



Haringey Council

Report for:	Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – 30 September 2014	Item Number:	
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Title:	Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel; Workplan for 2014/15
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Report Authorised by:	Cllr Barbara Blake Chair, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
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Lead Officer:	Robert Mack, Senior Policy Officer, 0208 489 2921 rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk
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Ward(s) affected:	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:
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1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. This report outlines the workplan for the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel for 2014/15 as well as highlighting a number of considerations that may influence the effectiveness and success of scrutiny.

1.2. Cabinet Member introduction

N/A

2. Recommendation

2.1. That the Panel recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the draft work plan for the Panel be approved.

3. Other options considered

N/A

4. Development of Workplan

4.1 The process for the development of the work plan for the Panel begun in July with the review by undertaken Centre for Public Scrutiny in July of the structure of scrutiny and priorities for the work programme. Following this, the Scrutiny Cafe consultation

event was held, involving non executive members, officers and key partners to discuss the issues arising from the review and, in particular, the development of the work plan.

4.2 The structure of overview and scrutiny and the formal constitution of the scrutiny panels was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 July. Following this, the Chair of the Panel met with the Cabinet Member for Environment, the Cabinet Member for Communities and senior officers during August to discuss the suggestions that had come out of the work planning process to date, as well as any other potential issues that might be included. An informal Panel meeting was held on 15 September so that Panel Members could also input their views on the work plan proposals.

4.3 The work plan will include the following:

- In-depth projects;
- One-off reports on specific issues from services;
- Question and Answer sessions with Cabinet Members or key partners;
- Performance reports; and
- Budget scrutiny.

5. In-depth projects

5.1 In depth projects involve the Panel considering an issue intensively over a period of time before making recommendations. This process can include evidence gathering sessions, consultation events and research. Panels normally undertake one in-depth piece of work at a time. Additional projects can be started once previous pieces of work have been completed.

5.2 Work on in-depth projects can be undertaken at scheduled meetings of the Panel or additional evidence gathering sessions can be arranged. In addition, other activities to gather information and evidence can be included, such as visits. It is intended that the format is very flexible and approaches adopted that fit best with the issue being considered and likely to be most effective.

5.3 The following issues have so far been identified as potential in-depth reviews;

- Violence Against Women and Girls; The proposal is to look at the level of awareness the Council and agencies have in terms of joined up and co-ordinated systems and procedures to ensure that violence is picked up at an early stage by GPs, schools, hospitals and Council departments.
- Equality of access to sports facilities; This will focus on the availability of sports facilities in all of the areas of the borough.

5.4 Further work will need to be undertaken to develop the scope and terms of reference for these should they be selected.

6. Other Issues

6.1 A number of other issues have also been identified as part of the work planning process to date. These will be dealt with as either one off issues or future in-depth pieces of work. The order of priority can be decided by the Panel.

- Street Cleansing;
- Waste and Recycling Data – current performance;
- Leisure Update;
- Haringey Safer Communities Partnership – Performance Statistics and Priorities;
- Trident;
- Local policing model;
- The green economy; and
- Support for victims of crime.

6.2 A provisional schedule for consideration of these items at Panel meetings for this year is attached as Appendix A. This will be further developed as the year progresses.

7. Good Scrutiny

7.1 In determining the work plan and priorities for the year, it may be useful for Panel Members to give some consideration as to what may constitute good scrutiny.

7.2 Scrutiny performs a number of functions:

- *Holding to account*; This can be achieved by:
 - Holding internal and external decision makers to account
 - Cabinet question and answer sessions
 - Calling in Cabinet decisions
- *Assisting in the development of policy and strategies*; This can include:
 - Undertaking in-depth reviews on particular issues
 - Commenting on departmental strategies
 - Performance monitoring
- *Budget scrutiny/ monitoring*

7.3 The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has set out four general principles of good scrutiny. These propose that good scrutiny should:

- *Provide a ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers.* This should be constructive, robust and purposeful.
- *Enable the voice and concerns of the public and its community.* This should facilitate an ongoing dialogue with the public in order to create an ‘accountability relationship’. Scrutiny should also represent and engage with diverse communities and address inequalities where they exist as well as promoting public understanding of the scrutiny role.

- *Be carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny process.* They should be champions of the value and potential of good public scrutiny as a vehicle for accountability.
- *Drive improvement in public service.*

7.3 A key part of the role of scrutiny is to promote transparency and openness. In keeping with this principle, scrutiny meetings should wherever possible be open to the public and papers should be made available to the public.

7.4 Scrutiny is intended to be non party political and is not subject to the party whip. Although there are provisions for voting, recommendations agreed this way can be less effective in influencing decision makers. Scrutiny therefore works best when there is consensus.

7.5 In terms of delivering outcomes, scrutiny has very limited formal powers and generally achieves them by means of influence. It is therefore important to develop constructive relationships with decision makers so that they are likely to be receptive to the views of scrutiny.

7.6 Input from scrutiny needs to be persuasive if it is to influence decision makers effectively. A well argued case with cross party support that is backed up with solid evidence is most likely to bring about a successful outcome. Evidence to back up recommendations can come from various sources, such as:

- Feedback from local stakeholders;
- Experience and good practice from other local authorities; and
- Information from specialist agencies, national organisations etc.

7.7 Although outcomes are very important, they are not always easy to measure. For instance, if there is an expectation that decisions will be subject to close scrutiny, it is likely that this will encourage more robust processes for making them and therefore promote better decision making. In addition, challenging and ambitious recommendations are likely to have less chance of being agreed to than ones that are ineffectual.

7.8 Good and effective scrutiny should also:

- Tackle strategic and significant issues that are important to local residents;
- Not duplicate or conflict with work taking place elsewhere;
- Should add value to the work of the Council and its partners; and
- Be timely.

8 Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Should any of the work undertaken by panels generate recommendations with financial implications, these will be highlighted at that time.

9 Comments of the Assistant Director Corporate Governance and Legal Implications

9.1 Scrutiny panels work programme and the subsequent reports and recommendations that each panel produces must be approved by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

10. Head of Procurement Comments

N/A

11. Policy Implications

12. Use of Appendices

13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Appendix A

Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – Work Plan

Agenda Items;

Monday 30th September:

- Cabinet Question Time; Cabinet Member for Environment
- Street Cleansing; Current position, future plans etc.
- Waste and Recycling Data; Current performance.
- Leisure Update; Leisure Centre Refurbishment/White Hart Lane Leasing Update
- Workplan; Including scope of Panel Project

Monday 6th November

- Cabinet Question Time; Cabinet Member for Communities
- Haringey Safer Communities Partnership – Performance Statistics and Priorities
- Trident
- Local policing model

Monday 8th December (Budget)

- Draft Medium Term Financial Plan

Thursday 26th January

- The Green Economy
- Waste and Recycling Data

Tuesday 10th March

- Support to Victims of Crime

Panel Project:

Violence Against Women and Girls