Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. To do this with four officers it is proposed to provide a dedicated Co-ordination Officer for the Scrutiny Management, Children and Young People, Adult Services and Health, and Environment Commissions, and for the three Co-ordination Officers and the Scrutiny and Complaints Manager to share the co-ordination for the Community Commission between them.
- 2.8 In 2005/06 the three Co-ordination Officers and the Scrutiny and Complaints Manager worked in pairs with each pair covering three Commissions. This arrangement worked well and 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 2006/07 with each pair covering two or three Commissions.
- 2.9 The Commission is advised that for the coming municipal year the Co-ordination Team is able to offer each of the five Overview and Scrutiny Commissions up to 30 meetings of around two hours duration. Depending on the Commission, between six and nine of these meetings will be taken up by the Commission's scheduled meetings, which are as set out in Appendix 3 in the 2006/07 Schedule of Meetings. The remaining meetings are therefore available to the Commission for extended scrutiny or policy development topic reviews, or for any other activities that the Commission considers would enable it to achieve its objectives for the coming year.
- 2.10 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.

- 2.11 In 2006 all four members of the Co-ordination Team worked together on the Primary Care Trust review and evidence gathering was completed in just one week. This was a new approach that was necessitated by the need to complete a large and complex review relatively quickly. The approach proved to be very successful and it is therefore suggested that the Commissions might adopt it for their 2006/07 reviews.

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Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Topic Selection Matrix
	Appendix 3 - Outcomes of scoping meeting on 26 April 2006
	Appendix 4 – Schedule of Meetings 2006/07
	Appendix 5 – Council Cabinet portfolios relevant to this Commission

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Costs incurred in implementing the Commissions' workplans will have to be contained within the 2006/07 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 2006-09.

Topic Selection Matrix

The Commissions are also 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.

SMC Council Tax review Outcomes of scoping meeting on 26 April 2006.

Those present: Councillors Allen, Hickson, Smalley with apologies from Councillor Higginbottom, also PW and DR.

The purpose of the meeting was to look at ways in which it might be possible to take forward the review of Council Tax income and expenditure that was discussed at the SMC meeting in December 2006.

The document setting out the practical limitations and implications of the review that had been prepared by PW was circulated and discussed. PW said that the choice seemed to be between a wide ranging but of necessity superficial review, or one that was smaller but more focussed and hence likely to give more worthwhile results. From discussion of the options it seemed that although members had a good idea of what they wanted to do, they were not entirely clear on the details of how the review might be conducted, what would be involved, or what the implications of the review would be.

Having considered PW's report, members appeared concerned that the officers were trying to discourage the review. The officers explained that this was not the case and pointed out that the objective of the scoping meeting was firstly to make sure members understood the practical difficulties involved in carrying out this review and secondly to ensure, so far as was possible, that the review resulted in worthwhile outcomes.

The officers also emphasised that to have a good chance of success, it was necessary to ensure that everyone involved in the review had a clear understanding of the objectives and the way in which the working group wanted to progress, and about what was practicably possible with the personnel and financial resources that were available.

There was considerable discussion about the form that the review should take, what could and should be included and how it might be conducted.

Ultimately it was agreed by the working group that the review should take a phased approach.

It was agreed that the first phase of the review would be to prepare a background paper that would bring together:

- The information on Council Tax income from the wards – including the number per ward of Council Tax payers and the number receiving benefit
- The population of each of the wards
- The number of residents registered to vote in each of the wards

There was discussion about how the review should then be progressed and the working group eventually concluded it would worthwhile to examine the money spent in each ward on specific issues. The working group considered that these should initially include:

1. The repair and maintenance of roads and pavements
2. Public Library provision and use
3. Pre-school provision – where do the under fives live and where are the service
4. Spending on young people – youth service centres and outreach groups
5. Street care provision

The working group asked for scoping reports on each of the six areas to be provided to the future co-ordinating Commission but did not give any specific timescale for them. It was felt that this approach would identify a 'framework' that would enable the review to be extended if/when further topics for examination were identified.

PW suggested that the background paper could be prepared fairly quickly as most of the information needed could be obtained without undue difficulty.

The working group considered that the co-ordinating Commission should own the review but thought that the issues would be of interest to all Council members and that it should therefore be opened up to members of all Commissions.

It was suggested and agreed that the background report should be submitted to meetings of all the Commissions as soon as was practicably possible after the Annual Meeting.

The officers pointed out to the working group that this would need to be a strongly member led review. This was accepted by working group members.

The view of the working group was that this could be an open-ended review that might be developed over an extended period of time to cover a whole range of issues.

DRR 27 April 2006.



Schedule of Meetings June 2006 - July 2007

	Day/Time	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Council	Wed 6pm		19		13		22		24		(Thur) 1*		23#		18
Council Cabinet	Tue 6pm	6	18	1	5	3, 31	28	19	16	20	20	17		15	3
Scrutiny Management	Tue 6pm	20	11		12	31		5	30		6	10	29		3
Adult Services and Health	Mon 6pm		17		11	30		11	22		12	16			16
Children and Young People	Tue 6pm	6	25		19		7	12	23		20			12	24
Environment	Mon 6pm	5	31		25		27		22		26			4	30
Community	Mon 6pm	19	24			2		4	15			2		18	23
Corporate Parenting Sub	Tue 6pm		4		5			12			27			19	
Area Panel 1	Wed 6.30pm	7			6		1		10		7			6	
Area Panel 2	Wed 6.30pm	14			6		8		17		14			13	
Area Panel 3	Wed 6pm	21			20		15		17		21			20	
Area Panel 4	Wed 6.30pm	28			27		29		31		28			27	
Area Panel 5	Wed 7pm		12			4		6	31			4			4
Planning Control	Thu 6pm	22	6 ⁺ ,20	24	7 ⁺ ,28	12 ⁺ ,26	9 ⁺ ,23	14	25	8 ⁺ ,22	8 ⁺ ,22	5 ⁺ ,26	31	21	5 ⁺ ,19
Taxi Licensing and Appeals Committee	Wed 6pm		26			18		20		14		25			11
General Licensing Committee	Wed 6pm		26			18		20		14		25			11
Disabled People's Advisory	Thu 6.30pm	8			21		2		18		15			7	
Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory	Thu 6.30pm	15			7		16		11		29			14	
Women's Advisory	Tue 6.30pm	13			19		21		23		27			19	
Conservation Area Advisory	Thu 5.15pm	8	13	10	14	5	2	7	11	15	15	12	10	14	12
Audit & Accounts Committee	Thu 6pm	29			28			7				5			
Councillor Training Days		29	10		18	10	14	13	8	14	20	11		28	9

* Council Tax Setting

^ Special Budget Meetings

Annual Council

* Planning Control Committee will be held twice a month for a trial period up to 31 May 2006. Meetings marked + will only take place on these dates if the need continues.

Area Panel 1 – Chaddesden, Spondon, Derwent, Oakwood
Area Panel 2 – Alvaston, Boulton, Chellaston, Sinfen
Area Panel 3 – Arboretum, Normanton, Abbey
Area Panel 4 – Littleover, Mickleover, Blagreaves
Area Panel 5 – Allestree, Darley, Mackworth

Meeting dates after 23 May 2007 have been approved by the Council but should be regarded as provisional as they may be changed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 23 May 2007.

Council Cabinet Member

Areas of Responsibility

**Corporate Policy
Councillor Chris Williamson**

Corporate Council Policies and Strategies,
including Community Strategy
Corporate Finance and Financial Services,
including Taxation
Corporate Legal and Administrative
Services
Corporate Communications, including
Derby Pointer
Community Consultation
Derby City Partnership
Sub Regional Strategic Partnership
Local Area Agreement
External Affairs – European, National,
Regional and Local
Mayoral Office/Electoral Issues/Registrars
Emergency Planning

**Personnel, Performance Management
and Economic Development
Councillor Dave Roberts**

Performance Management
Best Value functions and Best Value
performance Plan Corporate Personnel
and Equalities
Economic Development and Tourism,
including External Employment Initiatives
Estates/Property Services including
Markets (apart from Historic Buildings)
Building Design Services and Repair and
Maintenance
Health and Safety
Energy Conservation
Members' Services/Allowances

**Community Safety and e-Government
Councillor Philip Hickson**

Community Safety Partnership
E-Government
Computer Services
Telecommunications