

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2. Date:	13th June 2012
3. Title:	Work programme: 2012/13
4. Directorate:	Resources All wards

5. Summary

The paper outlines current options for a Scrutiny Work Programme for 2012/13.

6. Recommendations

That Members:

- Identify priority areas to be fed into the draft work programme in line with the Commission's remit
- Identify any areas for review to be undertaken during 2012/13
- Consider how they would like to tackle nominated themes (as outlined in para 7.4)
- Other issues which need to be included, in light of comments made about resource limitations.

7. Proposals and details

7.1 As outlined in the Council's Constitution, the remit of the Improving Places Select Commission is to:

- Community cohesion and social inclusion and the Council's specific initiatives to promote them
- Tourism, culture and leisure services and strategies
- Borough wide housing and neighbourhood strategies
- Economic development and regenerations strategies
- Environment and sustainable development

7.2 As we are at the start of the new municipal year there is a need to begin the development of a new annual work programme. There are a number of factors which need to be considered in pulling the programme together:

- A retrospective look at what was achieved in 2011/12 and any outstanding issues that need to carry forward
 - Improving Places Commission's 2011/12 work programme is attached as Appendix A. The vast majority of this work programme was achieved with a number of issues that will continue to be of interest and will carry forward into the new year's work programme. These include lettings software, transfer of Rotherham 2010 and tourism.
- An opportunity for Scrutiny members to feed issues of concern, into the respective Select Commissions, and enter into a wider discussion around the detail of the work programme.
- In addition to work identified on priority areas or issues referred from the previous municipal year, members are asked for comments on areas to be addressed by the Commission during 2012/13. These should be in line with the commission's remit (suggestions for areas of work relating to other commissions will be referred to OSMB for consideration).

7.3 It is also important to note the changes that have occurred during the last year and the reduction in staffing resources. Any work programme needs to take account of this and look realistically at what can be achieved and where it is best to focus resources and efforts.

7.4 Discussions have already been taking place between Cabinet, SLT and Scrutiny Chairs to identify some strategic priorities for the work programme that will involve joint working across both the Executive and Scrutiny's Commissions. (see below).

- Fuel Poverty
- 11 most deprived areas
- Troubled Families
- Welfare Reform
- Role of local members in their communities
- Reducing Health Inequalities

- Special Educational Needs and announced legislative changes

These joint priorities of Cabinet, Scrutiny and SLT were discussed at the OSMB meeting of 25th April. These priorities represent overarching themes which can either be retained by OSMB to explore or allocated to the Select Commissions to lead on. OSMB allocated the 11 most deprived areas theme to the Improving Places Select Commission. It should be noted also that although OSMB have retained the lead on Fuel Poverty, many members of the Improving Places Commission will be involved in the follow up work due to begin shortly. Similarly, Improving Places have been allocated the lead on Welfare Reform, but this is also viewed as a cross cutting review and will therefore aim to involve members from other commissions throughout the year. Most of the strategic priorities listed in 7.4 will be cross cutting in nature.

It is suggested that members now need to work on the theme and develop an appropriate programme to address the issues. An example of this is the recent work done on Fuel Poverty. Following a themed meeting at the Improving Places commission, a working session was set up which looked in depth at a whole range of issues associated with Fuel Poverty, followed by a focused discussion on what issues Scrutiny could add value to by focusing on e.g. a review of the up and coming Green Deal and how it will work in Rotherham.

A range of methods can be used to look at this including task groups, spotlight reviews, information sessions as well as full reviews.

- 7.5 The work programme is flexible and issues may be referred to OSMB and Select Commissions by individual members as well as from other sources, including members of the public. In determining its priorities for the work programme, Members should make a judgment on what outcomes may be achieved by accepting a referral, bearing in mind resource and capacity implications.

It is suggested that the work programme is reviewed by OSMB members and Select Commissions at regular intervals. This will ensure that issues of greater importance can be given a higher priority, reflecting changing circumstances or events. However if new issues are introduced, to ensure that the work programme is manageable and achievable, Members will need to decide if other items should 'fall off the agenda' to accommodate these discussions.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is important that a robust work plan is put in place to ensure that the work of Scrutiny is targeted, effective and delivers clear outcomes. The risk of not doing this is that the agenda items will become information items and not add value to the work of the Council.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposed work programme takes on board key policy agendas the Council is currently considering and performance information as and where necessary.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Cabinet/SLT/Scrutiny Chairs meetings.

12. Contact

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