

TITLE	Consideration of Requests for Overview and Scrutiny Reviews 2014/2015 and Committees Work Programmes 2014/2015
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 23 June 2014
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

<p>OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY</p> <p>That a programme of reviews for the forthcoming year is developed. By focusing on appropriate topics the Committee can help improve future policy and provide assurance to residents around the delivery of Council and other local public services.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>1) That the current Work Programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix A be noted;</p> <p>2) That the Committee considers the list of suggested scrutiny review suggestions in Appendix B and decides which suggestions should be added to the Work Programme of the Committee or Overview and Scrutiny Committees taking into the account the Council's Values and Priorities as set out in Appendix C and available resources.</p>
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report sets out the on-going work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Panels together with a list of new ideas submitted as potential scrutiny review items for the 2014/2015 municipal year. It suggests possible criteria for the Committee to come to a view on which topics to proceed with.</p>

Background

Under the Council's Constitution, scrutiny review suggestions can be submitted at any time throughout the year by Members, Officers or members of the public. This process involves the allocation of topics to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees or to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself.

In March 2014, all Members of the Council, senior Officers and the public were invited to submit ideas for possible scrutiny reviews. Those people who have put forward suggestions have been invited to attend this meeting in order to explain their suggestions further.

Analysis of Issues

1) The ongoing work programmes of the Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees is set out in Appendix A and the Committee should bear these existing commitments in mind when deciding whether to add a review to the programme.

2) The Committee is also asked to note the following scrutiny reviews which are already in progress or due to restart in the current municipal year.

- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Task and Finish Group (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee);
- Royal Berkshire Hospital Appointments System Task and Finish Group – (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee).
- Possible review topics previously allocated to the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but without a start date, (pages 25/26 of the Agenda).

New Scrutiny Review Suggestions

3) 13 new scrutiny review suggestions have been received to date, as set out in Appendix B. Two have been submitted by members of the public, seven from Wokingham Borough Council Councillors and four from Wokingham Borough Council Officers.

The suggestions have been initially grouped on the basis of possible of Committee consideration.

4) In assessing the new scrutiny review suggestions, the Committee is invited to:

- use the new Overview and Scrutiny Review Scoring Chart, (Appendix D) to help assess each suggestion;
- take into account the review selection criteria as previously adopted by the Committee:
 - Whether the issue is of local, and preferably current, concern;
 - Whether the undertaking of the review can be linked to the Council's Vision, priorities and underpinning principles or would help achieve these;
 - Whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere within the Council ;
 - Is the topic one that is capable of being influenced by the Committee;

- Is the topic of manageable scope – not too wide-ranging and yet of sufficient size to warrant a scrutiny review;
- Whether sufficient resources are available to support the scrutiny review; If a review is warranted, should it have a high, medium or low priority?
- Whether the review should be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee itself, delegated to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Group created to undertake the review?

5) The Committee is also asked to take into consideration that an analysis of scrutiny activity by Council Priorities undertaken in November 2013 showed that a significant amount of past scrutiny activity has been undertaken to support the priorities of ‘Improve the Customer Experience when accessing Council Services’ and ‘Improving educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential’, but that a comparatively smaller amount of scrutiny activity had been aimed at the Council priorities of town centre regeneration, ensuring strong sustainable communities and tackling traffic congestion. The Committee may wish to take this into account in deciding upon its priorities for the forthcoming year.

Format of the Meeting

6) There will be an opportunity for individuals who have submitted a suggestion to briefly introduce it to the Committee for approximately two minutes per suggestion followed by questions from the Committee. It is intended that all the suggestions will be presented prior to a decision being taken on whether to progress individual suggestions.

Terms of Reference

7) If a review is approved detailed terms of reference will then be drafted by Officers in consultation with the appropriate Director and agreed by the Committee or Task and Finish Group as appropriate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Undertaking Reviews will involve Officer time from Democratic Services and/or Service Departments.	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
None

List of Background Papers
None

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