

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

To: Physical Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Work Programme 2007/08

Date: 6 March 2007

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report advises the Committee as to the new process for compiling Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group to be implemented from May 2007.

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report and submit suggestions for Committee Work Programmes in line with the new process.

**3. Contact Officer:**

Kate Brown, Scrutiny Support Officer

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## **4. Introduction**

- 4.1 Effective Work Programming is central to successful scrutiny. Planning and scoping of work and a clear idea of what it is that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee wishes to achieve is more likely to result in tangible outcomes and make a positive impact.
- 4.2 The role of Overview and Scrutiny is changing. The government has recently signalled its intention to strengthen and extend the role of Overview and Scrutiny to our partners. This will have a major impact on the way that Scrutiny operates and effective work programmes will be integral to the successful implementation of these changes.
- 4.3 Consequently the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group has identified the management of Committee Work Programmes as a key area for development and have sanctioned a more systematic process for compiling the Work Programme for the next municipal year.
- 4.4 This report provides a summary of the new scrutiny powers, the rationale for this new approach and details of the new approach to compiling the work programme which will operate from May 2007.

## **5. Extending the role of Overview and Scrutiny**

- 5.1 New powers to broaden and deepen the role of Overview and Scrutiny to champion the interests of local people place a renewed emphasis on the importance of Overview and Scrutiny as a central tool in strengthening accountability for the provision of local services.
- 5.2 Both the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill and the Police and Justice Act provide for:
  - Community Call for Action: Councillors will be able to refer any local government matter, related to their ward, to the relevant scrutiny committee in certain circumstances;
  - A requirement for the Council's Executive to respond to Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations within two months, detailing what action the Executive proposes to take;
  - Partner organisations to the new statutory Local Area Agreements required to provide information to Overview and Scrutiny Committees
  - These partners could also be required to respond to Overview and Scrutiny recommendations about targets adopted by the LAA. Partner organisations would have to have regard to these recommendations.

- Public Sector Partners will have to co-operate with the local authority to agree targets in the Local Area Agreements and must have regard to the LAA targets once agreed.

## **6. Impact on Overview and Scrutiny**

- 6.1 The proposals provide a welcome opportunity for elected Members to make a real difference by holding public service providers to account for the delivery of the Community Strategy by requiring our Local Area Agreement partners to co-operate with Overview and Scrutiny.
- 6.2 This will mean that the role of Overview and Scrutiny will shift from a primarily internal service-based review process to strategic place shaper, working with and influencing key partners to secure better outcomes for local people.
- 6.3 Maximising the influence Overview and Scrutiny over key decision makers will require a fundamental reassessment of the role and remit of Overview and Scrutiny and will have a major impact on the way that Committees manage their workload.
- 6.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will therefore need to ensure that their work programmes address their key priorities, are based around driving the delivery of the Community Strategy, are outcome focused and crucially, add value.

## **7. Work Programmes**

- 7.1 Overview and Scrutiny is Member-led: it is for Members to decide what topics they would like to look at. This can be anything that affects the people of Manchester, not just services that are provided by the Council.
- 7.2 That said, Overview and Scrutiny should add value and make a difference- it is in the interests of all concerned if scrutiny work programmes are designed to have maximum impact.
- 7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme should help members to focus on their priorities, plan their work effectively and should be contain only those topics that will really benefit from scrutiny.
- 7.4 To facilitate this, a new process for setting the Work Programme will be introduced from May 2007. This has been devised to assist Committees to manage their Work Programmes more effectively and focus on areas where they can add value, represent the interests of local people and hold partners to account for the delivery of the Community Strategy.

- 7.5 From March until May, suggestions for Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes will be invited from elected Members, officers, partners and the general public. These will be submitted by using the standard suggestion form (attached at appendix 1).
- 7.6 To ensure consistency of approach, all suggestions, including those from the Chair and Members of the Committee in question, must be submitted in this format; this will ensure that Members receive sufficient information to judge whether a topic is suitable for Overview and Scrutiny. This will also mean that topics listed in the work programme for the 2006/07 municipal year will not automatically transfer. Members are requested to submit suggestion forms for all issues that they would like to be added to the Work Programme.
- 7.7 A version of this form is available on the Local Democracy section of the Council's website and will also be available on the Member's Intranet. Hard copies of this form will also be available from Members Services.
- 7.8 The suggestion form will ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Committees are sufficiently well-informed to select topics for the work programme that are relevant and are likely to allow scrutiny to really add value.
- 7.9 These suggestions will then reported to the Committee in May so that the Committee can consider which topics they would like to scrutinise in the coming year. All suggestions will be considered objectively and on their merits. An up to date copy of the Committee Work Programme will then be reported to the Committee at each meeting subsequently.

### **Timetable**

<b>March 6</b>	Information Report submitted to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the new process for compiling Committee Work Programmes
<b>April/May:</b>	Topic suggestions collated and researched by the Scrutiny Support Team
<b>May 22:</b>	Suggestions reported to the Committee. Members identify which topics they would like to scrutinise throughout the year based on their priorities.
<b>June 19:</b>	Final Work Programme reported to each Committee reflecting Members priorities and which will form part of the scanning report to be reported to all future meetings (see below)

Manchester City Council  
Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme  
Suggestion Form

1. What is the topic?

2. What is the background to the issue? What is the current situation/problem?

3. How do you think that Overview and Scrutiny can make a difference and add value to this issue?

Thank you for your suggestion.

Please return this form to: Scrutiny Support, Democratic Services, Room 405,  
Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA  
e-mail [scrutiny@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@manchester.gov.uk)