

Report Title: **Selecting the Initial Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2006/07**

Report of: **The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Wards(s) affected: **ALL**

1. Purpose

1.1 To identify suitable topics for scrutiny review and to commission from the list of prioritised topics, those to be initially carried out as scrutiny reviews this municipal year. As resources allow more topics may be commissioned later in the municipal year.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the O&S Committee give due consideration to the list of potential scrutiny topics.

2.2 That having regard to the size, council priority, links to improvement agenda and scrutiny priority, O&S Committee commission topics from the list, whilst also ensuring that a balanced work programme is maintained across departments.

2.3 That O&S Committee initially commission 8 large topics, one of which will be budget scrutiny, and will be carried out by the O&S Committee itself. Thereon the Committee will commission further topics from the list, or as it sees fit, either on completion of reviews or as resources allow.

2.4 That O&S Committee nominate one of its members to chair the Scrutiny Review Panel carrying out the reviews commissioned, maintaining political proportionality.

2.5 That the Chairs of Scrutiny Review Panels be responsible for liaising with the respective whips offices with regard the non-executive membership of their panels.

Report Authorised by: Gideon Bull - Chair

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 A rigorous and transparent process for selecting suitable topics for scrutiny review has been developed. The main work of Overview and Scrutiny now focuses on commissioned task and finish reviews, which will be carried out by Scrutiny Review Panels. The reviews will be commissioned from the list of suitable suggested topics. See **Appendix A**. These have been categorised by department and prioritised using new criteria. The application of the criteria identifies topics that focus and link to corporate strategies, CPA and other improvement plans. It also identifies topics which are on high profile subjects and capable of tangible outcomes as a result of scrutiny input and are one's that will impact on a substantial number of local people. Members of the O&S Committee will decide which topics to commission and which member of the Committee will Chair the task and finish Scrutiny Review Panels. A list of suggested but as yet un-assessed topics is shown at **Appendix B**.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.1 None

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 None

6. Background

6.1 Last municipal year (2005/06) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was for the first time provided with a list of potential scrutiny topics which was prioritised using criteria for assessing the usefulness of each review (**see Appendix C**). They then decided what reviews to undertake during the year, their form and scope. If a review panel was needed they also decided on the probable length of the review so that:

- Members interested in being on the Panel were aware of what they were committing themselves to.
- adequate resources could be allocated to the review.

6.2 Scrutiny officers together with the services concerned, then prepared detailed scoping documents for each topic being scrutinised by a dedicated review panel. These suggested, amongst other things, the terms of reference, the way the scrutiny could be undertaken and its completion date.

6.3 The problem with the process was that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to take decisions about what reviews to undertake, their form; length and scope before receiving detailed information about the subject and without the full involvement of the Service concerned. As a result, reviews sometimes took a different form to that initially planned and were not always as useful as initially hoped. Reviews frequently had common completion timescales, regardless of size, to ensure they did not run over the municipal year end. This impacted on flexibility and resulted in too many scrutiny reports being referred to the Executive in the first few months of the new municipal year.

Ways of overcoming these Problems

6.4 One of Scrutiny's long term aims is to develop and introduce a rolling programme of topics for scrutiny review, thus eliminating the need to identify and decide which reviews to carry out on in advance and on an annual basis. Greater flexibility would result if reviews were commissioned as resources allowed and task and finish reviews were just that, and could, when necessary, run into the next municipal year. It would also alleviate the bunching of scrutiny reports and allow a more balanced flow of reports to the Executive, throughout the year.

6.5 Ideally members should not be asked to take decisions about what items they wish to scrutinise until they receive a feasibility report for each topic which:

- ✓ Sets the scene and explains why the area is on the list of possible scrutiny projects.
- ✓ Possibly outlines latest thinking on the subject.
- ✓ Provides information about the Council's services and any problems they face.
- ✓ Details restraints which might be statutory, related to resources or practical.
- ✓ Identifies areas suitable for scrutiny focus and potential witnesses.
- ✓ Makes a judgement on the potential value of the review and whether it should be undertaken.
- ✓ Identifies the form, complexity and length of a review and what resources will be required to complete it.
- ✓ Identifies if there is a need to buy in expert advice and if so the advice to be sought, its likely cost and the benefits to be gained.

6.6 Such reports would enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to make informed decisions on which reviews to undertake and what they hoped to achieve from them. It is accepted that the process of drawing up a feasibility report will commit resources, but the additional information available will help Members choose worthwhile and effective reviews.

6.7 Feasibility reports should whenever practicable be drafted by the Scrutiny Officers in consultation with the services concerned. It is, however, appreciated that this might not always be possible. For instance the review could be so complicated and technical that the services concerned have to take responsibility. In such cases, however, Members need to be satisfied that it is a useful subject for a scrutiny review and not an issue which should be looked at by a specialist body.

6.8 It is also essential that senior officers from the services concerned are involved in the preparation of the feasibility reports to ensure that strategic issues are properly dealt with. Only then can each review be targeted to make positive comments and be focussed on improving services.

- 6.9 A feasibility study checklist has been developed to bring clarity and to facilitate this process (**see Appendix D**).
- 6.10 It is anticipated that if proper feasibility reports are prepared reviews will become even more output driven. It is also proposed that when a review panel wishes to change the scope or the review or carry out additional work, it's Chair and the appropriate scrutiny officer will complete a form setting out the proposed change and why it is considered necessary. This will then be submitted to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for agreement or discussion.
- 6.11 Whist health issues will invariably be different there is no reason why the above approach cannot be adopted when practical.
- 6.12 It was clearly not possible to introduce the process this year because of the elections and the need to first induct and provide training to new Members. It will also take time to introduce a process whereby each item on the scrutiny programme has been the subject of a feasibility report. In the short term there therefore needs to be an interim process, which can be used this municipal year, with a revised scrutiny selection process being introduced for future years.

Scrutiny Programme 2006/7

- 6.13 It is proposed that the Committee initially select seven topics from the list, in addition to Budget Scrutiny, using the same method of selection as for last year. The topics selected would be allocated one to each Committee Member, who will then Chair that review panel.
- 6.14 After submitting a bid, Overview and Scrutiny have been awarded up to £20,000 by the Centre for Public Scrutiny for a Health Scrutiny Action Learning Project. The bid was based a theme of the Governments white paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". The bid was based on improving access to primary health care for people with learning disabilities. **If the Committee does not select this as a review topic the Action Learning money will be lost.**

The Process in future Years

- 6.15 Once initial Scrutiny reviews have been commissioned and commenced for municipal year 06/07, Scrutiny Officers would complete feasibility reports for all topics on the suggested review list, according to their deemed priority. Eventually in this way, all suggested topics on the list would be supported by a feasibility report.
- 6.16 In future suggestions for future review topics will be sought throughout the municipal year and regular reports on the work programme submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Feasibility reports will be commenced once a new topic is placed on the list of possible scrutiny topics, so that a list of suggested topics supported by feasibility reports would be established and maintained. Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be able to commission reviews from this list (based on the information in the feasibility report) whenever resources were available, i.e. when a review was completed.

Properly Balanced Scrutiny Programme

- 6.17 It is clear that the scrutiny work programme must take account of the resources available in each service. This is essential to ensure that no service is so over burdened with scrutiny work that it is unable to make an effective contribution to a review. To help address this issue in future the work programme will be categorised under directorates and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be encouraged not to undertake more than two reviews at the same time, where the majority of work will be undertaken by one Service.
- 6.18 The aim in 2006/07 is to demonstrate to members that effective scrutiny can only result when there is trust, co-operation and when scrutiny and the Executive work together to improve services.

Scrutiny Review Topic Suggestions

- 6.19 Suggestions for suitable scrutiny topics are encouraged from a variety of sources and at any time. In order to capture essential information a topic proposal form must be completed in all instances, (**see Appendix E**). Suggested topics must be of sufficient high profile subjects to warrant scrutiny attention, must be capable of tangible outcomes as a result of scrutiny input and must have the potential to impact on a substantial number of local people.
- 6.20 As a matter of course all Councillors are written to at intervals and invited to suggest suitable topics, as are senior managers and our partners. The Haringey web-site scrutiny pages encourage local people to suggest topics and in the past there have been articles in Haringey People and other local publications. Scrutiny Committee Members are attending the current round of Area Assembly meetings to raise public awareness of the scrutiny function and of the ability of people to suggest suitable topics. Consideration is also being given to placing an advert in local publications.

Recommendations

- 6.21 Members of O&S Committee are recommended to select and commission topics for the initial scrutiny work programme from this list at Appendix xxx.
- 6.22 That O&S Committee nominate one of its members to chair the Scrutiny Review Panel carrying out the reviews commissioned.
- 6.24 That the Chairs of Scrutiny Review Panels be responsible for liaising with the respective whips offices with regard the non-executive membership of their panels.

7. Legal and Financial Implications

7.1 None directly as a result of this report. All commissioned scrutiny reviews may have individual legal and/or financial implications.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1 None directly as a result of this report. All commissioned scrutiny reviews are likely to have individual equality implications, which will be considered by the Scrutiny Review Panel.

9. Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs

Appendix A - List of prioritised topics suitable for scrutiny review this municipal year

Appendix B - List of additional proposed topics, un-prioritised

Appendix C -Criteria for prioritising scrutiny reviews

Appendix D- Contents of feasibility Report - Check List

Appendix E - Scrutiny Review Topic Suggestion Form

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POTENTIAL REVIEW TOPICS 2006/07

Appendix A

Department	Priority Rating - Max Score 7*
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	
Strategic Commissioning	7*
Young persons sexual health	7*
Extended schools & extra curricular activities	7*
Driving up educational achievement of children in care	6*
Provision of play facilities for children under school age	6*
Support to pupils with drug and/or alcohol problems	5*
Effective co-ordination of services for young people aged 16/19	4*
Fostering and Adoption of looked after children in Haringey	3*
FINANCE	
Value for money in areas of past investment – to be identified	
Budget consultation process and budget scrutiny	7*
Themed value for money reviews – areas to be identified by Finance Department	
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
Fly tipping / dumping how can it be reduced?	6*
Expansion of the use of CCTV for enforcement / crime issues/joint working with police	6*
Out of hours enforcement & late night economy (licensing)	6*
Environmental Health – review strategy	5*
Sustainability – climate change	5*
Road safety death and serious injury reduction, inc. Traffic management & calming.	5*
Concerts in parks policy review	5*
Conservation of our local heritage – good design	2*
LEGAL SERVICES	
Clearing rubbish from privately owned land/sites – single report	5*

CE ORG DEVELOPMENT	
Funding for Community Organisations	6*
Annual report on complaints to the council – single report to O&S	4*
HR Strategy, - effectiveness of new strategy	3*
Update on staff absence – single report to O&S	2*
Town Twinning – single report to O&S	2*
CE STRATEGY	
Worklessness in Haringey	5*
Effectiveness of partnerships	5*
Drug and alcohol crime	5*
Working with other agencies to combat crime	5*
Regeneration	
CE ACCESS	
Neighbourhood Management	5*
I.C.T. Strategy/ E-Government strategy	4*
Tech refresh – single report	4*
HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES	
Access to health services for people with learning disabilities	7*
Homelessness - including Management of Housing Register	7*
What is being done to encourage smoking cessation	4*
Direct Payments for Care Packages	4*
Performance of Housing Associations	3*
Suggestions from Wellbeing Board Chairs – Health Scrutiny – Unrated.	
What should an “information prescription” look like	
Primary care	
Licensing, affects of new legislation on health	
Access to General Practitioners	
Priority Housing for people with Mental Health illnesses	
Obesity – access to fresh foods	
Prevention and early intervention	
Frequent Fliers	

Additional Proposed Scrutiny Topics

1. The provision for excluded youngsters in PRUs and otherwise i.e. not in mainstream, home tuition etc.
2. Financial controls and project management arrangements for our major capital projects i.e. BSF (£177m) and Children's Centres phase 2 (c. £5m).
3. Essential User Permits and permits for specific roads.
4. The energy efficiency of council-owned buildings, including schools and housing.
5. Grants and interest free/low interest loans for homeowners to make their properties more environmentally-friendly, e.g. to install solar panels, insulation and water butts.
6. Promotion of car sharing and car pools.
7. Habitat conservation areas of our parks.
8. Planning Enforcement

Contents of Initial Feasibility Report – Check list

No.	Issue	The kind of Information Required
1.	Origins of Review	Who asked for the review and why, for instance it could have been asked for by the executive as a result of an external inspection or because deficiencies in service provision had been identified
2.	The Reviews Objectives and anticipated outcome.	This could be to improve the service currently provided, to consider changing current policy, to save resources or/and to make recommendations to outside bodies. This section of the scoping document should refer to VFM.
3	Lead Scrutiny Members	The scrutiny review chair and members
4.	Main Sources of evidence for Review	Current policies and provision, national guidance, expert witnesses, comparisons with other providers, interviews with users etc
5.	Involvement of Executive	The Members of the Executive responsible for the areas being reviewed, their expectation from the review and how they should be involved
6.	Research required	Besides looking at issues referred to in 5 is there any new studies or reports on review subject
8.	Level of support Required	Scrutiny Office support, other Department's input who, for instance will write reports
8	Appointment of External Expert Advisor	What will this add to review, status of advisor, cost, can external challenge be better meet by several experts giving evidence.
9.	Cost	Is it possible to estimate cost of review, specifically whether outside help will be required? Can cost be meet within budgetary provision?
10	Time Span	How long is review expected to take and indications of number of review meetings which will be required etc.
11.	Who Implements Review	Is it Council, external partners, Health Authority etc.
12	Who does it effect	This could be users, their carers, council officers' etc.
13	Monitoring Arrangements	What follow up arrangements should there be to monitor the implementation of recommendations agreed by executive and to see whether changes have desired effect.

PROPOSALS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW – 2005/06

<u>Topic Proposer</u> Full Name: E-Mail: Home Address:
1. What area would you like investigated? This can include services provided by the NHS and other partner agencies of the Council.
2. What are the main issues/concerns to be considered?
3. Why do you think this topic should be investigated?
4. What do you think are the likely benefits and outcomes from an investigation into this area?
5. Do you think this is an area of great concern to other local residents?

If you have more than one area then please complete a separate form for each area you would like investigated.

For further information on the Scrutiny Review process please contact TrevorCripps on 020 8489 6922. Please e-mail completed forms to trevor.cripps@haringey.gov.uk or post to Room G13, Civic Centre, High Road, London N22 8LE.

