
Scrutiny Management Committee

27 February 2012

Report of the Assistant Director of Governance & ICT

Scrutiny Work Planning 2012/13

Summary

1. This report identifies arrangements for delivering corporate scrutiny work planning, so that Scrutiny Committees can begin their overview and scrutiny work at the start of the new Municipal Year.

Background

2. Over the last few years, Scrutiny Management Committee has led on new initiatives to develop and move scrutiny forward within City of York Council. In 2011/12, as part of both the induction for newly elected Councillors and the continuing Core Training Programme for all Councillors, the following training on scrutiny was provided:

(1) 'Lets Talk Scrutiny' – a focus session for Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs

(2) Making a Bigger Difference through Overview & Scrutiny – a practical workshop on tips, tools and techniques for conducting effective scrutiny

(3) Scrutiny Work Planning – a collaborative session involving scrutiny members, the Cabinet and scrutiny lead officers (Chief Officers) aimed at helping the Council to use scrutiny as a productive partner in tackling and achieving key corporate challenges in a climate of fiscal austerity

(4) Local Government Yorkshire & Humber Regional Event – Scrutiny Questioning Skills – delivered in York by Tim Young from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Studies (CfPSS)

(5) Health Scrutiny Sharing & Learning Event – a speed learning session providing the opportunity for Members to speak with key health partners in the city

3. During 2011/12, Scrutiny Committees have undertaken or will undertake the following overview and scrutiny activities:

Health Scrutiny	Community Safety Scrutiny	Leisure & Culture Scrutiny	Effective Organisation	Economic & City Development Scrutiny
*End of Life Care	*Anti-social Behaviour in Westfield & Rural West	*Demographics in Primary Schools	*Sickness Absence Management	*Reducing the Carbon Footprint in the privately rented sector review (currently postponed)
*Health-Watch Procurement Monitoring Reports	*Domestic Waste Collection & Recycling	*Corporate Parenting	*Future Use & Options for the Guildhall	Sixth Monthly Update Reports on Major Developments within the City of York Council
Voluntary Sector Funding	Presentation on restructure of North Yorkshire Police	*Management of Public Parks		Sixth Monthly Update Reports on Major Transport Initiatives and Issues Arising from Them
Yorkshire Ambulance Service Priority Indicators for Quality Accounts	Presentation on restructure of CANS & Safer York Partnership	Yorkshire Museums Trust - Management of the Collections		Update on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS)
Update from York Hospitals Foundation Trust and NHS North Yorkshire and York in				

relation to Transforming Community Services				
Progress Report - NHS Reforms and the work of the Transition Board				
Terms of Reference for Health and Well Being Board and Updates on the Shadow Health & Well Being Board				
Updates on the Regional Joint Scrutiny Committee Investigating the Proposed Changes to Children's Cardiac Services				
Updates from Yorkshire Ambulance Service on complaints received				
Briefing for City of York Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on proposals to create an urgent care centre				
The Local Account for				

Adult Social Care 2011				
Briefing from the Leeds Partnerships Foundation Trust on Proposed Changes to Mental Health Services in York				
Redesign of Acute Care Pathway in York (Including closure of Ward 3 at Bootham Park Hospital)				
Briefing on the Major Trauma Network				
Dementia Strategy and Action Plan				

* activities marked with an asterix indicate scrutiny work prioritised corporately by the Scrutiny Work Planning Event held in July 2011.

4. As well as the work undertaken above, Scrutiny Committees continued to receive updates on recommendations made and agreed the previous year and financial/performance monitoring reports. They also received updates on work from individual Cabinet Members. All in accordance with their terms of reference.

Consultation

5. As the Committee with overall management responsibility for scrutiny, SMC is being consulted upon how it wants to effect collective work planning and priorities for 2012/13. It is also being asked to comment upon what has worked well over the past year and suggest any further developments which could be made to improve overall scrutiny performance or activity.

Options

6. Having considered this report, Members may choose:
- (i) To approve the proposals for a collective work planning event facilitated by the Chair of SMC in April 2012; or
 - (ii) To propose alternative options for effective scrutiny work planning; and
 - (iii) To suggest further developments in the provision of scrutiny within City of York Council to enhance scrutiny activity in 2012/13.

Analysis

Work Planning 2012/13

7. The table in paragraph 3 demonstrates that all Scrutiny Committees have looked at the review/work areas identified collectively at last year's scrutiny work planning event. In addition, it indicates that Scrutiny Committees also individually identified other areas they wished to review within the year. This had led to the following work areas being suggested by those Committees as priorities for taking forward into 2012/13:

Health Scrutiny	Community Safety Scrutiny	Leisure & Culture Scrutiny	Effective Organisation	Economic & City Development Scrutiny
End of Life Care (carry forward)		Yorkshire Museums Trust - Management of the Collections (carry forward)	Sickness Absence Management* (carry forward)	Completion of Section 106 Agreements – Processes (potential new topic)
				Role of Science City York in Economic Development (potential new topic)

				Maximise employment opportunities for young people in the city (potential new topic)
				Reducing Carbon footprint in privately rented sector (carry forward)

8. In addition, the work of the cross cutting Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee set up SMC to look at city centre access will continue into the next Municipal Year, as set out in a separate progress report on this agenda.
9. Not all the areas identified by Scrutiny and Cabinet Members collectively for 'review' at the Scrutiny Work Planning Event in July 2011 have led to full reviews and some are only now being looked at by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. Effective Organisation Scrutiny Committee will be receiving an initial position statement on the 'Future of the Guildhall' at its meeting on 28 February 2011. Leisure & Culture Scrutiny Committee will be considering what information it needs in relation to a 'parks' review at its next meeting in March 2012. Reasons for delays in looking at identified topics at the outset of the year will vary. For instance, Leisure & Culture Scrutiny Committee have had a full overview programme and decided to look at the 'parks' topic specifically in the better, spring weather. SMC may decide it would like to learn more from Scrutiny Chairs about delays behind progressing agreed and identified areas for review.
10. There are both advantages and disadvantages to a large collective work planning event for scrutiny at the onset of every new Municipal Year. The first time York tried this was in 2011. On the plus side, if well planned, such an 'event' can:
 - Collectively identify scrutiny challenges/priorities between all involved parties;

- Ensure priorities for scrutiny chime with corporate priority areas within the agreed Council Plan, focusing resources where the Council has said they should be focused;
 - Secure collective Senior Officer and Cabinet support for identified priorities
11. Potential concerns raised by some Members in their Committees to this way of scrutiny work planning are as follows:
- Some Members feel alienated from the process if they cannot be present;
 - Topics identified depend upon those present or not present, including Senior Officers;
 - Scrutiny Committees do not feel empowered to use their acquired knowledge and experience and identify work that they really feel, as a Committee, needs prioritising because their time has already been allocated by a wider planning event;
 - Is it realistically possible to make informed choices on topics for review at a two hour planning event ?
 - In effect, having a big work planning event session in 2011 delayed the effective start of some scrutiny work, causing a back up at the end of the current Municipal Year. This was primarily because the event was held in July last year.
12. To achieve and maintain the ongoing engagement of all those essential to undertaking effective scrutiny, it is important that the aims identified in paragraph 9 are delivered but equally, that the knowledge and experience on Members of individual Scrutiny Committees is brought to bear.
13. It should also be remembered that many topics, having been initially highlighted or identified by a Scrutiny Work Planning Event, may be refined in terms of how the issues are dealt with in light of Scrutiny Committees being able to scope them more specifically. For instance, the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee identified two topics for review at the event in July 2011:
- In regard to Domestic Waste Collection & Recycling, the Committee received a report in November 2011 detailing an ongoing officer review on issues in respect of waste management which was due to be completed by March 2012 . Mindful of the need to avoid duplication of work, Members agreed that rather than instigating a

scrutiny review, it would be more appropriate for the committee to be consulted as part of the officer review. Members did however question why the officer review had not been brought to light at the Scrutiny Work Planning Event in July 2011 to inform their choices regarding suitable topics.

- In regard to ASB in Westfield & Rural West, they agreed a remit for the review and formed a Task group to carry it out. The Task Group held a number of meetings to gather information and as a result it became apparent that a review based on the remit set would not achieve any realistic outcomes. In January 2012, the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee agreed not to proceed with the review, and instead identified an alternative topic on Young People, and Alcohol and Drug related ASB – work on this has yet to start and will therefore be carried over into the next Municipal year.
14. In light of paragraph 11, it is suggested that a similar ‘collective work planning event’ be held again for scrutiny, coordinated and led by the Chair of SMC, but held earlier, in April 2012 so that Scrutiny Committees can start working on identified areas from June 2012 onwards. In addition though, it is also suggested that those areas of priority already identified or being carried forward for scrutiny by individual Scrutiny Committees be reported to that ‘event’ and be deemed as equal priorities for those Committees in the coming Municipal Year. This would make the aim of the collective work planning event to identify any additional corporate priorities for 2012/13, in so far as these may accord with the priorities in the Council 2011-15.

Developing Scrutiny in York

15. Much work has been undertaken over the last 2 years to develop and secure collective engagement to overview and scrutiny within City of York Council. These measures have involved:
- Various training opportunities for Members since 2009 to develop the skills and understanding of effective scrutiny for backbenchers and Scrutiny Chairs– paragraph 2 sets out what has been provided in 2011/12;
 - The Chair of SMC addressing all Scrutiny Committees and reporting findings to SMC;
 - Establishing ‘lead officers’ at Chief Officer level within Directorates to provide key support and engagement within those Directorates;

- Reviewing the format of public scrutiny reports to create a more user-friendly A5 booklet for ‘public consumption’;
 - Developing a profile at a regional network level, through hosting events in York and through the Chair of SMC’s ongoing participation;
 - Initiating collective scrutiny work planning as outlined in this report to develop engagement and support for scrutiny across all levels of the Council;
16. In addition, last year SMC considered a report on amalgamating Effective Organisation Committee with SMC. Audit & Governance Committee recently received a report on a number of further changes to the ‘committee structure’ since May 2012 and endorsed the proposal for merging these two Committees. A separate report on this agenda outlines proposals for the newly formed SMC, seeking Members’ views on a revised remit. This remit should clarify the role of the merged Committee and give it powers, as the Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee, to receive corporate financial and performance monitoring information, as well as the authority to review the activities of the Standing Scrutiny Committees.
17. In the light of proposals to put in place arrangements for collective scrutiny work planning for 2012/13, SMC’s views are sought more generally on what appears to be working well or not to be working so well and what, if any, more can be done to further develop scrutiny.

Council Plan 2011-2015

18. Through its overview and scrutiny work and the management of other Scrutiny Committees, SMC should work to ensure that all scrutiny activities work to achieve and challenge the best possible delivery of the Council’s 5 core priorities under the Council Plan 2011-2011.

Implications

19. **HR & Financial** – Whilst there are no direct cost implications associated with any recommendations in this report, if Members suggest any further training or development in the Committee’s efforts to continue to develop scrutiny, clearly, financial or staffing implications could arise and would need to be addressed.
20. There are no other known implications associated with the recommendation in this report

Risk Management

21. There are no known risks associated with any recommendations in this report. However, if the Committee decides not to set in train any collective corporate scrutiny planning for 2012/13, there is a risk that Council resources will be extensively committed to supporting activities not within the core priorities set out and agreed in the Council Plan for 2011-15.

Recommendations

22. Having considered the information within this report, Members are asked to:

- i. Invite the Head of Civic & Democratic Services to put in place arrangements for a collective scrutiny work planning event in April 2012, on the basis set out in paragraph 14 above; and
- ii. Consider and comment on developmental initiatives in scrutiny to date and advise on any further appropriate steps, if any

Reason: To ensure proper and effective scrutiny work planning is in place for 2012/13.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) - None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None