

Updated Work Programme Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

BEGINNING OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010 /2011

It was agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs meeting to adopt the following procedure to allow the committee members to monitor their work programme. It is felt that the work programme should be a 'living' document and as such is intended to act as a guide for the Committee throughout the year, while providing the degree of flexibility needed to respond to any emerging or pressing issues as they arise. Committee members, and particularly the Chair, should have a major role in owning and managing the work programme.

The final item on the agenda for each Scrutiny Committee will be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

It is suggested that there should be four short reports. I have attached the following reports:

REPORT 1 - Lists all the issues the committee agreed to include in their Work Programme:

This report lists all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It also includes items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report gives a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a where possible a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

REPORT 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

REPORT 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report lists those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

REPORT 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

Report 1

(Updates are in red)

Date of item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Comments on Progress	Complete
17 TH JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resolved – That a work programme listing the reports from chief officers on key issues during the year and the progress of major development schemes form the basis of the committee's work programme for the current municipal year. ■ Performance reports, covering the remit of the Scrutiny Committee, would continue to be given on a quarterly basis. ■ The Forward Plan for the period July to October 2010 had now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members' were invited to indicate to the chair or party spokespersons whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan. Any urgent items could also be considered. 	<p>Officer Report</p> <p>Officer Report</p> <p>Officer Report</p>	<p>Agreed items are outlined below.</p>	
15 TH SEPT	Review of work programme	Officer Report	<p>The Committee received an update on its work programme including reports to be scheduled for the next two meetings.</p> <p>Resolved – That the work programme be noted.</p>	
15 TH SEPT	Housing Strategy	Officer Report	<p>The Head of Housing and Regeneration gave a presentation on the Housing Strategy 2005-2010 which had four key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving the urban areas of Wirral through tackling low demand. ➤ Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities ➤ Delivering Decent Homes ➤ Providing support for those who need it <p>In the presentation he also referred to some key issues, influencing factors, and priority choices.</p>	

			<p>In addition he circulated a briefing note on the new 15 year Housing Strategy 2011-2026 which outlined a number of significant changes which had occurred and which impacted on its development.</p> <p>These included the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and regional housing targets, no spatial priorities and no firm direction of travel yet with regards to guidance on determining local housing targets. There was a need to re-establish the position with regards to housing numbers through the Core Strategy and he gave details of a two part consultation programme. A further report on the Draft Strategy would be brought to the Committee on 24 November.</p> <p>The Interim Director responded to a number of comments from Members regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The work of the Empty Property Team in bringing empty properties back into use, of which there were now 6000 a rise from 5000 over 12 months. The Empty Property Strategy gave a breakdown of the different factors which led to properties being empty. ◆ Affordability which was a national issue and the need to lobby financial institutions to be more responsive in making finance available to first time buyers. ◆ Work to be done with RSLs for rented homes. ◆ The challenges of bringing the 3400 or so planning permissions for housing to completion. ◆ The factors affecting the bringing back into use of those empty properties which had had a different use and, which, although suitable for housing, did not now have planning permission as housing. <p>The Chair referred to the need for a fuller debate on the issue at the meeting of the Committee on 24 November to take account of both the Housing Strategy and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Strategy.</p> <p>Resolved – That the presentation be noted and a further report on the Housing Strategy be brought to the meeting on 24 November, 2010.</p>	
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24TH NOV

■ Update on Housing Strategy Consultation

Officer Report

Minutes:

The Head of Housing and Regeneration presented a report comprising an overview of the draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026, and update on the process and progress of the first phase of the consultation programme which was currently underway and due to finish on 10th December, 2010.

Following a review of the achievements of the current Housing Strategy officers had drafted a new long term strategy for Wirral, which would run up to 2026. The vision for Wirral's Housing Strategy was to create sustainable communities across the whole of the Borough, in which people would choose to live and stay. Four key strategic priorities of 'Delivering Urban Renaissance', 'Providing Affordable Homes to Maintain Balanced Communities', 'Delivering Decent Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods', and 'Meeting the Needs of Communities and Providing Support for Those who need It', were seen as fundamental to achieving the vision of the Strategy.

To ensure that the Strategy and in particular the Action Plan remained relevant and responsive to the changing environment, an extensive consultation exercise was being undertaken with key stakeholders, including communities across Wirral to 'reality check' the Strategy priorities and to identify any emerging local housing related issues. The majority of those consulted, supported both the vision and the strategic priorities and felt that these addressed all of their housing and related issues. In particular residents identified improving the housing offer, increasing the supply of homes and building more affordable housing as the key housing issues for Wirral which needed to be addressed. All of these priorities were currently included in the existing Strategy and Action Plan.

It was proposed that a two stage consultation programme be undertaken, with stage one specifically testing the draft strategy and gaining views on all of the key issues which would inform housing policies and initiatives for the future.

This part of the consultation process commenced in October would finish on 10th December 2010. When the responses had been collated, officers would start to develop the Strategy further along with a supporting Housing Investment Plan.

			<p>A further consultation stage would then take place on the Housing Investment Plan which would be used and monitored to respond to annual budgets and funding regimes such as the Comprehensive Spending Review. The final draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026 and supporting Housing Investment Plan, would be reported back to Members early 2011, ready for implementation from 1st April 2011.</p> <p>There was a discussion highlighting the need for initiatives to bring empty properties back into the market, the response to affordability which could include a person's ability to rent a home, and ways of supporting the letting sector.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>(1) That the report be noted.</p> <p>(2) <u>That a further report on the outcome of the consultation and the final draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026 be brought back to the January meeting of this committee.</u></p>	
24TH NOV	<p>■ Invest Wirral including the support of business in the present economic circumstances</p>	Officer Verbal Report	<p><u>Invest Wirral - Presentation</u></p> <p>Verbal report.</p> <p>Minutes:</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation outlining the Invest Wirral's role and responsibilities in providing information and support to help businesses grow and develop, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ locating business premises ▪ links to key business support organisations ▪ training and skills knowledge ▪ funding support ▪ networking and events ▪ supplier links ▪ business partner collaboration ▪ apprenticeship opportunities ▪ inward and local investment enquiries <p>He provided key statistics for the past year highlighting performance against targets for jobs created/safeguarded, and investment.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 		<p>The Director gave some specific examples of the range of work with local companies to assist their development plans; partnership working with a range of business support organisations; development of the Wirral Business Forum; organisation of key business promotion events; and participation in international events to raise awareness and create opportunities for overseas trade and investment.</p> <p>The Director responded to a range of questions from members including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the potential for increasing membership of the Business Forum; ■ Wirral's initiative in taking the lead for communicating the "green" agenda across the North West Region through the Green Power Forum, the availability of government funding, and the potential locally for training schemes utilising 'Green Deal' and Skills Agency funding. <p>Resolved – That the Committee thank the Director for his presentation and note the achievement against the key performance indicators relating to jobs created/safeguarded, and investment.</p>	
24 TH NOV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NGA Broadband 	Officer Report	<p>Minutes:</p> <p>(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of this matter, Councillor Kenny left the meeting whilst it was considered).</p> <p>Further to minute (Cabinet – 18/3/10) when actions taken to progress the design and implementation of a Next Generation Access Network for Wirral, giving priority to the main business areas were approved, the Head of Housing and Regeneration reported upon progress to date and outlined the next stages of development.</p> <p>He reported that with Cabinet approval in place, efforts had focused on consulting and preparing detailed evidence required for formal approval processes. Officers had been working with the consultants, Adit North, to develop a dedicated State Aid notification underpinned by a business model for EU Commission approval.</p>	

			<p>The business case modelling exercise was factored into the production of the Statement of Requirements (SOR) which defined the expected outcomes and provided a framework for tendering purposes. The tendering process which was now at an advanced stage would be undertaken via the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and would be designed procure the provision of broadband infrastructure and specialist operating and management services to run the network.</p> <p>With the progress made to date, it was proposed to maintain this momentum and obtain State Aid approval from the EU at the earliest possible opportunity. In parallel it was planned to proceed with the procurement of an Infrastructure Provider and a Network Operator. It was envisaged that the outcome of the tendering exercise would be the appointment of a key project partner to provide the physical infrastructure such as cabling and the procurement of an operating company.</p> <p>The estimated total cost of the NGA project for Wirral was £35m. The first phase, costing approximately £12m for the businesses areas, would be funded from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Council resources.</p> <p>Resolved – That the Committee welcome and note the progress made to date on this project.</p>	
12TH JAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Poverty Needs Assessment ▪ Outcomes from projects and programmes currently receiving funding and then to define the future outcomes to be achieved <p>(Programmes include Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Future Jobs Fund, HMRI, Business Start and Business Support Programmes)</p>	<p>Officer Report</p> <p>Officer Report</p>		
12TH JAN	<p>AGREED 24TH NOV MEETING that a further report on the outcome of the consultation and the final draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026 be brought back to the January meeting of this committee.</p>	<p>Officer Report</p>		

Report 2

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011**

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Report 3

PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR ECONOMY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010/2011

Meeting Date	Topic Description
17 TH JUNE	<p>The views of the Committee were requested concerning topics to be included in this year's scrutiny work programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Resolved</u> – That a work programme listing the reports from chief officers on key issues during the year and the progress of major development schemes form the basis of the committee's work programme for the current municipal year. ▪ Performance reports, covering the remit of the Scrutiny Committee, would continue to be given on a quarterly basis. ▪ The Forward Plan for the period July to October 2010 had now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members' were invited to indicate to the chair or party spokespersons whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan. Any urgent items could also be considered.
15 TH SEPT	Housing Strategy
24 TH NOV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update on Housing Strategy Consultation ▪ Invest Wirral including the support of business in the present economic circumstances ▪ NGA Broadband
12 TH JAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Poverty Needs Assessment ▪ Outcomes from projects and programmes currently receiving funding and then to define the future outcomes to be achieved (Programmes include Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Future Jobs Fund, HMRI, Business Start and Business Support Programmes) ▪ AGREED 24TH NOV MEETING that a further report on the outcome of the consultation and the final draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026 be brought back to the January meeting of this committee.
14 TH MAR	Review of work programme

Report 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

START OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010/2011

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