MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND POLICY REVIEW
2009-2010

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE   **23 JUNE 2009**

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1   For Members to determine the Annual Work Programme for the Scrutiny Committee during 2009-10, including the main theme for a detailed policy review.

2.   Background

2.1   The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for setting its own work programme within the following scope:-

General Scope: To co-ordinate scrutiny business and management of the overall Scrutiny Work Programme and consider the Council's corporate policies, performance and financial issues.

Remit: Corporate Improvement Plan; Sunderland Strategy; Partnerships (including relations with external bodies); enhancing the role and reputation of Sunderland regionally, nationally and internationally; co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Function; Asset Management, Property Services and Building Maintenance; Area Frameworks; Corporate Communications; External Assessments; Public Protection and Trading Standards; Governance; Emergency Planning (to refer to appropriate Scrutiny Committee); Budget, financial resources and value for money; and to review any matter not falling within the remit of the other Scrutiny Committees.

2.2   A report presented to Cabinet on 8 April 2009 approved a Review of Scrutiny and revised terms of reference **(Appendix A refers)** for the Council's Scrutiny Committees to align the subject focus to the relevant priorities of the Sunderland Strategy. The role of this Committee is two-fold, firstly it is for the Committee to focus on the priority areas and targets in the Sunderland Strategy and Local Area Agreement and secondly that it co-ordinates the work of all seven Scrutiny Committees to consistently address those areas of performance requiring detailed examination.

2.3   This approach linked to strategic and LAA priorities is proposed to allow a clear themed focus on the outcomes for the people of Sunderland, and allow for cross-cutting examination of issues, with potential for linking areas of knowledge and expertise that would not ordinarily be brought together, so increasing the likelihood of the committees identifying novel approaches and solutions to the issues they consider.

2.4   Partnerships, including relations with external bodies is specifically within the remit of this committee, however, it is intended that all committees should take a role in the scrutiny of partnership and area issues and have a role in engaging with partners, external scrutiny, community and public engagement, engaging with media and area scrutiny.

3.   Operation of the Committee

3.1   The Management Scrutiny Committee is a newly formed Committee and while the arrangements will develop as the Committee progresses through the Municipal Year, there are certain principles which will enable the Committee to manage a large amount of business in the most productive way.

3.2   The annual work programme will specify the purpose for inclusion of each report on the agenda.

3.3   The Committee may want to consider the items for scrutiny be limited as far as possible to three per meeting, although flexibility will be necessary as the Committee will need to respond to new issues arising, in addition to scheduled work programme items.

3.4   The Committee could consider the management of policy review evidence gathering through special evidence gathering meetings, site visits, commissioning of consultants and desk-based research. To further enhance and develop this Member-led approach the Committee may wish to consider smaller working groups involving members in pursuing issues in the work programme enabling discussion, development of ideas and preparation for the questioning of witnesses outside of Committee.

4.   Suggested Topics

4.1   Topics for inclusion in the work programme should vary from single items for consideration such as quarterly performance / budget monitoring reports, the Council's budget and policy framework documents, formal consultation exercises, short term policy reviews over 2-3 months or a major policy review.

4.2   The following table includes all topics suggested by Members alongwith the proposed method of enquiry, including the discussions held at the Scrutiny Conference on 11 June 2009 during the Management Scrutiny Committee's breakout session:-

Single Item (Items to be scheduled when dates known)	
Community Leadership Programme	To review the progress / outcomes to date of the Community Leadership Programme

Single Item (Items to be scheduled when dates known) continued/…..	
Formal Reporting of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) *(Envisaged timescale November / December 2009)*	To consider the formal reporting of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (to include the Organisational Assessment) and where appropriate explore the emerging issues by co-ordinating / re-directing to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for further examination.
Performance / Budget Monitoring *(Frequency – Quarterly)*	To consider quarterly performance / budget monitoring reports of the Council
Progress Reports of the Scrutiny Committees *(Frequency - Monthly)*	To receive regular progress reports from individual Chairs detailing the work / achievements of their relevant Scrutiny Committee
Executive's Forward Plan *(Frequency – Monthly)*	To consider the Council's Executive Forward Plan which contains contain matters which are likely to be the subject of a key decision to be taken by the executive, a committee of the executive, individual members of the executive, officers, area committees or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the plan.
On-going Issues	
Developing Links between Scrutiny and the Sunderland Partnership	To be involved in the on-going development of practices and processes to establish effective linkages between the Council's Scrutiny Function and its partners through the Sunderland Partnership.
Development of the Council's Scrutiny Function	To co-ordinate the on-going development / effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function
On-going Comprehensive Area Assessment *(Key dates: Feb, April, July 2010 – to be finalised)*	To consider the first (January 2010), second (March 2010) and third (June 2010) iterations of the on-going Assessment
The Council's Budget Setting Process for 2010/2011 *(October 2009 onwards)*	In-depth involvement in the Council's budget setting process for 2010/2011
The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan for 2010/2011	In-depth involvement in the Council's compilation of the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2010/2011, with particular focus on the key priorities for the year ahead.

5.   Policy Review

5.1   The policy review is the process of maintaining an overview of the Council and its partners' policies and will usually examine whether the Council and / or the relevant public service provider(s) intended policy outcomes have been achieved. The process will also explore issues such as the service users' perspectives.

5.2   Policy reviews are project planned with appropriate methodology applied to investigate the chosen topic. This may include meetings, site visits, surveys, public meetings or analysis of comparative practice in other local authorities.

5.3   Last year the former Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee began an assessment of how well the Sunderland economy is positioned to withstand the Recession. As this piece of work no longer falls within the remit of this Committee, it will expected that the issue / topic will transfer into the work programme of the Prosperity and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee.

5.4   In light of the two-fold role of this Committee, it may be appropriate for the Committee to undertake one or two short policy reviews, to enable it to fully undertake its co-ordinating / management of the work of the Scrutiny Committees.

5.5   Following the selection of a topic for review, the Committee will receive a report setting out a possible approach to the review. This will include the terms of reference, definitions, links to corporate goals, partnerships, the national and local context, and proposals for gathering evidence.

5.6   As a result of the discussions held during the Scrutiny Conference on 11 June 2009 and the Management Scrutiny Committee's breakout session, the shortlist of Policy Review Topics for 2009-10 is listed below.

5.7   The Committee is recommended to select <u>one </u>topic from the shortlist below for an in depth review:

Policy Review Proposals	
Effective Partnerships	To review the effectiveness of the Council's 'significant' partnerships and determine whether they are fit for purpose with regard to their governance arrangements, delivering outcomes and value for money.
Involvement of the Community and Voluntary Sector in Partnerships / Decision Making	To review the city's involvement of the community and voluntary sectors in partnership working and decision making processes.

Policy Review Proposals continued/……..	
Emergency Planning	To review whether the Council's current management and joint arrangements with neighbouring authorities are fit for purpose, i.e. in relation to current swine flu pandemic
Risk Management	To examine the current Council's approach to risk management.

6. Work Programme

6.1 A draft work programme for 2009-10 with items already scheduled will be circulated during the actual meeting, as **Appendix B**. The items listed above, when reduced to a short list and when timings can be known, will be included in the programme.

6.2 The work programme can be amended during the year. Any Member of the Committee can add an item of business to an agenda (Protocol 1 within the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook refers).

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is asked to:

(a) Consider the draft Annual Work Programme for 2009-10 and indicate any additions or amendments; and

(b) Consider the list of suggestions for policy review and determine one topic for review.

8. Background Papers

None

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