

## SCRUTINY HANDBOOK

### WORK PROGRAMMES

#### *Background to the Work Programme*

- 1.1 The annual work programme provides a framework guiding the activities of the Review Committees for the year ahead.
- 1.2 In Sunderland, overview and scrutiny is a member led process and the members of each committee have the final say on which items are included in the work programme. Work programmes are developed following consultation with members, residents, LSP partners and other stakeholders.
- 1.3 Each of the six Review Committees agrees an annual work programme at the first meeting of the municipal year. The work programme will include a balance of:-
  - Scrutiny of Cabinet decisions
  - Policy review and development
  - Performance management and improvement
- 1.4 The underlying principles of work programmes should be that they are outcome focused, timely, relevant, realistic and achievable.
- 1.5 Work programmes should as far as possible align to the key corporate priorities and plans of the Council as outlined in the Community Strategy, Corporate Improvement Plan and relevant service plans.
- 1.6 The Council's LSP partners and other stakeholders will be provided with an opportunity to contribute to the development of work programmes and work with Review Committee's to achieve tangible action and outcomes.
- 1.7 Work programmes should be designed to add value to the performance of the Council and avoid the duplication of issues scheduled to be investigated or reviewed by other functions/activities of the Council e.g. performance improvement studies.
- 1.8 Review Committees should seek to prioritise their work while remaining flexible enough to allow for new and emerging issues to be included throughout the year.

#### *Establishing the Work Programme*

- 1.9 Overview and Scrutiny committees may identify topics they want to work on from a variety of sources:-
  - Issues raised during the Annual Scrutiny conference

- Issues raised via Councillor Call for Action or petitions
  - Members Workshops and Training sessions
  - Request of Chairman items
  - Items for inclusion on work programme from members
  - Referrals from Cabinet
  - Community Strategy Priorities
  - Local Area Agreement targets
  - The Executives forward plan
  - Corporate priorities set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan
  - Performance and budget monitoring information
  - External inspections
  - New legislation and developments in practice
  - The Annual Residents Survey
  - Discussions with Executive members and senior officers
  - Concerns identified by members of the public
- 1.10 The Council encourages members of the public to submit ideas for topics and issues they would like to see reviewed.

*Role of the Policy and Coordination Review Committee*

- 1.11 To keep a track of new issues, all variations to the work programmes are reported monthly to the Policy & Coordination Review Committee (ie Management Committee) which monitors the potential for duplication of issues.
- 1.12 The Policy and Coordination Review Committee also receives all of the other Review Committee work programmes as part of its coordination function. This allows it to take an overview of the main areas of work being done and to identify any cross cutting issues or omissions.

*Items from Cabinet*

- 1.13 Items referred for advice and consideration will be placed on the agenda of the Review Committee whose terms of reference are most closely related to the primary subject matter of the item.
- 1.14 Reports on cross-cutting themes may fall within the terms of reference of more than one of the Review Committees. Where this is the case the item may be referred to only one of the relevant Committees, where the Chair of each agrees, or, as the Policy and Coordination Review Committee directs.
- 1.15 It is recognised that the majority of Cabinet decisions will have an element of financial impact. Where this is significant the item should be considered by the Review Committee for the policy area in addition to the Policy and Coordination Review Committee.

- 1.16 Reports requesting virement of budget should be referred to Policy and Coordination Committee, and also, where the proposal will have a significant (key decision level) impact on service coming under the terms of reference of another Review Committee to that Committee.

#### *Article 4 Plans*

- 1.17 Article 4 Plans are the strategic and planning documents that constitute the policy and budgetary framework of the Council. The Review Committee's role in dealing with Article 4 Plans is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.18 In the case of non-Article 4 planning documents, including supplementary planning documents, and other plans and strategies which can be approved by the Executive, reports will first go to the appropriate Review Committee(s) and the Planning and Highways Committee for comment. They will then be submitted to Cabinet incorporating the views and comments of the Committee(s).

#### *Annual Scrutiny Conference*

- 1.19 The Annual Scrutiny Conference provides an opportunity for members, officers, partners and stakeholders to identify key issues for the year, consider the relative priority of those issues and formulate ideas and suggestions.
- 1.20 The issues identified by the Conference can then be prioritised and fed in the individual work programmes of the Review Committees.

#### *Forward Plan*

- 1.21 The Forward Plan provides an important instrument allowing scrutiny members to monitor the development of Council policy and key decisions. The Forward Plan should help to ensure that Review Committee's have the opportunity to scrutinise and contribute to the development of policy within the Council at an early stage.

#### *Review Committees and Area Committees*

- 1.22 The work programmes of the Review Committees should focus on strategic and policy issues affecting the city as a whole or more than one area of the city.
- 1.23 Operational and area specific issues are best dealt with at a local level through the Area Committees and Forums. Where such issues are identified by Review Committees, action should be taken to refer the matter to the appropriate Area Committee.
- 1.24 The Council's Community Leadership Programme and review of the operation of Area Committees should help to build on the Council's ability to address and resolve "front line" issues at the local level.

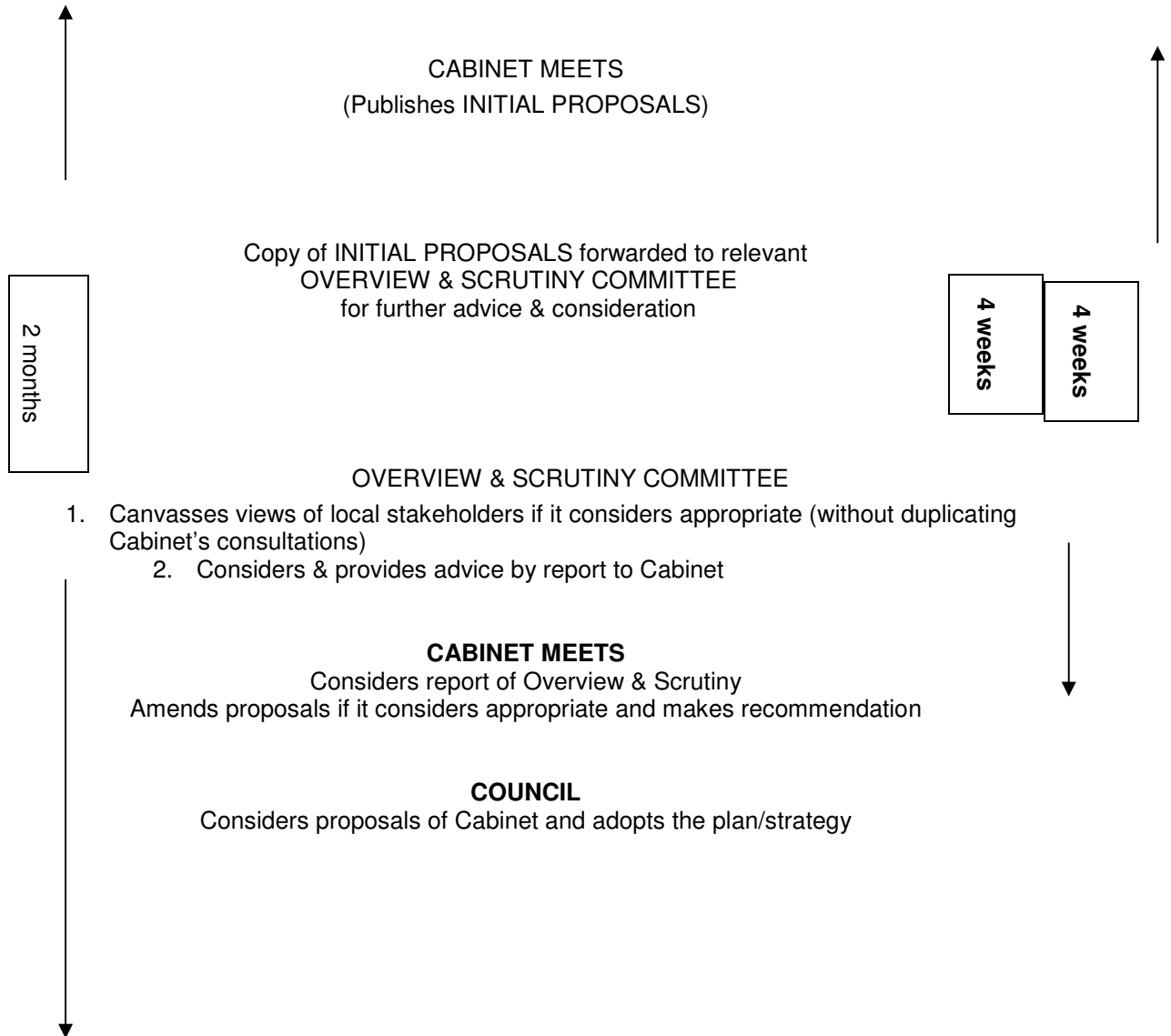
Issues should only escalate to the relevant Review Committee in the event of a failure to resolve them at the local level or where the issue has policy or resource implications city wide.

- 1.25 In order to avoid duplication and ensure that issues are dealt with at the appropriate level, mechanisms have been put in place to facilitate the referral of issues between each where this is appropriate.
- 1.26 It will be the role of the relevant Chairman, Review Coordinators and the Area Regeneration Officer to ensure that issues are dealt with at the appropriate level.

# ARTICLE 4 PLANS/STRATEGIES

## BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

Cabinet canvasses views of local stakeholders as appropriate & takes account of any representations made in formulating INITIAL PROPOSALS



**NOTE : Supplementary Planning Documents are not Article 4 plans**