

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 22 JUNE 2010
title: WORK PRIORITIES/WORK PLAN 2010/11
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider what should be classed as Committee's work priorities for the coming year and to formulate a work plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions - This may well depend on the work programme chosen.
- Community Objectives - Although the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not such as to directly provide services, the objective must surely be to ensure that services are provided in the best way possible and that we continue to be a well managed Council.
- Corporate Priorities – None.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A working group of Councillors was set up two years ago to review Committee arrangements when the two existing Overview and Scrutiny Committee merged into one. That working group concluded that the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee could have greatest value to the work of the Council by concentrating on four things viewed by the then government as priorities for local government linked to the improvement agenda:-

- community leadership
- priorities
- performance
- partnerships

2.2 In 2008/09 and 2009/10 Committee's main focus of work has been around a number of working groups set up as task and finish groups to investigate specific topics.

2.3 Committee identified the following issues at their last meeting for possible discussion:-

- waste management disposal regime from 1 August 2010
- tress in urban/rural environments

- the benefits for Ribble Valley of the coming Olympics including the current Olympiad
- single stream help to the elderly
- reducing running costs at Edisford Pool

2.4 At a meeting with your Chairman on 8 June 2010, it was agreed that Committee should have the opportunity to debate these topics and any others which Members may consider appropriate.

2.5 Councillor Sayers has already prepared a 'starter for 10' report on the trees issue which is appended to this report.

3 ISSUES

3.1 This matter has been discussed on numerous occasions by this Committee and by Corporate Management Team (CMT). The clear view of CMT is that whatever the work programme might be that is adopted, should not be on the basis of currency or any personal/particular interest but in order to add value to the work of the Council. CMT also wish to caution against duplicating work being carried out by other Committees in view of the limited resources available to the Council.

3.2 Effective scrutiny should always make a difference and should not duplicate effort.

3.3 There should also be an avoidance of issues over which the Council has no influence or ability to change the outcome.

3.4 CMT are keen that Committee should make every effort to retain those features of the two previous Overview and Scrutiny Committees work that had been particularly successful, such as performance monitoring and the working group methodology.

3.5 In order to open the debate, I would advise that Committee agree to concentrate on the four themes advocated by government, with specific pieces of work selected to contribute to one of those themes.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 It is vital for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce a work plan with broad parameters for the year ahead.

4.2 There should also be sufficient flexibility within the work plan to deal with matters of urgency as and when they arise.

4.3 There must be added value to whatever topics are selected for scrutiny.

4.4 There should also be an avoidance of topics where the Council has minimal influence or ability to change policy.

4.5 Duplication should also be avoided. Many topics are 'scrutinised to death' including the Local Area Agreement, Primary Care Trust and Local Strategic Partnership to name but a few.

4.6 It is important to choose scrutiny topics which reflect either Council priorities or community concerns.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – As things stand the only resources controlled by this Committee are the resources devoted to subject matters by working groups. However, the objective of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is likely to include improvements in efficiency and effectiveness which should lead to better use of the Council's limited resources.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – It is likely that any implications under these headings would be identified as being subject specific.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – There are none arising as a direct result of this report but it could be argued that an effective Overview and Scrutiny function can enhance the reputation of the local authority.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Formulate a work plan for Overview and Scrutiny for 2010/11.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1 Overview and Scrutiny minutes and reports from June 2008 to April 2010.

For further information please ask for Bill Alker, extension 4412.