

MEETING: **SCRUTINY**

DATE: **Monday 3 July 2006**

SUBJECT: **Scrutiny Activities – Monitoring report 2005-2006 and Annual Programme 2006/07**

REPORT OF: **Scrutiny Co-ordinator**

Ward(s): All

Purpose: To provide Members with information regarding the Scrutiny Committee's activities for 2005-2006 and to give Members the opportunity to consider the Annual Programme for 2006-2007 and suggest items for inclusion.

Contact: Katie Armstrong, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Telephone 01323 415023 or internally on extension 5023.
E-mail address Katie.Armstrong@eastbourne.gov.uk

Recommendations

- (1) That the monitoring report be noted.
- (2) That the draft Annual Programme of routine work as appended to this report be agreed.
- (3) That three subjects for detailed scrutiny reviews in 2006/07 be agreed having regard to the suggested subjects set out in appendix 7 to this report, and the resulting recommendations of the Assistant Director – Strategy & Democracy set out in paragraph 7 of this report.

1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1 At its meeting on 4 July 2005, Scrutiny agreed that an Annual report would be produced detailing the work of the Committee, the reviews conducted, the outcomes of each review and the work programme for the forthcoming year.

1.2 This report provides a factual review of items that have been discussed over the past year.

1.3 It is also an important part of the Scrutiny process that the outcomes of Scrutiny reviews are monitored; which had not been carried out in previous years.

1.4 As a result, during 2005/06 two previous reviews had been monitored;

Abandoned Vehicles and Wheeled bin Refuse Collection Service and Recycling Service.

1.5 Four further reviews would be monitored during 2006/07; Elections and Voter Turnout, Taxi's and Private Hire Service, Disabled Access and Back Alleys.

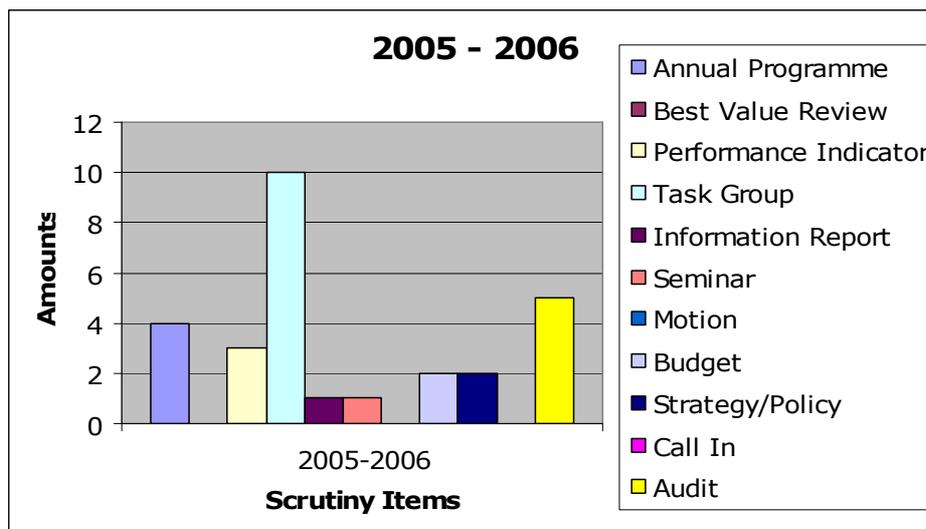
1.6 Members are asked to consider other areas that they would like highlighted in the future Annual reports.

1.7 As part of the consultation process the Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the draft Annual Programme each year and suggest items for inclusion into the programme for 2006/07.

1.8 A copy of the draft Annual Programme is attached at appendix 6, which includes standing items, items suggested by CMT, both parties and items carried forward from the 2005/06 programme.

2.0 Review of the 2005/06 Programme - Items considered.

2.1 The table below details the actual items Scrutiny have considered over the past year. Appendix 1 details the items discussed throughout the year.



(These items have been grouped to enable easier analysis, for example there have been 10 items for Task Groups, which covers the formulation of the Groups and includes the final reports).

2.2 An analysis of items discussed during 2005/06 and chart showing the percentage total of all items discussed since 2001 can be found at appendix 2 and a list of agenda items can be found at appendix 3.

2.2.1 **Annual Programme** - This is the standard item which covers the agreement of the Annual programme at the start of the municipal year and also allows for additional items to be added to the programme.

- 2.2.2 **Best Value Reviews** – There were no Best Value reviews during this year, although the Committee will still receive the outcomes of reviews carried out by East Sussex County Council namely; Joint Waste Management Review and the Review of Highway Management Agreements (Eastbourne and Hastings), which are likely to be reported in the 2006/07 programme.
- 2.2.3 **Performance Indicator Reports** – This is a standard item for which the Council’s Constitution provides that Scrutiny may review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas; Scrutiny receives quarterly reports regarding PI’s, Members are invited to request that Officers are present to answer any questions they may have. It is not the intention that the Committee gets ‘bogged’ down with reviewing each indicator, but that the indicators are a guide to the Council’s overall performance, which may also assist the Committee in targeting specific areas for review.
- 2.2.4 **Task Groups** – see item **3.0** below.
- 2.2.5 **Information Reports** – The only item received this year which could be regarded as an information report was the ‘One Stop Shop’ – Investigation report. It shows that the Scrutiny process is now functioning more efficiently with the considerable reduction in the number of information reports.
- 2.2.6 **Seminars** – Members were invited to attend a seminar held by East Sussex County Council based on Select Committees on the 17 February 2006 at County Hall, Lewes. Members from across the County were been invited to attend. Eastbourne was offered a total of 10 places.
- 2.2.7 **Motions** – No motions were received during this year.
- 2.2.8 **Budget reports** – Items covered include the Financial Strategy and 2006/07 Budget.
- 2.2.9 **Strategies / Policies** – This included the following items; Local Development Framework monitoring report and the revised Race Equality Scheme.
- 2.2.10 **Call-in** – There were no call ins during this year.
- 2.3 **Audit** – Items covered included Internal Audit Services - Review of Activities and Performance 2004-05, Statement of Internal Control, Internal Audit Summary of Activities, Review of Code of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Arrangements, Provision of Member Oversight of Internal Audit Activities and Corporate Governance Arrangements, Summary of Activities and Performance April 2005 to January 2006 and Audit Plan 2006/07.
- 2.3.1 There was a considerable number of Audit items considered in 2005/06.

- 2.3.2 At its meeting on 23 February 2006 the Council agreed that an Audit Task Group should be created under the Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the Audit Task Group Terms of Reference is attached at appendix 5.
- 2.3.3 As part of the Terms of Reference the Audit Task Group are required to report to the Scrutiny Committee on their activities and may report as and when necessary in respect of any matter of significant concern or where the Council is to be requested to agree a course of action.
- 2.3.4 The creation of this task group would considerably reduce the number of Audit items considered directly by the Scrutiny Committee in future years.

3.0 Task Groups

- 3.1 During the 2005/06 Annual Programme, Scrutiny Committee has conducted four reviews covering Disabled Access, Back Alleys, Airbourne and the Coaching Industry.
- 3.2 The Airbourne and Coaching Industry reviews are on going and are due to report to Scrutiny in September 2006
- 3.3 A list of all Task Groups, their aims, status and outcomes can be found at appendix 4.

4.0 Changes to Scrutiny Performance and Management

- 4.1 Following the report to Annual Council on 17 May 2006 the following proposals for the future of Scrutiny and Performance Management were agreed;
- The committee would focus on a small number of large issues and/or service area reviews selected primarily on the basis of maximum impact to our customers and/or corporate priorities.
 - Annual scrutiny programme would be discussed more actively by the administration and corporate management.
 - Work would be focused on the use of Task Groups with the minimum number of actual main committees.
 - Cabinet would make more use of requesting the committee to investigate specific matters.
 - The committee would take back the performance monitoring role which would enable Performance Management Task Group to be disbanded, ending the confusion of roles.
 - The committee would make greater use of Forward Plan of Key Decisions to ensure key policy matters are discussed.
- 4.2 It was agreed that all agendas of the new Committee would be structured into 3 segments, namely ANNUAL PROGRAMME, PERFORMANCE MONITORING, and POLICY REVIEW.

- 4.3 In order to create a manageable workload, it was agreed that for 2006/07 a maximum of 3 major service areas should be selected for scrutiny reviews on the basis of corporate priority and customer impact.
- 4.4 The primary criteria for review subjects are that they should be issues of significant size and outward impact on the community.
- 4.5 Each review would be assisted and supported by the relevant nominated lead service officer for the area being reviewed.

5.0 Developing the Annual Programme

- 5.1 It is vital for the Scrutiny Committee to maintain its momentum in producing its Annual Programme, moving away from information reports and increasing the proportion of issues for investigation.
- 5.2 It should be remembered that public participation should start with topics under investigation. It is unlikely that members of the public will be interested in investigations into internal matters, and therefore attention should be paid to public priorities and issues of local concern.
- 5.3 It is essential that Members consider the objectives for each review proposed carefully, in order not only to conduct a thorough and worthwhile review, but also to ensure the most suitably qualified Members are appointed to the review teams and that all relevant parties are aware of the forthcoming review and, more importantly, are invited to participate.

6.0 Consultations

- 6.1 As part of the development of the annual programme the Leaders of both parties have been requested to seek items from their respective groups, in addition to this, the Corporate Management Team were also be given the opportunity to have input into the draft programme prior to the current version (appendix 6) being submitted to Scrutiny on 3 July 2006 and forwarded to full Council in July for ratification. As a result of these consultations, the list of suggested reviews is appended for consideration.

7.0 Comments from the Assistant Director – Strategy & Democracy

- 7.1 This report sets out clearly in paragraph 4 above, the new approach required to the conduct of a small number of worthwhile scrutiny reviews with particular emphasis on their impact on the wider community, and correlation with key Council priorities. Of the areas put forward for suggestion, some do still have a tendency towards inward process and/or are maybe premature pending emerging service changes. Of those ideas that have been submitted, it would be my recommendation that three reviews that would achieve the most benefit in areas of genuine public interest would be:

- Benefits – Focusing on an analysis of the quality of sharp end

delivery of the service as perceived by our customers.

- Healthy Environment – Focusing on this Council’s potential contributions towards the current significant environmental issues of air quality and water supply.
- Enforcement – Focusing on the actual and perceived effect on the community at large of our enforcement team’s activities.

All three above reviews would be suitable for direct involvement and engagement with residents as part of evidence gathering and are, I believe, topics of genuine current interest to a large number of people.

8.0 Resource implications

8.1 Selected areas for review will need appropriate time allocation by officers concerned and members appointed to those task groups. The way in which Task Groups should operate is that:

- The two nominated members undertake the review.
- The designated officers provide information, set up meetings and invite relevant participants as requested by the members.
- Following the review, the designated officers should write the outcome report on behalf of the nominated members.
- The nominated members need to agree and take ownership of the outcome report and submit its findings to the main committee.

Designated officers will include the lead officer, assisted by administrative/clerical staff from within the relevant service area, and working in liaison with the Council’s Corporate Scrutiny Co-ordinator, the latter’s primary role being to ensure that Scrutiny Reviews are carried out and promoted in a consistent and high quality manner.

9.0 Other Implications (covering equalities, environmental, human rights, community safety, youth, anti-poverty)

9.1 None specific, however, it is hoped that areas selected for review are of significantly wide public interest and, as a consequence, will probably affect several of these issues.

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 The aim of the report is to provide a factual review of the items that have been discussed by the Committee over the past year, with particular attention to the reviews that have been conducted.

10.2 In addition, the report provides a means of monitoring the Scrutiny Committee’s activity year on year.

10.3 The Committee are requested to take the above changes to Scrutiny and performance management into consideration when suggesting items for review, selecting items on the basis of corporate priority and customer impact.

- 10.4 Finally the Committee are requested to discuss the Draft Annual programme, and suggest any items for inclusion / deletion.

Katie Armstrong
Scrutiny Co-Ordinator

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Scrutiny and Performance Management – proposed changes to the Council’s process – Annual Council 17 May 2006.

Scrutiny Task Group reports – as detailed

Review of the Scrutiny Process 2001-2005 – Scrutiny 4 July 2005

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.