



Report to Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 10th July 2013

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Subject: Work Planning 2013/14

Summary:

This report outlines an approach to Work Planning for 2013/14 has been focused on a single question – how can the Scrutiny Committee achieve a greater impact than it did last year?

The report makes proposals to focus on a more in depth approach on a smaller number of issues and suggests some practical next steps.

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Comment on the proposed approach and agree the way forward.
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Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Work Planning

1. **New Style of Scrutiny Work**

- 1.1. The approach to Work Planning for 2013/14 has been focused on a single question – how can the Scrutiny Committee achieve a greater impact than it did last year?
- 1.2. It is proposed that the focus shifts towards a more in depth approach on a smaller number of issues. This approach will enable the Committee to hear a wider range of differing perspectives and consider a wider range of evidence on specific issues.
- 1.3. It is also hoped this approach will allow the Committee to do more of its work ‘out and about’ rather than in the Town Hall. This could involve more direct involvement with people who are affected by the issue the Committee is looking at.
- 1.4. Looking at issues in greater depth will require Committees to look at fewer issues overall. It is proposed this is done by moving away from a large number of one-off monitoring reports. It might also mean that some items would be circulated to Members of the Committee for information, rather than allocated time on a meeting agenda. If a Member felt an item in this category required a discussion of the whole Committee then they could make this request to the Chair.
- 1.5. That is not to suggest urgent issues should not be considered by the Committee. For clarity, this paper is not proposing any changes to how the Scrutiny Committee approaches the Call-In procedure to review a decision. The Call-In process would continue as it currently does.

2. **Next Steps**

- 2.1. Discussions the Chair has had suggest that ‘Cycling in Sheffield’ would be a good topic for the first **in-depth inquiry**. The Cabinet member for Business, Skills and Development is positive about this as a topic and has indicated to the Chair of the Committee that this is an issue where there is an opportunity to have an impact on the Council’s approach. There is also the opportunity to link in to the work of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group and their national report ‘Get Britain Cycling.’
- 2.2. It is anticipated that this work could be completed before Christmas, which would enable the Committee to undertake a second in-depth inquiry in the second half of the municipal year. A specific topic for this second inquiry is not proposed in this report.
- 2.3. It is proposed the Committee set up a **Task and Finish Group** to progress the work in between the full bi-monthly meetings of the Committee. The proposed Task and Finish Group would be made up of a maximum of 6 members, including the Chair of the Committee who would also be the Chair of the Task and Finish Group. It is anticipated

that the Task and Finish Group would need to meet in those months the Committee does not meet.

- 2.4. It is not proposed the Task and Finish Group would be responsible for the totality of the work and the recommendations on a specific issue. Rather, it would have responsibility for making progress on work between full meetings of the Committee. The full Committee would have a role in developing the work as it progressed.
- 2.5. It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group's initial tasks are to:
 - 1) Discuss and agree a Terms of Reference for the work. It is proposed this is based around two or three key questions that the inquiry is trying to answer.
 - 2) Plan a timescale for the work, which would include discussing and agreeing the type of evidence the Committee would require to answer the questions in the Terms of Reference. This would include who the Committee would benefit from hearing from and where this would best take place.
- 2.6. It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group undertake this work in July. This would mean that the Committee's meeting on 11th September can include hearing from relevant witnesses to the issue the Committee is considering.
- 2.7. Members are asked to indicate if they would be willing to serve on the Task Group.
- 2.8. It is proposed that the **full meetings of the Committee** have a two part agenda with the first part being the business agenda. Ideally this would focus on a single main item per meeting, but it could also include any items called-in. It is proposed that performance issues would be brought in as part of discussions on relevant items, rather than taken as separate performance discussions.
- 2.9. The second part of the meeting would be spent on the in-depth inquiry. This could include updates on progress from the Task and Finish Group, hearing from witnesses and discussions on the recommendations

3. Future meetings

- 3.1. Future meeting dates of the Committee are:
 - 11th September 2013
 - 9th October 2013
 - 11th December 2013
 - 12th February 2014
 - 9th April 2014
- 3.2. It is proposed that the following items from 2012/13 will need to be considered by the Committee in 2013/14:
 - Climate Change Adaptation
 - Sheffield Food Plan

- City Centre Vibrancy
- Modernisation of Cabinet Highways Committee
- Rural Broadband

3.3. It is proposed that the Committee's engagement with business is done through specific work the committee is undertaking, rather than through a general information sharing session.

3.4. The Committee set up a Working Group on 'Parking on Dropped Kerbs and Pavements' last year. Following discussions with the Chair it is proposed to bring together the work that has been undertaken so far into a summary to send to the Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development, and not to undertake further work on this issue at this stage.

3.5. It is proposed the Chair, supported by the Scrutiny Policy Officer works up the detailed programme of which items should be taken at which meeting.

4. Support for Scrutiny

4.1. The support arrangements for Scrutiny have changed. Scrutiny will be supported by two Policy and Improvement Officers in the Elections, Equalities and Involvement Team in the Policy, Performance and Communications Service. The capacity of the new support arrangements will enable each of the Council's four subject specific Scrutiny Committees to undertake one piece of in-depth work at a time.

4.2. Brief guidance will be available for people attending scrutiny on what the purpose of the meeting is and what they can expect and what the Committee will expect. This will include keeping introductions to reports or presentations brief and to the point to enable more time to be spent on the discussion.

5. Recommendations

5.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 1) Comment on the proposed approach and agree the way forward.