



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COMMISSION Monday 18 JUNE 2007

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Services

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

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note and approve the report
- 1.2 To consider and comment topics members wish to include in the work programme of the Community Commission.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 All Commissions are expected to set their annual work programme based around items contained within their respective portfolios at the beginning of each municipal year. The portfolio of the Community Commission has altered slightly this year to include leisure and direct services whilst omitting community safety issues. (Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference).
- 2.2 In developing the work programme members may wish to take into account corporate and local priorities as well as issues of concern to local residents. By taking this approach it should not only help the Council to make improvements to local services but could also generate greater public interest in overview and scrutiny process. The work programme should also take account of the need to conduct Annual Budget Scrutiny by end of January 2008, whilst retaining some capacity to respond to other issues that may arise during the year.
- 2.3 The constitution allows each Commission to conduct policy reviews and submit up to two reports to the Council Cabinet each year. Although this has been largely achieved in the past, it is suggested that during this year Commissions focus more on conducting detailed scrutiny rather than conduct policy reviews as these can often have financial implications which the Council may find difficult to address. It is envisaged that conducting focused scrutiny is also likely to support the corporate assessment due to be carried out in autumn.

- 2.4 At this year's annual meeting the Council created an additional Commission on Climate Change and adopted a timetable which retained the same overall number of meetings for Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. The affect of timetable on the Community Commission means that it will have held its first two meetings by mid July and leaving remainder three for the rest of the year. It is therefore suggested that to make best use of this schedule, members identify topics they wish to see covered within the Commission's annual work programme and give their suggestions to the Overview and scrutiny Co-ordination officers by end of June. This will allow time for these to be worked up in more detail and be agreed at the July meeting. It is also suggested the Commission seeks wherever possible, to conduct its reviews in between the scheduled meetings. Taking this pragmatic and structured approach will help to keep the reviews focused and hopefully enable members to scrutinise a broader sets of issues. A list of issues for detailed scrutiny by the Commissions suggested by the chair and vice chair is shown in Appendix 3.
- 2.5 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.
- 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. 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
- 2.7 Members are asked to comment on the items listed in appendix 3 and give their suggestions on additional items they wish consider at the July meeting.

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Background papers:	None.
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference Appendix 3 – Suggested Topics for Detailed Scrutiny Appendix 4 – Topic Selection Matrix

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

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

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Effective scrutiny will benefit all Derby people.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report links with Council's priorities for 2007-10 to:
 - make us proud of our neighbourhoods
 - create a 21st Century city centre

Terms of Reference for the Community Commission

Cabinet Members: Nath, Williams, Graves

Neighbourhood, Social Cohesion and Housing Strategy

Area and Neighbourhood Co-ordination, including Area Panels
Community Development
Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
External Regeneration Funding
New Deal for Communities
Customer Services
Housing Strategy and Development
Private Sector Housing
Housing Options/Homelessness
Social Cohesion
Housing and Council Tax Benefits
Community Legal Services
Derby Advice

Leisure and Direct Services

Arts and Libraries
Assembly Rooms/Guildhall
Museums/Art Gallery
Festivities
Outdoor Events
Sports including Grants
Leisure Centres and Coaching

Housing Management

Housing Management – Client
The Council's Buildings of Heritage and Importance

Potential topics for detailed scrutiny by the Community Commission

Title	Description	Other issues	Potential witnesses	Possible dates
Review of Area and Neighbourhood Working	Assess the impact and effectiveness of the Area and Neighbourhood working on areas that don't have additional funding such as Littleover, Chellaston and Mickleover areas	Examine reasons for the changes in the structure of the area and neighbourhood working; consider how this will impact on the local community and whether the new structure will deliver the desired outcomes	Area and Neighbourhood Team; Director of Derby Community Safety Partnership, Cabinet Member, local residents	Briefing to be delivered by Andy Thomas on 18 June
Review the effectiveness of external funding schemes to deliver desired outcomes	To examine what impact Derwent New Deal for Communities and Normanton NRF have had on their respective communities	These programme have are coming to the end of life and therefore provide the Commission the opportunity to consider whether regeneration programme has achieved the desired outcomes from the perspective of the local community	Director of Regeneration to understand the initial aims of the programme, local residents	
Scrutiny of Customer Services	Examine how the Council is meeting customer expectations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering telephone calls • Responding to letters 	A number of indicators within the performance eye under customer services are showing red	Conduct mystery shopping, conduct surveys and hold face-to-	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting visitors within 3 minute • Number complaints responded to within 10 days 	or amber and also heading in the wrong direction. The Commission could examine whether the targets have been set at the appropriate level, whether these are being met consistently.	face interviews. Seek evidence from front line staff as well as senior managers.	
Examination of housing and council tax benefit claims	How quickly are we processing the housing and council tax benefits	The Best Value Performance Indicators for benefits assessments have consistently been off target and the trend is also in the downward direction. The introduction of the new computer may have affected some of the claims but there may be other issues that need to be examined such as the level of information provided by partner agencies. The new Assistant Director has identified this issue as a priority and will be addressing the problems with assistance from	Assistant Director, frontline staff, partner agencies, benefit claimants.	

		external consultants. Members may wish to speak with the AD to consider whether a detailed scrutiny by commission could add value to the process.		
Scrutiny of lack of suitable transport for young people	To assess whether the lack of public transport for young people from outlying area after 6pm indirectly causes antisocial behaviour.	There is anecdotal evidence that suggests that young people get involved in antisocial behaviour when they have no suitable activities to be engaged in. When activities are available these are often inaccessible due to lack of transport.	The Commission may seek evidence from young people, bus companies, staff working with young people, parents, elected members.	

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.