

THIS REPORT PROVIDES AN UPDATE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AT THE END OF THE 2009/10 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Council Excellence

UPDATES FROM THE 17th MARCH MEETING ARE IN RED

AGREED WORK PROGRAMME

This was a new, cross cutting committee. In order to bring all the elements together, it was suggested that the work programme was designed around the four themes of the Comprehensive Area Assessment, which is how Council Excellence will be judged in future. This is a much broader inspection regime than the CPA, and looks at all the public sector in Wirral and how it is contributing to the well being of Wirral Residents.

There are four key themes:

1. Sustainability, (which is not just environmental but social and economic as well.)
2. Tackling inequality, disadvantage and discrimination.
3. People whose circumstances make them vulnerable
4. Value for money.

The three key questions the inspectors will ask are:

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations
- How well are outcomes and improvements being delivered?
- What are the prospects for improvement?

They will use (sparingly) a red and green flag system to flag up where we are doing well and where we have real problems that need attention.

It was suggested that the work programme is approached like this:

1. Ask the Audit Commission for an explanation of how the Comprehensive Area Assessment will work, and in particular what they understand each key theme to mean, any immediate problems they are aware of, and what work they believe it would be useful for the committee to do in monitoring progress. Also ask for any examples of best practice the committee could look at.
2. Ask the officers to do a SWOT analysis on each theme (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – these reports may lead to further reports and perhaps some subcommittee working.)
3. Ask for a presentation from key partners on their contribution to the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the way in which they would like to be working with the Council.
4. Arrange visit/s to other authorities to learn from best practice.
5. In the last meeting of the year, assess progress against each theme, highlighting any problems that need to be tackled, or any major successes or gains that with a bit of a push could gain excellence for the people of Wirral.

Report

UPDATED REPORT FOR THE SCUTINY BOARD WHICH INCLUDES PROGRESS MADE AT MEETING 17th MARCH – UPDATES ARE IN RED.

MONITORING REPORT FOR COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/2010

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Comments on Progress	Complete?
JULY	<p>1. <u>Equality session</u></p> <p>2. <u>Comprehensive Area Assessment Members to agree work programme based on four themes</u></p> <p>a) Sustainability</p> <p>b) Tackling inequality, disadvantage and discrimination</p> <p>c) People whose circumstances make them vulnerable</p> <p>d) Value for Money</p>	<p>Circulation of LGIU briefing.</p> <p>Presentation by Audit Commission covering key themes, key questions and any suggestion for areas to be considered by committee.</p>	<p>LGIU briefing distributed.</p>	
16 TH SEPT	<p>1. <u>Presentation by Audit Commission</u></p> <p>Covering key themes, key questions and any suggestion for areas to be considered by committee.</p>	<p>Sustainability Bill Norman (Sustainability Unit) Jim Wilkie (Social and Economic sustainability)</p> <p>Tackling inequality, disadvantage and discrimination. (Choose officer following first meetings presentation/training etc.)</p> <p>People whose circumstances make them vulnerable (John Webb/Alan Stennard?)</p> <p>Value for Money – Ian Coleman</p>	<p><u>Presentation on the Comprehensive Area Assessment by Peter Forrester of the Audit Commission</u></p> <p><u>Minutes:</u></p> <p>Mr P Forrester of the Audit Commission gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which was the new way of assessing how well people were being served by their local public services.</p> <p>It would look at how public services worked together and would focus on local, as well as national priorities, to provide a robust, but proportionate assessment of local services that would be reported directly to the public in</p>	

**16TH
SEPT**

2. SWOT analysis of each of the four CAA themes.

Officers to report on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of each theme and identify further work that could be undertaken by the committee or specialist subcommittees to improve the council's performance

Members to decide on further areas of work arising from above.

straightforward language. It was intended that improved accountability would strengthen local democracy and a two way relationship would assist in the scrutiny function.

He outlined the factors that contributed to the area and organisational assessments, which were now in progress and commented that the final assessments would be shared with local partners in September/October 2009. Any remaining reviews would be resolved in early November and on 10 December 2009 a new website, 'oneplace', would be operational with the first set of CAA reports published in straightforward, jargon-free language.

Resolved –

- 1. That the presentation be noted.**
 - 2. That the presentation be circulated to members of the Committee.**
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SWOT Minutes:

Further to minute 12 (1 July 2009), the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services reported that officers had considered how best to develop the Committee's work programme and were at present undertaking a piece of work in relation to a **SWOT analysis** on each theme of the CAA assessment, which it was proposed to present to the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved – That a further more detailed report be presented to the next meeting.

**19th
NOV**

1. Joint or individual presentation from partners on their contribution to CAA, their relationship with the Council and any joint working to improve results.

(Through Local Strategic Partnership or LAA Board?)

2. Members to decide on areas to monitor and ways to improve joint working and possible connections with other Scrutiny Committees.

Partner members to report on their contribution to CAA. Possibly include LAA targets at this point? Information for members on what to monitor and how to improve joint working.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation in relation to an Evaluation of the four underpinning themes in Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which were included in the scrutiny work programme of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Sustainability
- Tackling Inequality
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Value for Money

The CAA placed a focus on self-assessment for the Council and the Partnership and he outlined what had been learned from the evaluation exercise, including the need to –

- Ensure the capture of local knowledge;
- Ensure that the voice of the community is represented in plans and in feedback to the public;
- Improve communication of partnership successes;
- Ensure a proactive approach to sharing learning on joint commissioning across the partnership;
- Continue to improve performance management of shared partnership objectives and targets.

<p>19th NOV</p>			<p>He proposed that the outcomes of CAA would be reported to Council Excellence on 1 February 2010, together with an action plan to address CAA area outcomes and findings of partnership evaluation. The delivery of the activity could be the subject of scrutiny by Council Excellence, with a particular focus on the underpinning themes agreed as part of the work programme. In response to comments from Members in relation to the availability of the full version of the Council's self assessment, the Director agreed to consider how best to disseminate information to Members in advance of it being made available publicly on the Audit Commission website. He agreed also to investigate the information contained within press releases copied to Members.</p> <p>Resolved – That the presentation be noted.</p>	
<p>FEB</p>	<p>3. Review progress on each theme, highlighting successes and problems. This should be set against the earlier SWOT analysis to demonstrate tangible results</p>	<p>Each officer to report on their own theme, highlighting progress made, key achievements, problems still to be tackled.</p>		
	<p><u>Throughout the year visit/s to be arranged to examples of best practice</u></p>	<p>Facilitator Ian Coleman</p>		

1st
FEB
2010

General Financial matters

(Including underachieved income from golf courses)

Officer Report

The Director of Finance provided information on the treasury management position, monitoring of the prudential indicators, the position regarding Council Tax, National Non Domestic Rate, general debt and cash income collection and the payment of benefits.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the concerns of the Committee in relation to underachieved income from golf courses for the last three years be brought to the attention of the Cabinet.

Performance Monitoring Report (Q3)

Officer Report

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services gave a detailed presentation to highlight the key achievements and performance issues which had been identified in the 2009/2010 third quarter monitoring period.

Resolved –

That a Year End Report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee upon those projects/indicators in the Red sector of the Performance Summary, where critical milestones have been missed or there is serious slippage.

Office Accommodation Update – Strategic Asset review

At the Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee, held on 19 November 2009, members requested a progress report on the Office Accommodation element of the Strategic asset Review.

Officer Report

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided a detailed update on the work being undertaken in accordance with the Strategic Asset Review (SAR) to rationalise office accommodation to achieve at least a 20% (£1m) reduction in accommodation costs by 2011.

Community Cohesion - Update

Officer report

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That a further update be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.**

The Head of Policy and Performance provided an update in relation to how the Council continued to work towards improved community cohesion.

Resolved –

- (1) That the update be noted.**
- (2) That the frequency of more detailed updates in relation to community cohesion be considered as part of the work programme at the next meeting of the Committee.**
- (3) That the Corporate Policy Team Briefing Note be circulated to all Members of the Committee.**

The Chair presented an update to the agreed work programme.

Resolved –

That a Work Programme for the 2010/2011 municipal year be considered at the next meeting of the Committee and any issues to be included within it be notified to the Chair direct.

Review of Scrutiny Work Programme

17th
MAR

Freedom of Information Request

Officer Report

The Director of Finance presented an update report on the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Council since the introduction of the Act in 2005. The meeting was also addressed by a member of the public.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That a further detailed report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee to include a breakdown of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act during 2009/2010.

(3) That the officers be requested to arrange to meet with Mrs Campbell in order to consider fully the issues referred to in her statement.

(4) That the issue of Freedom of Information requests be included in the Committees work programme for 2010/2011.

Reaching 'Excellent' Level of the Equality Framework for Local Government

Officer Report

The Head of Policy reported that since November 2009, when the Council was awarded level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) had developed a new Equality Framework for Local Government in order for Councils to be able to respond to new thinking on equality outcomes.

Office Rationalisation project

Officer Report

Resolved –

- (1) That the Corporate Action Plan for reaching ‘Excellent’ level of the Equality Framework for Local Government be noted**
- (2) That the scrutiny function be further developed to incorporate the criteria of the Equality Framework for Local Government.**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided an update on the work being undertaken to rationalise office accommodation and he set out progress and work undertaken since the last meeting against each of the five project work streams –

- Baseline Information
- Building Utilisation/disposal
- Workplace Change/Policy
- Facilities Management
- Implementation

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That the Strategic Asset Review Office Rationalisation Project form part of the Committee’s work programme for 2010/2011 and regular updates be presented to future meetings of the Committee.**

Review of Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chair presented an update to the agreed work programme.

Resolved –

That the following items be added to the work programme for the 2010/2011 municipal year –

- **Strategic Asset Review – Office Rationalisation Project**
- **Freedom of Information Act**
- **Common Administrative Processes**
- **Community Cohesion**

<p>JULY</p>	<p><u>TRAINING</u></p>	<p>Facilitator - Jacqui Cross (Equality and Diversity Officer), Ged Smyth (NRAC Auditor) and Steve Talbot (Staff Development Manager)</p> <hr/>	<p><u>TRAINING</u></p> <p><u>Equality Impact Assessments</u></p> <p>Recognising People's Different Needs through the Use of Equality Impact Assessments</p> <hr/>	
<p>SEPT</p>		<p>Facilitator Ian Coleman</p> <hr/>	<p><u>Finance Training</u></p> <p>Minutes:</p> <p>The Chair referred to Finance training that had been arranged by the Director of Finance on <u>30 September and 7 October 2009</u>. Although all members of the Council had been invited, the training was of particular relevance to members of this Committee and she urged members to attend if it was possible for them to do so.</p> <hr/>	
<p>NOV</p>		<p>Corporate Equality and Cohesion Manager</p>	<p>Community Cohesion</p> <p>The presentation focused on "what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well and live well together".</p>	

Report 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
Office Accommodation element of the Strategic Asset Review	Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 19/11/09.	Officer report to Council Excellence meeting on 01/02/10. Further report requested for meeting on 17/03/10. <i>To be considered for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.</i>	
Freedom of Information Act	<i>Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 17/03/10.</i>	Item deferred from 01/02/10 until 17/03/10 <i>To be considered for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.</i>	
Performance Monitoring – Year End Report on those projects/indicators in the Red sector of the Performance Summary, where critical milestones have been missed or there is serious slippage.	Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 01/02/10.	Report requested for meeting on 17/03/10. <i>Further update reports to be produced on a quarterly basis.</i>	

<p>Community Cohesion –</p> <p>The frequency of more detailed updates in relation to community cohesion be considered as part of the work programme at the next meeting of the Committee.</p>	<p>Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 01/02/10.</p>	<p>To be considered for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.</p>	
<p>The Draft Work Programme for the 2010/2011 municipal year.</p>	<p>Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 01/02/10.</p>	<p>To be discussed at the Council Excellence meeting on 17/03/10</p>	
<p>Common Administrative Processes</p>	<p>Council Excellence Scrutiny Committee on 17/03/10.</p>	<p>To be considered for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.</p>	