

AGENDA ITEM: 11g

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

27 JUNE 2006

AD HOC REVIEWS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a range of potential topics for consideration and their inclusion into the Board's Work Programme.

BACKGROUND

2. The Board will recall that all Council Members were invited to submit their ideas for potential scrutiny topics for the 2006/07 work programme. In addition to that, non-executive Members were invited to attend a discussion to enable them to put forward additional suggestions.
3. Those suggestions which did not naturally fit into the remit of the existing scrutiny panels could be developed as potential 'ad-hoc' scrutiny topics for consideration by the Board, or specially formed ad-hoc panels. The suggestions are as follows:
 - a) Local Strategic Partnership – the impact of the Middlesbrough Partnership
 - b) How dependant is the Council on Bids for Funding ie, Lottery money, grants, initiatives
 - c) The Council's Corporate Property – ownership, management, use to further the Council's policies
 - d) Use of the Council's website
 - e) Assistance which is given to asylum seekers placed in Middlesbrough
 - f) Open invitation for members to discuss proposed and existing council procedures regarding council members lawful participation in the Council's business and the public's participation
 - g) Making Members accessible to the public
 - h) Performance Managing Chief Officers
 - i) Comparison of the new decision making system as opposed to the old committee system to also include civic duties
 - j) Provision of parking by the health authority at James Cook Hospital

Setting the Work Programme

4. The Board is also reminded that under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well being. Therefore, in addition to the generally recognised powers of Scrutiny (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), and health scrutiny powers, scrutiny boards/panels have the power to consider **any** matters which are not the responsibility of the Council but which affect the local authority **or** the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.
5. The topics listed are a prompt for the Board's discussions on the work programme, if panel members would like to add further suggestions then this would be the ideal opportunity to put those suggestions forward.
6. The Board is also advised to be cautious in setting an overly ambitious Work Programme for which it may be unable to deliver. Once the Board has identified Scrutiny topics, anticipated time frames need to be applied.
7. The Board will also continue to receive finance and audit reports, items which are part of the Council's policy framework and Scrutiny will continue to act as a major political consultee on the development of Policy documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board receives the report and considers which issues it would like to see included in the Board's Work Programme for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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