

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 July 2007

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme (2007/08)



Report of Feisal Jassat , Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform members of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and approach to delivering effective scrutiny for Durham County Council (2007/08).

Information

2. Overview and Scrutiny is focused on contributing to policy development and policy review. This approach is in line with the recent white paper on local government. As part of this focus opportunities to look at specific issues relevant to the Council and its partners will be facilitated through “light touch” reviews. Light touch will involve a smaller number of member’s over a defined period.

Opportunities to work across overview and scrutiny sub committee areas of influence will be identified. Cross cutting scrutiny reviews will be established (see below).

A review of scrutiny recommendations will be reported on. It is proposed that a 6 month review of the recent work be reported on.

This will require Cabinet to identify what action is being taken in relation to the scrutiny recommendations.

3. The “overview” element of Overview and Scrutiny will continue with reports to respective sub committees on issues and themes that impact on the quality of life of local communities.

4. Capacity to support members deliver on the work programme is being considered at present. For example, opportunities to pursue a joint appointment with the NHS to support the JHOSC is being discussed; opportunities to engage with council services to directly support delivery of the work programme is also an option under consideration.

5. The work programme gives examples of how these elements, namely policy development /policy review and light touch reviews, will work.

6. The work programme is informed by the County Councils Corporate plan, its Forward plan of decisions, input from Cabinet Portfolio holders and Chief Officers and with input also from the NHS family.

The work programme is set within the context of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) blocks.

The Work Programme 2007/08

Note:

Policy Development and Policy Review will be delivered through either a specially convened working group or via the scrutiny sub committee; Light touch reviews will be time limited and include a small group (+-5) of members; Cross Cutting reviews will be a combination of both working group and or light touch. Working groups will build on the existing model we have in place in the County Council.

A) Corporate Management Scrutiny Sub Committee:-

The focus of this sub committee will be on:

- Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan – This will form the main work of the Corporate Scrutiny Sub-Committee delivered through the Budget Working Group.
- ‘Making Assets Work’ – This is Policy Development and will require a cross cutting review involving Safer, Stronger and Healthy Communities scrutiny sub committee. Its focus is on our Estate and will include ‘Building Libraries for the Future’.
- Stress Related Ill-Health – A ‘light touch’ review in collaboration with the Human Resources Committee.

B) Safe, Strong and Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee

(LAA theme – Safer, Stronger Communities and Older People):-

- Building Libraries for the Future –this is linked to ‘Making Assets Work’ -Review of our Estate;
- Safeguarding Adults – This is a Policy Development agenda and will be considered by the sub committee.
- Alcohol – A review of the recent scrutiny exercise into alcohol and drugs misuse identifying what action is being taken in relation to the recommendations. (Note links to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.)

- Gypsy and Travelers – A ‘light touch’ review to be undertaken focusing on what do we know and what are we doing in relation to Gypsy and Traveler communities.
- DAAT – A ‘light touch’ review to determine the role, responsibilities and impact of the DAAT.

C) Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub Committee:-

(LAA Theme – Children and Young People / Children’s Trust)

- Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET) – This is Policy Development and will require a cross cutting review involving the Economy scrutiny sub committee and the JHOSC.
- Improve places to go and things to do for teenagers – This will be linked to the work on NEET’s.
- Pre-school provision – A light touch review with a focus on private sector providers with an analysis of provision throughout County
- Reduce teenage pregnancy – A ‘light touch’ review linking with the JHOSC.
- Bullying – A ‘light touch’ review

D) Economy Scrutiny Sub committee:-

(LAA Theme – Economy and Enterprise)

- Regional Spatial Strategy – This is policy development and will require a “light touch” cross cutting review involving the Environment sub committee.
- New Business Start-Ups – A ‘light touch’ review. which would link in with the ‘Outcome from Adult Commission Report on Economic Regeneration’ (combined project)
- Skills Developments – A ‘light touch’ review.
- Worklessness (Employability) – A review of the recent scrutiny exercise on the subject looking at what action has been taken in relation to the recommendations.
- Review of Area Tourism – A ‘light touch’ review of the Area Tourism Management Plan (ATMAP).

- Outcome from Audit Commission Report on Economic Regeneration and the GHK Review – when the reports are available they will be revived by the sub committee. Areas for the work programme will be considered then.

E) Environment Scrutiny Sub Committee:-

(LAA theme – under consideration)

- Waste – An update as to “what is happening now” in relation to the disposal and collection of waste and the Waste Management Company (a position statement).
- Planning – To be considered in report form at the Sub-Committee.
- Climate Change – To be considered in report form at the Sub-Committee
- Network Maintenance and Management – A ‘light touch’ review
- Transport Plans – a joint review between Durham County Council and our District partners looking at Commercial, Community and Public sector provision.
- Urban and Rural Renaissance –A ‘light touch’ review.

F) Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC):-

(LAA Theme -Healthy Communities)

Policy/Strategic Priorities:

- Action on Health Inequalities
- Future of Residential Care – This is policy development with a focus on what is best for our communities.
- Reconfiguration of Health and Hospital Services.
- NHS Foundation Trust – consultation on the TEWPS, NHST application.
- Oral Health Services/Access to Dental Services
- Urgent Care/Overview of the White Paper (1 October 2007)
- Development of a COMPACT (protocol) between JHOSC, the NHS family and the LINK
- Adult Mental Health Strategy

- Response to the NHS Health Care Commission Annual Health Report

Service Improvement Priorities

- Hospital Acquired Infection (Implementation of the Hygiene Code)
- Bowel Screening Programme/Update on National Pilot and Local Implementation
- Mental Health Services for Older People (to include services modelling)

Reviews

- Termination of Pregnancy Services
- Modernisation of Ambulance Services (review of community paramedics and ambulance stations)
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Minding the Gap)
- Alcohol and Drug Misuse

Conclusion

This is an exciting agenda with huge potential for members to contribute to policy development in line with governments thinking on promoting stronger and prosperous communities.

The capacity to deliver on this agenda is a challenge. The OS leadership is confident that the approach taken will assist in responding effectively to this challenge and that the approach will deliver the relevant outcomes for our communities.

Recommendation

That members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the work programme and the suggested approach in delivering effective scrutiny for Durham County Council.

That Overview and Scrutiny members agree to participate fully in delivery of the work programme thereby contributing to policy development and assisting the executive (Cabinet) develop and implement policy that makes a difference for our communities.