

Scrutiny: Briefing

Subject:	Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee
Date:	June 2013
From:	Scrutiny Support Team

Summary of contents:

1. The purpose of overview and scrutiny
2. Service areas relevant to this committee
3. Dates of meetings
4. Committee Membership
5. Outstanding items from previous scrutiny committees
6. Key Internal Plan & Strategies
7. Key local and national policy drivers
8. The role of the Chair
9. Officer support arrangements
10. Key contacts

1. The purpose of overview and scrutiny

Overview and scrutiny is a vital component of good governance, which has the potential to significantly improve the quality of Council decision-making, service provision and cost-effectiveness. It includes:

- Holding the Executive to account – a primary role is to provide a framework of accountability which seeks to modify executive behaviour and prevent the abuse of power.
- Holding Partners to account – scrutiny provides an opportunity to investigate the work of public, private and voluntary sector partners and their impact on the community.
- Horizon-scanning – looks ahead to future changes in local government in order to help the Council adapt to them. This will usually mean considering future actions by central government which will have repercussions for local government.
- Policy Development and Review – scrutiny contributes to the development of key policies to be included in the Council's policy framework, as well as examining how well a policy has been implemented and if outcomes have been achieved.
- Pre-decision scrutiny – examines the council's proposals, objectives, and draft programmes in order to inform their development before they are delivered. This helps the council to achieve optimum impact by avoiding mistakes and grasping opportunities.
- Post-decision scrutiny – examines the implementation of council policy and performance and enables the council to review the effects of its decision-making

- In-depth review – small groups of councillors will undertake detailed investigations into a specific topic of particular interest to them. The process is member-led and can involve methods such as informal meetings, mystery shopping, external visits etc. This type of review can facilitate greater involvement of residents and community organisations.
- Performance management and improvement – involves reviewing achievement against Corporate Plan goals and targets. This can be a powerful force for improvement by highlighting areas of poor performance and ways to address this.

2. Service areas relevant to this committee

<p>1. Resources & Financial Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Advice • Financial Management (including Treasury Management) • Audit • Procurement • Information Technology Services
<p>2. Legal & Member Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services • Registration • Freedom of Information • Records Management & Archives • Complaints
<p>3. Human Resources & Organisational Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR / Payroll • Organisational Development
<p>4. Business Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue / Benefits • Libraries / One Stop Shops • Customer Services
<p>5. Pensions</p>

3. Dates of meetings 2013/14

- Tuesday 30th **July**
- Monday 23rd **September**
- Wednesday 6th **November (budget)**
- Wednesday 4th **December (budget)**
- Wednesday 29th **January (including budget)**
- Monday 14th **April**

4. Committee Membership

15 Members			
8 Labour	5 Conservative	1 Liberal Democrat	1 Independent
Cllr. Ron Abbey (Vice) Cllr. Pat Glasman Cllr. Rob Gregson Cllr. Sylvia Hodrien Cllr. Christina Muspratt Cllr. John Salter Cllr. Stuart Whittingham (Chair) Cllr. Janette Williamson	Cllr. Andrew Hodson (S) Cllr. Chris Blakeley Cllr. John Hale Cllr. Les Rowlands Cllr. Adam Sykes	Cllr. Phil Gilchrist (S)	Cllr. Mark Johnston

5. Outstanding items from previous scrutiny committees

Previous Committee / Date	Item	Description	New Committee
CE 22/04/13	IT Strategy	Scope document produced in early 2013. Panel meeting with Tony Glew who agreed to refer the refreshed IT Strategy to the Panel (still outstanding). Cllr Whittingham requested the review be on the work programme of the new committee.	Trans & Resources

6. Key Plans & Strategies

Plan/Strategy	Current status
Corporate Plan	2013-16 Corporate Plan agreed 18th February 2013: http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3872&Ver=4 Refresh scheduled for December 2013 following Policy Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Budget strategy submitted to Cabinet 18 April 2013: http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3872&Ver=4
Improvement Plan	View plan here: http://wbcnet.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/improvement-plan Progress report submitted to Cabinet – 13 June 2013: http://wir06metrognome.admin.ad.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4358&Ver=4
Asset Management Strategy	A Review of Asset Management is one of the projects included in the Council's new Transformational Programme. Details of the scope of this project are included at: http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4473&Ver=4
ICT Strategy	This is currently being reviewed and updated.

People strategy	Current Strategy 2010 – 2013.
Transformation programme	Programme details approved by Cabinet 23 rd May: http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MIId=4473&Ver=4

7. Key policy drivers

<p>Queen’s Speech - Legislation 2013/14</p> <p>Local Audit and Accountability Bill [Royal Assent expected May 2014]</p> <p>This bill will formally abolish the Audit Commission and replace it with a new local audit framework. The main objectives are to reduce the cost of local audit and improve ‘direct democracy’ over Council Tax. The latter is achieved through giving local council taxpayers a veto to rises in council tax caused by bodies such as waste disposal authorities and integrated transport authorities. The bill will also cut down on the amount of council-funded newspapers produced.</p> <p>Implications: Transformation and Resources will have a role in the development of a new local audit framework. Budget Strategy considerations may also be impacted by the changes to the Council Tax threshold for triggering a referendum.</p>
<p>Draft De-regulation Bill</p> <p>This draft bill lays out how the government intends to reduce the amount of regulation with which businesses, individuals and public bodies have to comply. Measures include exempting from health-and-safety legislation people who are self-employed and whose work poses no risk of harm to other people, and removing the ability of employment tribunals to make wider recommendations in successful discrimination cases, which they were granted in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Implications: In its current form, there may be both direct and indirect implications, e.g. in respect of HR and contract / procurement regulations, that the Local Authority may wish to explore as the Bill is further debated and refined.</p>

<p>Other policy drivers</p> <p>Whole Place Community budgets</p> <p>Whole place community budgets’ are a flagship policy of the coalition government to put major principles of localism, ‘customer first’ service integration, public services reform and deficit reduction into practice. They also tend to be supported enthusiastically by local government in both community leadership and local results delivery roles.</p> <p>Implications: Wirral has expressed an interest in involvement in the newly established Community Budgets network.</p>
--

Individual Electoral Registration (Implementation 2014 prior to 2015 General Election)

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) will require electors to register individually and end reliance on registration through heads of household.

There are immediate duties to:

- Take part in dry run of data-matching electoral rolls with DWP database through the IER Digital Service
- Local publicity plans in place from June

In advance of the forthcoming Spending Review, the **LGA** prepared a submission to HM Treasury seeking to influence government spending and public sector reform. The table below summarises the main proposals of this submission relevant to this committee. The Government's Spending Review is due to be announced on 26 June and an update will be provided at the first meeting of this committee.

Finance	
Remove restrictions on council tax	The LGA is proposing that the government should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give full and unconstrained ability to vary locally all council tax discounts• Change Treasury rules to enable local government to capitalise on one-off revenue expenditure
Increase the local share of business rates to be retained locally	Implications: Wirral's business rate base suggests that Wirral is unlikely to benefit from moves to allow Council's to retain a share of locally collected business rates.
Provide Local Government with a stable funding outlook in respect of Public Health	Beyond 2014/15, there is no indication of the financial allocations for public health or the pace of any funding changes.
Develop alternative borrowing mechanisms – i.e. local authority bonds agency	Implications: The Local Authority may wish to further explore the potential impact of this announcement
Public Sector Reform	
At least maintain NHS investment in social care and explore case for adding to it	Implications: LCR and Wirral have argued that the integration of social care needs more rapid and sustained transfer of resources from the NHS to local authorities with a duty to lead the delivery of integrated community services – this would provide us with a very effective model for meeting the increased challenge of an ageing population, and contribute to reducing pressure on acute Hospital services.
Explore use of Dedicated Schools Grant to support early intervention	Current restrictions on the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant ring-fence expenditure to those with High Needs. This makes it harder to maintain focus on prevention work.

Undertake a joint central / local review of the statutory duties on local government	The Local Authority may wish to further explore the potential impact of this announcement
Introduce a landfill tax freeze at 2014/15 levels	A landfill tax freeze would contain the Council's costs to a 3 per cent rise in 2015/16.

8. The role of the Chair

The role of a Policy and Performance Committee Chair is to:

1. Provide leadership and direction to the Committee and act as Champion for the functions falling within its remit.
2. Chair formal and informal meetings connected with the work of the Committee and ensure that such meetings are conducted fairly, efficiently and follow the Council's Constitution and the law.
3. Identify and help meet the development and training needs of the Committee collectively and its individual members.

Responsibilities:

1. Actively promote the work of the Committee and generally act as a 'Champion' for its activities.
2. Ensure that Committee members lead on developing an effective and prioritised work programme. Ensure the work programme includes service scrutiny/performance management.
3. Encourage the Committee to challenge and scrutinise Cabinet decisions.
4. Encourage the committee to horizon scan and seek opportunities to undertake pre-decision scrutiny in advance of Cabinet decisions.
5. Encourage the Committee to scrutinise the performance of non-Council bodies, for example partnership delivery plans, and the effectiveness of partnership working, to ensure this is adding value.
6. Endeavour to engage all members of the Committee within the scrutiny process.
7. Co-ordinate work with other Policy and Performance Committees and their Chairs and share learning.
8. Ensure that adequate resources i.e. financial and officer support are identified and sought from the Council.
9. Develop a constructive relationship with the Cabinet, especially the relevant portfolio holders, and with the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service in the areas that the Committee scrutinises.
10. Chair formal and informal meetings connected with the work of the Committee in a fair and open manner following the terms of reference of the Committee, the Council's Constitution and the law.
11. Ensure that meetings are conducted in a suitable manner that encourages contributions from all members, co-opted representatives and witnesses.
12. Help achieve more community and partner involvement in the scrutiny process by using alternative venues, co-option and innovative meeting styles.
13. Ensure that scrutiny reviews are more efficient through the application of effective project management.

14. Ensure that 'in depth' scrutiny takes place by using expert witnesses and working with officers to help improve members' knowledge base.
15. Maintain awareness of national and local issues related to the Committee and its work.
16. Keep under review, advise on and agree the training and development requirements of the Committee and its individual members.
17. To be responsible for continuous personal development. Take advantage of learning opportunities to build understanding and knowledge, and to develop relevant skills.
18. To promote and participate in Member training, and attend relevant training events each calendar year.

Skills Required:

In order to fulfil the above responsibilities a Policy and Performance Committee Chair will need to ensure that they develop and maintain the following core skills:

- Actively encourages involvement of others and works collaboratively to analyse information and promote understanding.
- Is open to new ideas and ways of doing things.
- Works closely with others to develop, promote and achieve objectives.
- Leadership and excellent chairing skills

In addition to the above core skills, meeting Chairs may also require the following supporting skills:

- Good communication, including media, presentation and interpersonal skills
- Conflict resolution
- Team working
- Project and time management
- The ability to influence and work constructively with Members, officers, the public and outside organisations.

Behaviours

To act in accordance with the values and principles required of those operating in public life:

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural difference

9. Officer support arrangements

The Chair of the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee will be supported by the Strategic Director (Transformation and Resources). A dedicated support officer will be allocated to the Committee from the Scrutiny Support Team. The key responsibilities of the Scrutiny Support Team include:

- Working with the Chairs of the Policy & Performance Committees and working groups in agenda preparation and work programme coordination, dealing with matters arising from meetings.
- Providing support for the scoping and planning of reviews, including notes of working group meetings, coordination of witnesses, etc.
- Project managing reviews.
- Ensuring Chairs and Members are kept informed of any relevant scrutiny guidance, and that Chairs have the information needed to feel confident in chairing, or being involved in, their relevant committee.
- Undertaking research for policy reviews and general communication purposes.
- Working with Members to draft reports for Policy & Performance Committee reviews.
- Providing assistance to Members with monitoring the progress of recommendations.
- Liaising with officers across the Council about the work of the Policy & Performance Committees.
- Keeping up to date with best practice.
- Providing facilitation of appropriate events for Members and officers involved in scrutiny work.

Additional capacity will be provided by staff from the Directorates as required.

10. Key contacts

Scrutiny Support

Mike Callon – 691 8379
 Project Coordinator
michaelcallon@wirral.gov.uk

Committee Services

Andrew Mossop – 691 8501
 Principal Committee Services Officer
andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk