

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 7th April 2010
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PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2009/10

1 Purpose of Report

As we draw to the end of the municipal year it is customary at this time to be drafting the Annual Scrutiny Report. The purpose of this cover report is to

- a) Provide the Committee with background to the provision of an Annual Scrutiny Report to Council
- b) Seek the views of members of the Committee about what information should be included in an Annual Scrutiny report.
- c) Provide the Committee with an early opportunity to comment on the draft report.

2 Recommendation(s) / Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to:

- d) Suggest any improvements or amendments to the draft report.
- b) Make recommendations based on the year's experience about topics to include in next year's work programme.
- c) Support a work planning session (cited as best practice) at the beginning of the municipal year, identifying and setting out key priorities for the year ahead.
- d) Consider making any specific recommendations to Council about scrutiny.

3 Key Priorities

Community Strategy Priorities

Overview and Scrutiny is a process by which decision-makers are accountable to local people, via their elected representatives for improving outcomes relating

to all priorities for the Borough and its residents. Scrutiny seeks to influence those who make decisions by considering the major issues affecting the Borough and making recommendations about how services can be improved. The Annual Scrutiny Report supports the Scrutiny process by providing a record of the work carried out during the year and plans for the future year.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial – None

(b) Risk Management – None

5 Supporting Information

5.1 Annual reports are an opportunity to review the scrutiny work programme for the last year and assess the impact scrutiny has had on influencing policy and holding the Executive to account. Looking at an Annual Report can help us to understand the nature of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny and to assess its effectiveness. It also gives an opportunity to reflect on any lessons learned during the year to help guide future work.

5.2 The production of an Annual Report is a statutory requirement of the Constitution and the Committee “must report annually to the full Council on future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.”

5.3 This Committee is provided with a draft of the Annual Scrutiny Report and it summarises the work carried out during the municipal year and also looks at issues for the future. Some discussion has taken place with each of the Chairpersons with respect to the content.

5.4 The first part of the report provides details of the work of the individual panels. The report this year picks up on the different approaches that have been used to scrutinise topics:

5.4.1 Regular and continuous scrutiny of performance indicators and inspection findings has helped members to develop a joined up more strategic perspective rather than concentrate on issues in isolation;

5.4.2 Special meetings such as those on Safeguarding Children have allowed for more detailed scrutiny of an issue and partner performance; similarly special meetings on Stoke Road Cemetery allowed community involvement in developing a solution.

5.4.3 The scrutiny of Traveller Incursions within Slough has encouraged this to be looked at in the wider context of social inclusion and developing appropriate policies for our Traveller community.

5.4.4 Finally Health Scrutiny has continuously used its statutory powers to hold the PCT and Hospital Trusts to account and intervene early particularly over the recent changes proposed for Mental Care Services.

- 5.4.5 There is scope to build on and develop different approaches to scrutiny next year; particular attention needs to be given perhaps on evidencing how scrutiny actually makes a difference; continued forward planning and appropriate selection of items within the work programme, fewer routine reports for noting and challenging the status quo by making recommendations as a result of scrutiny will help with this.
- 5.5 The second part of the report will look ahead, considering the points made above in 5.4.5 and other areas where further development could be considered. The third part of the report is a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee and its panels - Appendices (1-5) and a record of attendance.
- 5.6 Members are asked to note that the Annual Report is still in its draft stages with two further scrutiny meetings still to be held at the time of writing. Final formatting will be similar to last year's report subject to final text and contents being agreed. The final version will be circulated to Committee members before being submitted to Council.

6 **Conclusion**

The local authority through its Overview and Scrutiny function has an influential as well as a statutory role in scrutinising the activities and performance of the Executive and External bodies. The Annual Scrutiny Report provides an opportunity to communicate the work the Committee and its Panels have undertaken, challenges faced and the improvements made to the lives of Slough residents.

7 **Appendices**

- 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
- 2 – Health Scrutiny Panel Work Programme
- 3 – Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme
- 4 – Community, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Panel Work Programme
- 5 – Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel Work Programmed
- 6 – Draft Annual Scrutiny Report