COMMITTEE: Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 21 May 2008

SUBJECT: Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2008/9

REPORT OF: City Solicitor

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Committee’s discussion regarding the selection of topics for the 2008/9 work programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1) Considers the information set out in this report;

2) Identifies topics for investigation as part of its 2008/9 Work Programme; and

3) Requests that the Chair of the Committee, in consultation with relevant Officers, draft outline work programme reflecting these priorities for submission to the next meeting.

CONTACT OFFICERS

Kate Brown, Scrutiny Support Officer 0161 234 3376
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a central role in contributing to the improvement of outcomes for Manchester residents.

1.2 By representing the views of local people about the services they receive and providing democratic accountability for the delivery of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, the Committee can influence important issues affecting Manchester residents, regardless of which agency is responsible for delivering them.

1.3 A balanced and effective work programme will enable the Committee to dedicate its time and resources to those areas where it can have the greatest impact and will help members to commission relevant information, be it from written reports or witnesses, which will assist the Committee in formulating recommendations and reports.

2. THE WORK PROGRAMME

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny process is led by elected Members and is an important part of the decision-making process. Committees should therefore contribute to the delivery of the City Council’s aims and objectives, as set out in the Community Strategy.

2.2 The Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a number of responsibilities as part of its role in challenging and supporting decision-makers:

- representing the interests, views and wishes of Manchester residents;
- scrutinising how the City Council and the Manchester Partnership are working together to improve services and outcomes for residents;
- holding the City Council’s Executive to account and reviewing Executive decisions;
- scrutinising the work of the Manchester Partnership in delivering the Community Strategy;
- helping to develop new policies and reviewing existing ones;
- monitoring performance.

2.3 The Committee is not obliged to consider every topic within its remit during the course of the municipal year and in order to discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Committee should select only those topics to which it can make a real difference. Guidance on prioritising topics for the work programme is set out below.

Remit of the Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.4 The City Council reviewed the remits of all six Overview and Scrutiny Committees in May 2007. This was again amended in May 2008 to
reflect changes in the Police and Justice Act 2006, which requires all local authorities to have a designated Committee responsible for the overview and scrutiny of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour matters.

2.5 Issues within the remit of the Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2008/9 are therefore:

- Crime and Disorder Reduction
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Drug and Alcohol Prevention
- Older People
- Agenda 2010
- Information and Advice Services
- Respect Agenda
- Community Cohesion
- Domestic Violence/Abuse
- Equality and Inclusion
- Mancunian Agreements

2.6 The Committee also has responsibility for overseeing the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Work Programme Sources

2.7 By gathering topic ideas from a broad range of sources, the Committee can make informed decisions about which topics it would like to influence and evaluate over the next twelve months.

2.7 Examples of information sources that may assist the Committee to identify potential work programme topics include:

- Suggestions from elected members, members of the public, the Executive and partner organisations
- Work programme of the Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP)
- Forward Plan of Key Decisions
- Local Area Agreement
- Service and Business Plans
- Performance Monitoring Information
- Audit and Inspection Reports
- National and regional policy developments and initiatives

2.8 The Committee will consider the new Crime and Disorder Strategy at its next meeting in June, which will set out the CDRP’s priorities and key actions over the coming twelve months. Members may wish to use this information to identify which, if any aspects of the Strategy that it wishes to consider as part of its 2008/9 work programme. In the interim, the Committee may wish to consider those issues raised by the Committee during 2007/8 as appropriate for further investigation in 2008/9 as set out at Appendix One.

Prioritising Topics

2.9 The Work Programme should support the Committee to make a positive contribution to the delivery of better outcomes for Manchester. By concentrating on those high-level issues that are of strategic importance to the City Council and its partners, the Committee can help
to reflect the needs and wishes of local communities before decisions are taken. This will maximise the influence of Overview and Scrutiny and ensure that the best value in the use of time and resources.

2.10 From April 2008, the City Council and named partners have a formal duty to respond to reports and recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees setting out action they propose to take, if any, the reasons for this and to what timescales. Priority should therefore be given to those topics where there is a potential to add value and make recommendations that can make a real difference.

2.11 Past experience suggests that Overview and Scrutiny is most effective when it looks at fewer issues in more depth. In 2007/8 the Committee sought to consider one or two major topics at each meeting. This ensured that Members had sufficient time to give full consideration to key issues and to gather and evaluate evidence from different sources, including external witnesses.

2.12 The Committee may also wish to take the following factors into account in selecting topics for the work programme:

A) Does the topic relate to one of the Council’s key priorities in the Community Strategy?

B) Will scrutiny lead to better outcomes or services to the people in Manchester?

C) Are there widespread public concerns about the service or topic?

D) Will it contribute to the formulation of future plans or strategies?

E) Is the issue likely to be of interest to members of the public?

F) Is it timely?

G) Would it be better to refer the topic to be considered elsewhere?

**Implementing the Work Programme**

2.13 The Work Programme should be flexible enough to respond to changing needs and priorities: it is likely the Committee will still occasionally be required to respond to issues at short notice. Members will therefore need to review the work programme on a monthly basis.

2.14.1 An up to date version of the Committee’s work programme will continue to be submitted to every meeting as part of the Information and Overview report. This will provide an opportunity for all Members of the Committee to shape and influence the Committee’s work and may include suggestions for fact-finding visits, external witnesses that may help the Committee in its work and suggestions for how the public could be involved in scrutiny work.
Recommendations

2.15 Recommendations appear at the front of this report